



Emails to the early childhood education and care sector 2019

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20 December 2019

Reminder: Local emergencies and child care support

In view of the number of emergency and natural disaster situations being experienced across Australia recently, and the potential for further disruption over the summer period, providers may wish to review the Australian Government child care assistance available when a local emergency occurs.

Each service needs to make a decision that is right for their individual circumstances. For general information on assistance available for families and child care providers when a local emergency or natural disaster occurs, please refer to the [Emergencies and natural disaster](#) fact sheet.

For general information on your reporting requirements during a period of local emergency (additional absences), please refer to the [Information for child care providers when a period of local emergency occurs](#) fact sheet.

Services in Queensland closing early on 24 December 2019

Providers are reminded that session reports can only be submitted where a service is open and providing care.

The department is aware that the Queensland Government has passed legislation to establish a part-day public holiday on Christmas Eve, which starts from 6pm.

If a service chooses to close early on 24 December 2019, it must ensure session reports accurately reflect the hours the service is open and providing care.

If you have any questions on this topic, please contact the CCS Helpdesk on ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au or 1300 667 276

18 December 2019

Making a subsequent determination for Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) (child wellbeing)

If a child in receipt of ACCS (child wellbeing) continues to be at risk beyond the first determination period (for example, up to 13 weeks), you will need to apply for a new subsequent determination. You can do this via your Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS) software provider product or the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#). You will need to upload new or existing evidence to support any new subsequent determination application.

Please note:

- evidence needs to be less than six months old
- uploading evidence to an existing determination will not trigger a subsequent determination assessment, a new subsequent determination application **must** be lodged.

If the evidence previously provided was a statutory declaration, this cannot be used for a subsequent determination. You should talk to the family (where appropriate) and ask for their assistance to gather further information to support the ongoing subsidy. The family may also provide consent for you to approach other third parties. If the required evidence is not provided, then the application for a subsequent determination will be rejected.

For more information on the evidence requirements refer to the [Guide to ACCS \(child wellbeing\)](#) and the [factsheet and checklist](#) we have published to help providers gain relevant evidence from third parties in support of an ACCS (child wellbeing) application for a determination.

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Helpdesk Christmas Shutdown

The CCS Helpdesk will close from 12:30pm (AEDST) on Tuesday, 24 December 2019 and will reopen at 9:00am (AEDST) on Thursday, 2 January 2020.

The CCS Helpdesk has prepared a factsheet in relation to the [2019-20 Christmas and New Year period](#).

The factsheet contains information on:

- Public holidays and Christmas shutdown
- Session submission and payment processing dates
- Reporting attendance and service closure
- Reporting absence days.

12 December 2019

Funding for quality early childhood education and care

On 10 December 2019, the Australian Government announced that it would continue to fully fund the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) from 1 July 2020.

ACECQA is an independent national authority responsible for working with all governments to provide guidance, resources and services to support the early childhood education and care sector to improve outcomes for children. More information on ACECQA is available at acecqa.gov.au.

This will enable ACECQA to continue to perform its role under the National Quality Framework, by promoting nationally consistent regulation and driving continuous improvement in the quality of early childhood education and care services delivered to children.

This announcement demonstrates the Australian Government's continuing commitment to the delivery of high quality early childhood education and care services and reflects the significant benefits that quality early learning has for children's cognitive and socio-emotional development, health and well-being.

For more information visit minister-edu.govcms.gov.au/tehan/ensuring-quality-early-childhood-education.

Inclusion Support Portal changing to PRODA

It has now been confirmed that the authentication method for accessing the Inclusion Support Portal will be changing from AUSkey to PRODA in 2020.

The department will support the transition of ISP stakeholders to the new authentication arrangements.

Further information will be provided soon.

New Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) (child wellbeing) fact sheet for foster carers

An ACCS (child wellbeing) [foster carer fact sheet](#) is now available on the department's website. Providers are encouraged to circulate the fact sheet to any foster carers already using their service or before they enrol a child in their service. This fact sheet will provide foster carers with a

- better understanding about how they may be eligible for a higher rate of assistance to help them with the cost of approved child care.
- The foster carer fact sheet outlines the necessary steps a carer will need to follow to apply and be eligible for Child Care Subsidy (CCS), which will allow the provider to access ACCS (child wellbeing) on their behalf.

Enrolment notice reminder - must include the parent who is assessed for CCS

When enrolling a new child at your service, to ensure that CCS can be paid to you on behalf of a family, you must ensure that the parent listed on the Complying Written Arrangement (CWA) is the parent who has applied for (or is going to) and has been assessed for CCS through Centrelink.

After you have enrolled the child, you can confirm the parent's CCS entitlement in your CCSS software provider product or the [Provider Entry Point](#).

If the parent advises you that no one in the family has been assessed, or if there is no entitlement showing for the family, you should recommend that the family [contacts Centrelink](#) to discuss their CCS claim.

CCS Helpdesk closed today from 1pm - change in regular shutdown day

The CCS Helpdesk will be closed today, from 1:00pm (AEDST) and will reopen at 9:00am (AEDST) Friday, 13 December 2019.

This closure is a change in the CCS Helpdesk's regular shutdown afternoon that usually occurs on the second Wednesday of each month.

Should you require assistance during this period, please refer to the [information resources for providers](#).

CCS Helpdesk Christmas Shutdown

The CCS Helpdesk will close from 12:30pm (AEDST) on Tuesday, 24 December 2019 and will reopen at 9:00am (AEDST) on Thursday, 2 January 2020.

The CCS Helpdesk has prepared a fact sheet in relation to the [2019-20 Christmas and New Year period](#).

The fact sheet contains information on:

- Public holidays and Christmas shutdown
- Session submission and payment processing dates
- Reporting attendance and service closure
- Reporting absence days.

11 December 2019

Changes to the 8 week rule

[As announced](#) by the Hon Dan Tehan MP, Minister for Education, the Australian Government has made a number of minor amendments to the *Family Assistance Law* to cut red tape and make life easier for families and providers using the Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

The amendments reflect feedback from child care providers, services and families.

Key amendments include:

- increasing the number of weeks at which enrolments automatically cease due to non-attendance, from eight to 14 weeks. **This will take effect from 13 January 2020**
- removing the 50 per cent limit on the number of children that a provider can self-certify for Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing). This reduces barriers to vulnerable children accessing early childhood education and care while retaining the capacity to impose a limit, if necessary, to ensure providers are certifying children appropriately. **This will take effect from 13 July 2020**
- enabling the Minister to create a new rule to allow parents to receive CCS in limited circumstances where their child cannot attend scheduled care at the start or end of an enrolment
- enabling the Minister to create a rule to allow certain third party contributions to fees (such as state/territory government payments) to be used in combination with CCS to ensure that cost is not a barrier to vulnerable and disadvantaged children accessing early childhood education and care.

The legislation changes also make a number of clarifying and technical amendments (including adding In Home Care into the primary legislation alongside other care types).

Many of these amendments require Minister's Rules to be made to give effect so **will not come into effect immediately**. The department will be consulting on these rule changes with sector representatives and will advise further.

The legislation is available [here](#).

Preparing for the school holiday period

With the end of term 4 fast approaching, **and the eight week rule still in effect until 13 January 2020**, now is a good time to re-establish ceased enrolments for children attending your service again in the upcoming school holidays.

Families who have not used your service since the last school holidays will most likely have had their enrolment automatically ceased in the CCS System, as their child will not have attended a session of care for eight or more continuous weeks.

4 December 2019

Offering enrolment incentives

Child care services offering incentives to families to enrol their children have attracted recent media attention. We reiterate our previous advice and encourage you to contact the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Helpdesk on 1300 667 276 or refer to the liability for payment section of the [Child Care Provider Handbook](#) for further information.

A range of marketing tools and strategies are used by the early childhood education and care sector and while most are used appropriately, providers must make sure their commercial practices comply with Family Assistance Law and all other legal requirements.

CCS is an entitlement for families and is paid only to reduce their child care fees. While families' CCS is paid directly to their child care provider, the provider is required by law to pass on the full subsidy amount to the family as a fee reduction.

Providers are reminded that they are required by law to report accurate details about each session of care, including the actual fee charged. This means if a parent is not charged any fee (or a lower than usual fee), as part of an incentive/offer, the provider must accurately reflect this in the relevant session report/s.

Providers must also ensure their arrangements with parents, including any incentives offered, comply with relevant state or territory [consumer protection laws](#).

If you become aware of unethical practices we encourage you to notify the department's Tip Off Line on 1800 664 231 or tipoffline@education.gov.au.

Drought support funding available for child care services

The Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) special circumstances grant opportunity is intended to support approved child care services operating in drought affected areas that are experiencing financial pressure putting them at risk of closure.

Grants provided under this arrangement are intended to assist child care services deal with the costs of operating a child care facility during the drought. For example, special circumstances grants can be used for meeting standard child care operating costs, which may include paying utility bills and subsidising wages.

To see if your service is eligible for the drought support grant opportunity, please check the guidelines and information available on the [CCCF special circumstances drought support page](#).

Additional support for families

Although the CCCF special circumstances grant opportunity cannot be used to subsidise the fees to be paid by families, additional fee relief for families is provided under the Additional Child Care

Subsidy (ACCS), in particular [ACCS \(temporary financial hardship\)](#).

ACCS (temporary financial hardship) is a top up payment in addition to the Child Care Subsidy which provides targeted additional fee assistance to families and children experiencing significant financial stress due to circumstances beyond their control.

For more information on additional support for families, visit the [DHS website](#).

Child Care Management System (CCMS) Decommissioning and historical data

From close of business Friday, 13 December 2019, you will no longer be able to download historical data from CCMS.

CCMS recently closed on Friday, 29 November 2019, however you are still able to access CCMS using your third party software to download historical data. Access to download CCMS historical data will close as of Friday, 13 December 2019.

Copies of enrolments and session reports already submitted to CCMS do not need to be retained by services to meet record keeping obligations under the Family Assistance Law. However, services are still required to maintain other records, such as (but not limited to) sign in/out attendance sheets and medical certificates, as required in the legislation.

Extension of In Home Care Educator Transitional Provisions

On 3 December 2019, the Hon Dan Tehan MP, Minister for Education, announced the extension of the transitional provisions relating to qualifications for In Home Care (IHC) educators working in remote and very remote areas for a further two years, until 31 December 2021. The relevant media release is available at the following link: ministers.education.gov.au/tehan/supporting-our-remote-child-care-workforce.

The *IHC National Guidelines* will be updated to reflect the Minister's decision, and will be available on the Department of Education website before the end of the year.

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Helpdesk closed on Thursday 12 December 2019 from 1pm - change in regular shutdown day

The CCS Helpdesk will be closed on Thursday, 12 December 2019 from 1:00pm (AEDST) and will reopen at 9:00am (AEDST) Friday, 13 December 2019.

This closure is a change in the CCS Helpdesk's regular shutdown afternoon that usually occurs on the second Wednesday of each month. This change means that the CCS Helpdesk will now be open on Wednesday, 11 December 2019, operating during its usual hours of 9:00am to 5:00pm (AEDST).

Should you require assistance during this period, please refer to the [information resources for providers](#).

Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS) maintenance 6 to 8 December 2019

The Department of Human Services will be undertaking scheduled maintenance of their IT systems this weekend. As a result, the CCSS will be unavailable from 10:00pm (AEDST) Friday, 6 December 2019 until 10:00am (AEDST) Sunday, 8 December 2019.

For providers and services, this means no session reports will be processed during this period.

2 December 2019

Check out the updated Guide to the Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) (child wellbeing)!

The Department has updated the [Guide to ACCS \(child wellbeing\)](#) following feedback from the sector.

The guide contains information for providers and services, approved for the purposes of the Family Assistance Law, that are involved in the administration of ACCS (child wellbeing).

We encourage providers and services to become familiar with the contents of the guide to best support their families who may require the additional subsidy.

You can access the updated guide on our [website](#).

28 November 2019

Factsheet and checklist for third parties providing evidence - Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) application

Remember there is a [factsheet and checklist](#) available to help providers gain relevant evidence from third parties in support of an Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) application for a determination.

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Helpdesk closed on Thursday 12 December 2019 from 1pm - change in regular shutdown day

The CCS Helpdesk will be closed on Thursday, 12 December 2019 from 1:00pm (AEDST) and will reopen at 9:00am (AEDST) Friday, 13 December 2019.

This closure is a change in the CCS Helpdesk's regular shutdown afternoon that usually occurs on the second Wednesday of each month. This change means that the CCS Helpdesk will now be open on Wednesday, 11 December 2019, operating during its usual hours of 9:00am to 5:00pm (AEDST).

Should you require assistance during this period, please refer to the [information resources for providers](#).

21 November 2019

Important information about the eight week rule

We recently let you know that the Australian Government has introduced a bill into Parliament that proposes measures to build on the Child Care Package. The bill includes a change to the 'eight week enrolment ceasing rule' that would extend this timeframe to 14 weeks.

However, the eight week rule remains in place until Parliament agrees to the bill. If this happens we will provide you with further information, including when this change will take effect.

More information on when enrolments cease can be found in [Chapter 4 of the Child Care Provider Handbook](#).

Child Care Management System (CCMS) Decommissioning

From close of business Friday, 29 November 2019, you will no longer be able to create, modify or cancel information in CCMS.

CCMS was scheduled for closure at the end of March 2019 but has remained open to allow providers and services to formalise a small number of outstanding Child Care Benefit enrolments. This access will close as of Friday, 29 November 2019.

The last date to download historical data from CCMS will be close of business Friday, 13 December 2019.

Copies of enrolments and session reports already submitted to CCMS do not need to be retained by services to meet record keeping obligations under the Family Assistance Law. However, services are still required to maintain other records, such as (but not limited to) sign in/out attendance sheets and medical certificates, as required in the legislation.

Please ensure you are updating your details in the Child Care Subsidy System through your third party software or via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) for your information to be displayed on Child Care Finder. If you have been updating your information in CCMS it will not have been displayed on Child Care Finder.

Are any children in your service eligible for the preschool exemption?

With the new year approaching, remember families can receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS) to support their preschool-aged child to attend a preschool program at a Centre Based Day Care service even where families do not meet the activity test.

All families with children attending a preschool program in 2020 should ensure their child's expected school start date is correct and up to date with Centrelink.

For more information about the process, please refer to the [preschool exemption fact sheet](#). Further information can also be found on the [FAQ page](#).

Payment to provider or parent?

Under the Child Care Package, the vast majority of CCS and Additional Child Care Subsidy payments are made directly to providers to pass on to parents as a fee reduction.

In some circumstances, depending on the sequence in which parents claim subsidy and their eligibility and entitlement is assessed, and providers enrol children and submit session reports, backdated payments may be made directly to parents.

For more information on how this works and how it intersects with your fee charging practices please refer to the [Payment to Provider or Parent factsheet](#).

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Helpdesk Christmas Shutdown

The CCS Helpdesk will close from 12:30pm (AEDST) on Tuesday, 24 December 2019 and will reopen at 9:00am (AEDST) on Thursday, 2 January 2020.

The CCS Helpdesk has prepared a factsheet in relation to the [2019-20 Christmas and New Year period](#).

The factsheet contains information on:

- Public holidays and Christmas shutdown
- Session submission and payment processing dates
- Reporting attendance and service closure, and
- Reporting absence days.

Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS) maintenance 23 to 24 November 2019

The Department of Human Services will be undertaking scheduled maintenance of their IT systems this weekend. As a result, the CCSS will be unavailable from 10:00pm (AEDST) Saturday, 23 November 2019 until 10:00am (AEDST) Sunday, 24 November 2019.

For providers and services, this means no session reports will be processed during this period.

Drought support funding available for child care services

Child care services in drought affected communities are eligible to apply for grant funding of up to \$10,000 (excluding GST) under the Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) special circumstances grant opportunity.

This grant opportunity is intended to support approved child care services operating in drought affected areas that are experiencing financial pressure putting them at risk of closure.

To check if your service is eligible for this grant opportunity, the grant opportunity guidelines, list of drought affected communities, fact sheet, and grant application form are available on the [CCCF special circumstances drought support page](#).

Why was my Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) determination rejected?

The Department of Human Services (DHS) may reject an application for an Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) (child wellbeing) determination if the evidence provided by the provider does not meet the evidence requirements as set out in the [Guide to ACCS \(child wellbeing\)](#).

All services are advised to become familiar with the evidence requirements outlined within the guide to ensure that determination applications are lodged with adequate supporting documents.

How can I have this decision reviewed?

Where you've had a determination rejected by DHS, you may wish to seek a review of the decision.

To seek a review of an ACCS (child wellbeing) decision, you will need to complete the attached '[Review of Decision – Additional Child Care Subsidy \(child wellbeing\)](#)' form and upload it to a new determination application to DHS, along with any new evidence you can provide to support your request for review. Once you have submitted an application for a new determination, DHS will initiate a review.

Due to the 28 day backdating rule, you may not be able to enter the original start dates in the new determination application. Please proceed to submit the new determination and backdate as far as possible. Depending on the outcome of the review DHS will, if appropriate, backdate the determination to the original start date.

If you have a query about reviews and appeals of determination decisions, you can contact DHS at the following email address: ACCS.CWB.Review@humanservices.gov.au. This email address is solely for child care services to submit enquiries relating to ACCS (child wellbeing) determination rejections. All other provider and service enquires that are not related to this should be directed to the CCS Helpdesk. Families with enquiries should be directed to contact DHS (Centrelink).

Please note you must make your application for review within 13 weeks of being notified of the original decision.

CCS Helpdesk - Online Enquiry Form

Remember you can submit queries to the CCS Helpdesk using the [Online Enquiry Form](#). It is important to fill out **all relevant information** so that your query can be actioned as quickly as possible.

Child Care Subsidy System maintenance 16 to 17 November 2019

The Department of Human Services will be undertaking scheduled maintenance of their IT systems this weekend. As a result, the Child Care Subsidy System will be unavailable from 8:00pm (AEDST) Saturday, 16 November 2019 until 6:00pm (AEDST) Sunday, 17 November 2019.

For providers and services, this means no session reports will be processed during this period.

12 November 2019

Local emergencies and child care support

In view of the number of emergency and natural disaster situations being experienced across Australia recently, and the potential for further disruption over the summer period, providers may wish to review the Australian Government child care assistance available when a local emergency occurs.

For general information on assistance available for families and child care providers when a local emergency or natural disaster occurs, please refer to the [Emergencies and natural disaster](#) fact sheet.

For general information on your reporting requirements during a period of local emergency (additional absences), please refer to the [Information for child care providers when a period of local emergency occurs](#) fact sheet.

New - Educational mini videos

Welcome to the third video in a series of educational mini videos to help providers, services and educators to understand their obligations under the Family Assistance Law.

This new mini video helps to explain an educator's obligations when caring for children in their extended family – [caring for relatives mini video](#).

Reminder: Have your say on the Inclusion Support Program Guidelines!

Have your say on draft updated Inclusion Support Program (ISP) Guidelines, which aim to provide more support to children with additional needs and increase their participation in early childhood education and care.

The ISP is part of the Child Care Safety Net which supports services to improve their capacity and capability to implement quality inclusive practices. ISP has been operating since 1 July 2016, and the Guidelines are now due for review.

The consultation draft guidelines and summary of changes can be considered at education.gov.au/have-your-say-updated-inclusion-support-program-isp-guidelines.

Feedback can be provided via an [online survey](#) or sent to InclusionSupportProgram@education.gov.au until **11 November 2019**.

Making a subsequent determination for Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing)

If a child in receipt of Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) (child wellbeing) continues to be at risk beyond the first determination period (for example, up to 13 weeks), you will need to apply for a new subsequent determination. You can do this via your third party software or the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP). You will need to upload new or existing evidence to support any new subsequent determination application:

Please note:

- evidence needs to be less than six months old
- uploading evidence to an existing determination will not trigger a subsequent determination assessment, a new subsequent determination application **must** be lodged.

If the evidence previously provided was a statutory declaration, this cannot be used for a subsequent determination. You should talk to the family (where appropriate) and ask for their assistance to gather further information to support the ongoing subsidy. The family may also provide consent for you to approach other third parties. If the required evidence is not provided, then the application for a subsequent determination will be rejected.

For more information on the evidence requirements refer to the [Guide to ACCS \(child wellbeing\)](#) and the [factsheet and checklist](#) we have published to help providers gain relevant evidence from third parties in support of an ACCS (child wellbeing) application for a determination.

31 October 2019

New – Educational mini videos

Welcome to the second video in a series of educational mini videos to help providers and services to understand their obligations under the Family Assistance Law.

This new mini video helps to explain what to do when an educator is going on leave or not providing care - [educators who are on holiday or are overseas mini video](#).

Participate in the final round of Inclusion Support Program surveys

Macquarie University is now conducting its second and final round of surveys on the Inclusion Support Program (ISP), which assists early childhood education and care services to improve their capacity and capability to provide quality inclusive practices.

The survey provides an opportunity to have your say on the ISP, what you think is working well and how it can be strengthened.

Macquarie University is inviting submissions until **15 November 2019**.

Thank you to the staff from 3,857 services across Australia who participated in 2018 and those who have already completed the 2019 survey. Your feedback is vital to the continuing success of the ISP.

To register for the survey, visit: mqedu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2izKsHsgDmCpJeB.

Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) enhancements

Currently when creating certificates and determinations for the Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) (child wellbeing), these could only start on a Monday and not before the start date of the enrolment.

However enrolments may not necessarily start on a Monday, creating a potential gap in subsidies that are able to be paid on behalf of a family.

Enhancements were implemented on 26 October 2019 to manage enrolment commencements and cessations which do not occur on a Monday. The enhancements will allow a determination or certificate to commence from Monday of the week where an enrolment has commenced.

Additionally where an enrolment cessation does not occur on a Monday; a determination or certificate can be created to end on the Sunday of the week where an enrolment ceases.

Software Providers have been advised of the requirements for this system enhancement. If you experience any issues in your third party software, please contact your Software Provider directly.

Alternatively, if you are using the [Provider Entry Point](#), please contact the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Helpdesk by phone on 1300 667 276 or via email at CCSHelpdesk@education.gov.au.

For more information on ACCS (child wellbeing), please refer to [The Guide to ACCS \(child wellbeing\)](#).

25 October 2019

Reminder: Have your say on the Inclusion Support Program Guidelines!

Have your say on draft updated Inclusion Support Program (ISP) Guidelines, which aim to provide more support to children with additional needs and increase their participation in early childhood education and care.

The ISP is part of the Child Care Safety Net which supports services to improve their capacity and capability to implement quality inclusive practices. ISP has been operating since 1 July 2016, and the Guidelines are now due for review.

The consultation draft guidelines and summary of changes can be considered at education.gov.au/have-your-say-updated-inclusion-support-program-isp-guidelines.

Feedback can be provided via an [online survey](#) or sent to InclusionSupportProgram@education.gov.au.

Community Child Care Fund Special Circumstances Grant Opportunity - Revised Eligibility Criteria

Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) special circumstances grants are available to support continuity of child care, in particular in disadvantaged or vulnerable communities. The grant guidelines have recently been revised to clarify that an applicant may be:

- a service at risk of closure due to viability issues resulting from an unforeseen event or circumstance, such as a natural disaster or extreme weather event, or
- a service at risk of permanent closure due to another event or circumstance, where the closure would result in lack of suitable child care (market failure) for the community, or
- a service that is seeking to commence a new service in a community where another service has closed, resulting in lack of suitable child care (market failure), and the new service requires funding to establish a viable operation.

Funding provided under this grant opportunity is intended to be one-off and depending on a service's circumstance, two application types are available:

1. Grants up to \$10,000 - to respond quickly to child care services affected by natural disasters or other unforeseen events; applicants can seek a grant of up to \$10,000 under a streamlined process supported by a basic budget.
2. Grants over \$10,000 - to respond to child care services at risk of closure between CCCF grant round opportunities or an existing provider seeking funding to establish a child care centre where market failure has occurred; applicants are required to respond to selection criteria and include a detailed budget for the proposed activity.

To see if your service is eligible for this grant opportunity, the Special Circumstances Grant Opportunity Guidelines, fact sheet, frequently asked questions and grant application forms are available on the [CCCF Special Circumstances Grant Opportunity page](#).

Child Care Subsidy System maintenance 26 to 27 October 2019

The Department of Human Services will be undertaking scheduled maintenance of their IT systems this weekend. As a result, the Child Care Subsidy System will be unavailable from 10:00pm (AEDST) Saturday, 26 October 2019 until 10:00am (AEDST) Sunday, 27 October 2019.

For providers and services, this means no session reports will be processed during this period.

18 October 2019

Have your say on the Inclusion Support Program Guidelines!

Have your say on draft updated Inclusion Support Program (ISP) Guidelines, which aim to provide more support to children with additional needs and increase their participation in early childhood education and care.

The ISP is part of the Child Care Safety Net which supports services to improve their capacity and capability to implement quality inclusive practices. ISP has been operating since 1 July 2016, and the Guidelines are now due for review.

One of the key proposed changes to the ISP Guidelines is broadening eligibility for additional educator funding to cover children with additional needs who may not have a diagnosed disability, such as those with serious medical or health conditions (including mental health), learning, language and speech delays, children presenting with challenging behaviours and/or trauma-related behaviours.

Eligibility is also being expanded to now include children with a disability or awaiting diagnosis participating in a preschool program in a Centre Based Day Care service, where the child attracts Child Care Subsidy.

The proposed changes are based on feedback from services, Inclusion Agencies and other key stakeholders.

We look forward to your feedback on the updated ISP Guidelines. Services are also encouraged to advise parents and carers of children with additional needs on the opportunity to provide comment on the ISP Guidelines.

Feedback can be provided via an [online survey](#) or sent to InclusionSupportProgram@education.gov.au.

Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) Certificate - What should I do if I enter incorrect dates?

It is important to submit an Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) (child wellbeing) certificate with the correct dates to ensure the certificate reflects the dates the child is 'at risk' and to ensure that correct ACCS payments are made.

If you submit via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#), the date selected in the 'percentage cap calculation date' field will populate as the start date of the certificate. If you submit via third party software this may be different and you may need to contact your vendor if unclear.

If you have made an error it is important to enter the correct details as soon as possible. In most circumstances, within the 28 day variance and change period, certificates can be cancelled and replacement certificates given.

Information on how to do this in PEP is outlined in section 2 of the task card [ACCS Child Wellbeing – how to submit a new certificate in PEP](#).

Reminder: Update your details to help families find your service in Child Care Finder!

How to update your details

- You can update your details via the [PEP](#). Please refer to the [Task Card](#) on the department's website if you need further assistance on how to update your organisation details in PEP.
- Alternatively, you can update your details via your third party software. Please contact your software provider for assistance updating your details via a third party software program.

Please allow up to 24 hours for changes to be reflected on [Child Care Finder](#).

Child Care Subsidy System maintenance 19 to 20 October 2019

The Department of Human Services will be undertaking scheduled maintenance of their IT systems this weekend. As a result, the CCS System will be unavailable from 10:00pm (AEDST) Saturday, 19 October 2019 until 6:00pm (AEDST) Sunday, 20 October 2019.

For providers and services, this means no session reports will be processed during this period.

15 October 2019

Session reporting and fees requirements under Family Assistance Law - recent queries

The Department has started to receive queries regarding 'hourly billing' within the early childhood education and care sector, and specifically whether there are upcoming changes to Australian Government requirements.

The Department would like to take the opportunity to confirm that there are no new requirements in respect of hourly billing or session reporting about to be introduced. The policy in regards to this issue remains as prescribed in Family Assistance Law and articulated in the [Child Care Provider Handbook](#).

What are the requirements?

Family Assistance Law does not regulate what fees providers may charge for a session of care – this is a matter for providers. However, a fundamental principle and requirement under Family Assistance Law is that Child Care Subsidy is always calculated on the actual fee the parent is liable to pay for each session of care. A session of care is the minimum period that a provider charges an individual a fee for providing child care (not the period the child actually attends). (Refer to pages 48 and 61, [Child Care Provider Handbook](#), June 2019).

Providers are required to provide children's actual in-and-out attendance times in both statements of entitlements to families and session reports to the Australian Government. Attendance times are not used to calculate Child Care Subsidy or Additional Child Care Subsidy. Reporting actual attendance times is intended to help parents understand the relationship between the fees they are charged, the amount of subsidy paid to their child care provider on their behalf, and their out-of-pocket expenses. (Refer to page 55, [Child Care Provider Handbook](#), June 2019).

We also understand there may be some confusion regarding the Additional staffing requirement from 1 January 2020. This refers to the final scheduled step-up in staffing requirements for NQF approved services that have been progressively introduced since 1 January 2012. For more information, please visit the [ACECQA Website](#).

11 October 2019

Foster carers can access Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing)

Did you know that foster carers may be eligible to receive Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) (child wellbeing) for a child placed in their care who is considered to be 'at risk' for the purposes of ACCS (child wellbeing)?

What does the foster carer need to do?

Foster carers are not automatically eligible for ACCS (child wellbeing). To be eligible, foster carers must:

- contact Centrelink to obtain a CRN (if they don't have one) and have the child/ren in their care linked to them
- apply, and be approved, for Child Care Subsidy (CCS), and
- complete a Complying Written Arrangement for each foster child in their care.

To avoid any delays the foster carer should be encouraged to undertake these steps as soon as they become the primary carer of the child/ren.

What do providers need to do?

- If a foster carer has met and completed all of their requirements to be eligible for ACCS (child wellbeing), you must follow the same procedure as for other 'at risk' children in order for the additional subsidy to be paid (see page 23 of the [Guide to ACCS \(child wellbeing\)](#)).
- You will not need to make a referral to a support agency.
- Evidence provided for subsequent determinations should not be more than six months old and can be a letter from the state/territory child protection agency stating that the court order is still current (see page 31 of the [Guide to ACCS \(child wellbeing\)](#)).

Sometimes a foster carer may be responsible for the care of two or more children from the same family. In this case you must apply for ACCS (child wellbeing) for each child individually through the Provider Entry Point.

Child Care Subsidy System maintenance 12 to 13 October 2019

The Department of Human Services will be undertaking scheduled maintenance of their IT systems this weekend. As a result, the CCS System will be unavailable from 10:00pm (AEDST) Saturday, 12 October 2019 until 10:00am (AEDST) Sunday, 13 October 2019. For providers and services, this means no session reports will be processed during this period.

4 October 2019

CCS Helpdesk – New Online Enquiry Form

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Helpdesk has listened to your feedback – providers can now submit queries through to the CCS Helpdesk using an [Online Enquiry Form](#).

It is important, however, to fill out all relevant information so that your query can be actioned as quickly as possible.

When to enrol a child under a Relevant Arrangement

A Relevant Arrangement (RA) enrolment is an arrangement between a provider and an individual for the care of a child that does not meet the full requirements for a Complying Written Arrangement (CWA).

No CCS can be paid for care provided under this type of arrangement.

Therefore this type of enrolment notice is to be used only where a provider is sure that the family does not wish to claim CCS.

If the family advise that they have not yet been assessed or are in the process of being assessed for CCS and will want to claim CCS, you should still create a CWA enrolment for the family. The same applies to families who cannot currently provide a required detail such as a Customer Reference Number (CRN) or date of birth.

Further information on the different enrolment types can be found [here](#).

Have your say on preschool

Nous Group is reviewing the Universal Access National Partnership (UANP)* on behalf of the Australian and State and Territory Governments.

The Review will inform governments' decisions about future preschool arrangements.

Nous is inviting submissions until 6 October 2019. You can also complete a survey on the [UANP Review website](#).

The UANP Review Terms of Reference ([available on the Education Council website](#)) include consideration of how to maximise preschool participation, particularly for Indigenous children, children in regional and remote areas, and children experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage.

(*the UANP is also formally known as the 'National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education').

CCS Helpdesk closed on Monday 7 October 2019 – ACT public holiday

The CCS Helpdesk will be closed on Monday, 7 October 2019 and will reopen at 9:00am (AEDST) Tuesday, 8 October 2019.

Should you require assistance during this period, please refer to the [information resources for providers](#).

27 September 2019

Handy hints for amending session reports for a previous year

As of 29 July 2019, the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) System was closed for changes to be made to the 2018–19 financial year session reports.

In limited specified circumstances where a provider needs to submit, vary or withdraw session reports in the previous financial year, the provider will need to [submit an application](#) to the department.

We recently provided some handy hints for filling out the [online form](#).

The CCS Helpdesk are still receiving a number of Attendance Exemption forms that have required further information to be provided – please see some updated helpful hints below for guidance in filling this form out correctly.

Provider Digital Access (PRODA) RA number

This number can be found by logging into your personal PRODA account, not the services PRODA account. The number can then be found by looking under ‘personal details’.

Attendance details must be completed correctly

Part C of the application form will, in most circumstances, require both current submitted sessions and the sessions to be varied to be provided before the department can assess the form.

Detailed explanation must be completed correctly

Part D of the form requires providers to provide a detailed reason for submitting, varying or withdrawing session reports.

It is not sufficient for the providers to simply say that they would like to amend session reports for this period.

Correct contact details must be provided

Contact details entered into the online form must match those already provided in the CCS System.

If the provider needs to update contact details, they will need to do so using their approved child care software or [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) before submitting the online form.

If details do not match, the department will be unable to assess the application.

Creating a digital signature

When completing the form providers will be asked to create a digital signature. In response to feedback, the department has developed a [factsheet](#) outlining the steps on how to create a digital signature.

In order for this form to function correctly, providers will need to download the form to their computer and open using Adobe Acrobat Reader. If providers do not have Adobe Acrobat Reader installed, it can be downloaded for free from the [Adobe Website](#).

Reminder: Have your say on preschool now!

Nous Group is reviewing the Universal Access National Partnership (UANP)* on behalf of the Australian and State and Territory Governments.

The Review will inform governments' decisions about future preschool arrangements.

Nous is inviting submissions until 6 October 2019. You can also complete a survey on the [UANP Review website](#).

The UANP Review Terms of Reference ([available on the Education Council website](#)) include consideration of how to maximise preschool participation, particularly for Indigenous children, children in regional and remote areas, and children experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage.

(*the UANP is also formally known as the 'National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education')

Child Care Subsidy System maintenance 28 to 29 September 2019

The Department of Human Services will be undertaking scheduled maintenance of their IT systems this weekend. As a result, the CCS System will be unavailable from 10:00pm (AEST) Saturday, 28 September 2019 until 6:00pm (AEST) Sunday, 29 September 2019.

For providers and services, this means no session reports will be processed during this period.

The CCS Helpdesk will be closed on Monday 7 October 2019 and will reopen at 9:00am (AEDT) Tuesday 8 October 2019.

Should you require assistance during this period, please refer to the [information resources for providers](#).

Proposed amendments to the Child Care Legislation

The Australian Government has introduced a Bill into the Parliament that proposes a number of minor amendments to the Family Assistance Law to cut red tape and improve the operation of the Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

The 'Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Building on the Child Care Package) Bill 2019' (the Bill) takes into account feedback from child care providers, services and families, and proposes to:

- increase the number of weeks at which enrolments automatically cease due to non-attendance from eight to 14 weeks. This will eliminate the need for children to be re-enrolled following most regular breaks in attendance, such as where a child does not attend care during the school term.
- remove the 50 per cent limit on the number of children that a provider can self-certify for Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing).

The Bill also proposes to make a number of clarifying and technical amendments (including adding In Home Care into the primary legislation alongside other care types) and enable the Minister to create new rules to make the subsidy operate more effectively, including in respect to:

- absences before and after a child physically attends care under an enrolment, and
- third party contributions to fees (such as certain state/territory government payments) that support vulnerable and disadvantaged children's access to early learning and child care.

Further consultation with the sector will take place to develop new rules should the Bill pass through Parliament.

The Bill is available [here](#).

Reminder: Have your say on preschool now!

Nous Group is reviewing the Universal Access National Partnership (UANP)* on behalf of the Australian and state and territory governments.

The Review will inform governments' decisions about future preschool arrangements.

Nous is inviting submissions until 6 October 2019. You can also complete a survey on the [UANP Review website](#).

The UANP Review Terms of Reference ([available on the Education Council website](#)) include consideration of how to maximise preschool participation, particularly for Indigenous children, children in regional and remote areas, and children experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage.

(*the UANP is also formally known as the 'National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education').

Child Care Subsidy System maintenance 21 to 22 September

The Department of Human Services will be undertaking scheduled maintenance of their IT systems this weekend. As a result, the CCS System will be unavailable from 10pm (AEST) Saturday, 21 September 2019 until 10am (AEST) Sunday, 22 September 2019.

For providers and services, this means no session reports will be processed during this period.

13 September 2019

Balancing factsheet for your families

In August we provided you with information to send to families to help them understand the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) balancing process that is now underway.

A [factsheet](#) with this information is now available to share with families who attend your service.

Have families at your service been adversely affected by a major disaster?

If you receive questions from families, you can encourage them to visit humanservices.gov.au/balancing.

Families affected by a major disaster, such as a bushfire or flood, may be eligible to receive additional support through the Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) (temporary financial hardship). ACCS (temporary financial hardship) is a short-term payment from the Australian Government to help families experiencing significant financial stress with the cost of child care.

Families can apply for the additional subsidy via their Centrelink online account using [myGov](#) or by visiting a Centrelink office and applying in person.

Further information, including more detail on how to apply and supporting information required, can be found on the Department of Human Services' website humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/additional-child-care-subsidy.

Preparing for the school holiday period

With the end of term 3 fast approaching, now is a good time to re-establish ceased enrolments for children attending your service again in the upcoming school holidays.

Families who have not used your service since the last school holidays will most likely have had their enrolment automatically ceased in the CCS System, as their child will not have attended a session of care for eight or more continuous weeks.

Child Care Subsidy System maintenance 13 to 14 September

The Department of Human Services will be undertaking scheduled maintenance of their IT systems this weekend. As a result, the CCS System will be unavailable from 10pm (AEST) Friday, 13 September 2019 until 12pm (AEST) Saturday, 14 September 2019.

For providers and services, this means no session reports will be processed during this period.

6 September 2019

[Have your say on preschool now!](#)

Nous Group is reviewing the Universal Access National Partnership (UANP)* on behalf of the Australian and State and Territory Governments.

The [Review](#) will inform governments' decisions about future preschool arrangements.

Nous is inviting submissions until 6 October 2019. Providers and services can also complete a survey on the [UANP Review website](#).

The UANP Review Terms of Reference (available on the [Education Council website](#)) include consideration of how to maximise preschool participation, particularly for Indigenous children, children in regional and remote areas, and children experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage.

(*the UANP is also formally known as the 'National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education').

Handy hints for amending session reports for a previous financial year

On 29 July 2019, the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) System was closed for changes to be made to the 2018–19 financial year session reports.

In limited specified circumstances, where a provider needs to submit, vary or withdraw session reports from a previous financial year, the provider will need to [submit an application](#) to the department.

Please find below some handy hints for filling out the online application form.

Attendance details must be completed correctly

Part C of the application form will, in most circumstances, require both current submitted sessions and the sessions to be varied to be provided before the department can assess the form.

Detailed explanation must be completed correctly

Part D of the form requires providers to provide a detailed reason for submitting, varying or withdrawing session reports.

It is not sufficient for the providers to simply say that they would like to amend session reports for this period.

Correct contact details must be provided

Contact details entered into the online form must match those already provided in the CCS System.

If the provider needs to update contact details, they will need to do so using their approved child care software or [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) before submitting the online form.

If details do not match, the department will be unable to assess the application.

Creating a digital signature

When completing the [form](#) providers will be asked to create a digital signature. In response to feedback, the department has developed a [factsheet](#) outlining the steps on how to create a digital signature.

In order for this [form](#) to function correctly, providers will need to download the form to their computer and open using Adobe Acrobat Reader. If providers do not have Adobe Acrobat Reader installed, it can be downloaded for free from the [Adobe Website](#).

Child Care Subsidy System maintenance 7 to 8 September

The Department of Human Services will be undertaking scheduled maintenance of their IT systems this weekend. As a result, the CCS System will be unavailable from 10pm (AEST) Saturday, 7 September 2019 until 10am (AEST) Sunday, 8 September 2019.

For providers and services, this means no session reports will be processed during this period.

30 August 2019

System maintenance 31 August

The Department of Human Services will be undertaking scheduled maintenance of their IT systems this weekend. As a result, the Child Care Subsidy System will be unavailable from 10pm (AEST) Saturday, 31 August 2019 until 10am (AEST) Sunday, 1 September 2019.

For providers and services, this means no session reports will be processed during this period.

30 August 2019

Session reports for the 2018-19 financial year

On 29 July 2019, the Child Care Subsidy System closed for changes to be made to the 2018–19 financial year session reports. This means providers cannot submit new session reports, or vary or withdraw existing session reports, for any period between 2 July 2018 and 30 June 2019.

In limited specified circumstances, where a provider needs to submit, vary or withdraw session reports in the previous financial year, the provider will need to [apply to the department](#).

A Fact Sheet on this process can be found [here](#).

Reminder for providers to notify the department of a change in personnel

Providers are reminded they are required to notify the department about any new person:

- with management or control of the provider (including any person who becomes responsible for the day-to-day operation of any of the provider's approved child care services)
- who becomes a Family Day Care or In Home Care educator for any such service.

These changes to personnel must be notified within seven days and can be made through your third party software or the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#). By doing this it also ensures the right people within your organisation are receiving communications from the department.

More information can be found in the Child Care Provider Handbook education.gov.au/child-care-provider-handbook/notifications.

Grant funding outcomes announced for Community Child Care Fund Round 2

Child care services will benefit from more than \$7 million in Australian Government funding through the latest grant funding round of the Community Child Care Fund (CCCF). The grant funding helps child care services, particularly in disadvantaged, regional and remote communities, to improve their sustainability, increase local child care participation, and create more child care places.

In addition to grant rounds like this one, the program also supports services through the CCCF Special Circumstances Grant Opportunity and CCCF Business Support.

The CCCF Special Circumstances funding is designed to support continuity of child care where the viability of a service is affected by a natural disaster or weather event (e.g. drought), or another unforeseen event that would lead to the closure of a service. The amount of funding is determined on a case-by-case basis, and is intended to be one off and short-term.

CCCF Business Support is a free business review and advice service available to child care services experiencing financial viability and/or sustainability issues. It is delivered through business advisors who work with services to help them identify ways to improve their financial viability and sustainability.

More information is available at education.gov.au/cccf.

Making a subsequent determination for Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing)

If a child in receipt of Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) (child wellbeing) continues to be at risk beyond the first determination period (for example, up to 13 weeks), you will need to apply for a new subsequent determination. You can do this via your third party software or the [PEP](#). You will need to upload new or existing evidence to support any new subsequent determination application.

Please note:

- evidence needs to be less than six months old
- uploading evidence to an existing determination will not trigger a subsequent determination assessment, a new subsequent determination application must be lodged.

If the evidence previously provided was a statutory declaration, this cannot be used for a subsequent determination. You should talk to the family (where appropriate) and ask for their assistance to gather further information to support the ongoing subsidy. The family may also provide consent for you to approach other third parties. If the required evidence is not provided, then the application for a subsequent determination will be rejected.

For more information on the evidence requirements refer to the [Guide to ACCS \(child wellbeing\)](#) and the [factsheet and checklist](#) we have published to help providers gain relevant evidence from third parties in support of an ACCS (child wellbeing) application for a determination.

28 August 2019

Help your families understand the balancing of Child Care Subsidy

Dear Provider

Please forward this further information on Child Care Subsidy balancing to your families.

Centrelink is balancing families' Child Care Subsidy (CCS) entitlements. This email contains further information designed to help your families understand the CCS balancing process.

If you receive questions from families, you can encourage them to visit www.humanservices.gov.au/balancing. There is more information on the Centrelink website to help families understand the balancing process.

Kind regards

Stakeholder Engagement Team

Dear Families,

Child Care Subsidy balancing is underway

Throughout the year, Centrelink pays your Child Care Subsidy (CCS) based on the details you've given them. At the end of the financial year, they balance your CCS to make sure you received the right amount.

Centrelink is balancing CCS for the 2018–19 financial year. Your CCS won't be balanced straightaway. It can take some time.

Here's how Centrelink gets to your outcome.

1. You confirm your income

You need to confirm your family's income for the 2018–19 financial year before Centrelink can balance your CCS. You and your partner do this by lodging your tax returns with the Australian Taxation Office.

If you don't need to lodge a tax return, you need to tell Centrelink by doing an 'Advise non-lodgement' with them. You can do that either in your:

- Centrelink online account through myGov, or
- Express Plus Centrelink mobile app.

2. Centrelink works out your CCS entitlement

Once you've confirmed your family income, Centrelink will work out how much subsidy you were entitled to for the financial year. They compare that amount to how much you were paid throughout the year.

Centrelink then makes any necessary adjustments. This includes adding CCS withheld throughout the year. Centrelink withholds 5% of your weekly CCS during the year as a default.

If you were paid too much CCS at any time during the year, Centrelink will also factor that in. This may happen if you had a change in your family's circumstances or if your family income estimate was lower than your actual income.

3. Centrelink tells you your outcome

Once Centrelink has considered all of these factors, they send you a letter with your outcome. The letter will outline how they've worked out your outcome.

There are three possible outcomes:

- A top-up payment – you don't need to do anything else. Centrelink will pay this money to your bank account you've given them.
- No further action – you received the correct amount of CCS during the year.

An overpayment – you may need to take action to pay back any money you owe. If you don't set up a payment plan or pay the money back in full by the due date, Centrelink may reduce your future CCS to pay off the debt. Centrelink will work with you to set up a repayment plan you can afford.

Additional Balancing FAQs

We have developed additional [Balancing FAQs](#) in response to feedback and questions asked during the recent webinar. We will continue to update and add information as necessary.

Do I need to issue a new Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) certificate for each 12 month period?

Yes.

What you need to do

- You will need to issue a new six week certificate **prior** to applying for a further determination if a child at your service has been receiving Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) for **continuous periods** over the last 12 months.
- In this circumstance the Child Care Subsidy System will **not** allow you to apply for a further determination. Following the issue of this new certificate, **if the child remains 'at risk'**, you will then need to apply for a further 13 week period determination.
- The exception to this is where your service is **over** its **ACCS (child wellbeing) percentage cap**. Where this occurs, a new certificate cannot to be issued and you will need to apply for a further determination.

For example:

- On 2 July 2018, a certificate was issued for Billy for 6 weeks by the child care service he attends, because he was assessed as being at risk. Billy has remained on 13 week determinations continuously since then. On 13 May 2019 Centrelink made a determination for another 13 weeks for Billy which ceases on 11 July 2019. If Billy is still considered to be at risk, the service will need to give a certificate for another 6 weeks, from 12 July 2019, before another determination can be given.

However, if the service has gone over its ACCS (child wellbeing) percentage limit, the service must apply for a further determination.

Do I need to issue 6 weeks of ACCS (child wellbeing) certificate in the current 12 month period?

Yes.

What you need to do

- If the start date of the next determination is **before** the end of the 12 month period, the system will check to see if 6 weeks of certificate has been used in the previous 12 months.
- If the full 6 weeks of certificate have **not** been used, you will need to issue a certificate for the balance of the 6 weeks **before** you can apply for a new determination.

- The exemption to this is where your service is **over its ACCS (child wellbeing) percentage cap**. Where this occurs, a certificate **cannot** be issued and you will need to apply for a further determination.

For example:

- The child care service Janie attends was not able to issue a certificate for her, after she was assessed as at risk, when she started at the service on 6 July 2018, because the service had exceeded the ACCS (child wellbeing) percentage cap. The service had to apply for a determination from Centrelink who makes a determination for 13 weeks, commencing 9 July 2018. Janie continues to be assessed as at risk and the service makes applications to Centrelink for determinations every 13 weeks.
- The start date of the next determination, before the end of the 12 month period, would commence on 8 March 2019. The system has checked to see if the 6 weeks of certificate has been used in the previous 12 months. In this case, the 6 weeks of certificate was not used, due to the service exceeding its ACCS (child wellbeing) percentage cap. Therefore the service must issue a certificate for the balance of the 6 weeks before they can apply for a new determination.

However, if the service continues to be over its ACCS (child wellbeing) percentage limit, it must apply for a further determination.

9 August 2019

Reminder - Update your details on Child Care Finder

**Families are looking on Child Care Finder now
for priority placement in Child Care Finder's search results,
make sure your details are up to date**

What do I need to do?

Services who have updated all their details get priority placement in the search result rankings on [Child Care Finder](#). If you have not yet updated your details, you can submit or update the required information through your third party software or the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#). Services should allow 24 hours for changes to be reflected in the system.

If you require assistance to submit or update the above information in the PEP, please refer to the task card on the [department's website](#). If you require assistance to submit or update information in a third party software program, please contact your software provider.

Child Care Subsidy System maintenance 10-11 August

The Department of Human Services will be undertaking scheduled maintenance of their IT systems this weekend. As a result, the Child Care Subsidy System will be unavailable from 10pm (AEST) Saturday, 10 August 2019 until 10am (AEST) Sunday, 11 August 2019.

For providers and services, this means no session reports will be processed during this period.

6 August 2019

Now available - Understanding CCS balancing presentation

Thank you again to all those who tuned in for one of the Understanding CCS balancing webcasts on 15 and 16 July.

As requested by many of you, the webcast video is available [here](#).

In line with our commitment to accessibility, the video is currently being captioned and will be uploaded to our website shortly.

National Police Check clarification: all specified staff must have this check and the service needs evidence of this check

In a recent email newsletter we discussed National Police check information relevant to Family Day Care (FDC) services and educators. Below we are providing some information for both FDC and all other services.

Under Family Assistance Law, providers are required to undertake a pre-employment police check (officially known as the Australian National Police Criminal History Check*) for each:

- person who has management or control of the provider entity
- person who has responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the service
- Family Day Care educator
- In Home Care educator.

Australian National Police Criminal History Check information

A police check is made through the police service in the state or territory where the new staff member or educator lives or through another agency accredited by the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission.

The pre-employment police check must be no more than six months old at the time a specified staff member (listed above) commences employment with the provider.

New police checks are not required every six months, they are only required for individuals commencing with a provider.

Information for all providers can be found at [CCS Approval – Fit and Proper Requirements for Child Care Providers and their Personnel](#).

*State and Territory police forces have their own jurisdictional terminology for the Australian National Police Criminal History Check. Jurisdictions may refer to this police check as a Nationally Coordinated Criminal History Check (NCCHC), Criminal History Check, Criminal Records Check or National Police Certificate. The Child Care Provider Handbook has more details about [provider eligibility rules](#), including these checks.

26 July 2019

Help Your Families Understand The Balancing Of Child Care Subsidy

Dear Provider

Please forward the information below to your families

After the end of each financial year, Centrelink balances each family's Child Care Subsidy (CCS) entitlements ('balancing' is also known as 'reconciliation'). All families who received CCS in 2018-19 will go through this process. This can only happen after they've lodged a tax return for 2018-19, or advised Centrelink that they are not required to lodge a tax return.

We have worked with Centrelink to develop resources you can share with families who attend your service to help them understand the process.

If you receive questions from families, you can encourage them to visit www.humanservices.gov.au/balancing. There is more information on the Centrelink website to help families understand the balancing process.

Kind regards

Stakeholder Engagement Team

Dear Families

Child Care Subsidy balancing basics

What is balancing?

After the end of each financial year, Centrelink balances your Child Care Subsidy. They do this to make sure you received the right amount of subsidy for the financial year.

How does balancing work?

Centrelink looks at your adjusted taxable income for the 2018-19 financial year and compares it to the estimate you gave them.

They then work out if you were paid too little subsidy, the right amount or too much. They'll send you a letter to let you know the outcome. Your letter will tell you whether:

- you'll get a top up of subsidy because you were paid too little,
- you'll need to pay Centrelink back because you were overpaid, or
- you were paid the right amount, and don't need to do anything.

What you need to do?

To balance your Child Care Subsidy payments, Centrelink needs to confirm your family income for the 2018-19 financial year.

Once you and your partner have lodged your tax return, the Australian Tax Office will send Centrelink your income information. There's nothing else you need to do and there's no need to call.

If one or both of you don't need to lodge a tax return, you need to tell Centrelink you're not required to lodge.

Your subsidy can't be balanced until you do this.

Telling Centrelink you're not required to lodge

You can tell Centrelink you don't need to lodge a tax return in either your:

- Centrelink online account through myGov, or
- Express Plus Centrelink mobile app.

Select **Advise non-lodgement** and follow the prompts.

Where to go for more information?

To see when your Child Care Subsidy has been balanced you don't need to call Centrelink. Instead you can:

- keep an eye on your myGov Inbox, as this is where Centrelink will send your outcome letter if you get letters electronically.
- view the status of Child Care Subsidy balancing in your Centrelink online account through myGov or Express Plus Centrelink mobile app.

To find out more about balancing your Child Care Subsidy (or your other family payments) go to humanservices.gov.au/balancing.

25 July 2019

Reminder - submit your session reports by 28 July

A reminder providers need to submit all session reports for the 2018-19 financial year by 28 July 2019.

These session reports need to be accurate and finalised as they are essential for balancing (or reconciling) family Child Care Subsidy (CCS) entitlements after the end of the financial year.

The Child Care Subsidy System will be closed for the 2018-19 financial year from 29 July 2019. This means providers will not be able to submit new session reports, or vary or withdraw existing session reports, for any period between 2 July 2018 and 30 June 2019.

Factsheet and checklist for third parties providing evidence - Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) application

We have developed a [factsheet and checklist](#) to help providers gain relevant evidence from third parties in support of an Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) application for a determination.

Child Care Subsidy System maintenance 27-28 July

The Department of Human Services will be undertaking scheduled maintenance of their IT systems this weekend. As a result, the Child Care Subsidy System will be unavailable from 10pm (AEST) Saturday, 27 July 2019 until 10am (AEST) Sunday, 28 July 2019.

For providers and services, this means no session reports will be processed during this period.

22 July 2019

Child Care Subsidy Balancing - Resources to share with families

From 29 July 2019, the Department of Human Services (DHS) will start balancing each family's Child Care Subsidy (CCS) entitlements for the 2018-19 financial year. All families who received CCS during that year will go through this process.

For some families, this may be the first time they will be part of the balancing process.

To help families understand the balancing process, the Department of Education and DHS have developed the resources listed in the table below. Providers and services are encouraged to share these with families attending their service.

While these resources are there to help families, providers and services are not expected to answer questions families have about balancing their payments. Families who need more information to understand the balancing process can be directed to the DHS [website](#).

Resources for you to share with your families:

- [Information Sheet](#) – you can distribute this information sheet to families who attend your service.
- [Self-print poster \(Balancing CCS\)](#) – you can display this poster at your service.
- [Self-print poster \(Family Update\)](#) – you can display this poster at your service.
- [Infographic \(the balancing journey\)](#) – you can share this image with families who attend your service.
- [Video \(Balancing CCS\)](#) – you can share this video with families who attend your service.

These resources can also be found on the Department of Education [Child Care Subsidy Balancing webpage](#).

Criminal record check clarification: all educators and staff must have this check and the service needs evidence of this

***Please refer to email newsletter from 5 August 2019 for updated information**

Providers are required to determine that educators and their staff are a 'fit and proper person' to administer eligible CCS services.

One important part of the 'fit and proper person' assessment is that the provider must ensure that an educator or staff member provides a Nationally Coordinated Criminal History Check* (NCCHC) when a new staff member or educator commences with the early learning and child care service.

The pre-employment NCCHC must be no more than six months old at the time a new educator or staff member commences employment with the provider.

A NCCHC is made through the police service in the state or territory where the new staff member or educator lives.

New NCCHC are not required every six months, they are only required for educators and staff commencing with a provider.

*State and Territory police forces have their own jurisdictional terminology for the NCCHC. Jurisdictions may refer to the NCCHC as a police check, criminal history check, criminal records check or national police certificate.

12 July 2019

Remember - the new financial year is here – have you submitted your session reports?

By 14 July 2019 - Providers need to submit all session reports for the 2018-19 financial year.

By 28 July 2019 - These session reports need to be accurate and finalised as they are essential for reconciling (or balancing) family Child Care Subsidy (CCS) entitlements after the end of the financial year.

From 29 July 2019 - the Child Care Subsidy System will be closed for the 2018-19 financial year. This means providers will not be able to submit new session reports, or vary or withdraw existing session reports, for any period between 2 July 2018 and 30 June 2019.

Do I need to issue a new Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) certificate for each 12 month period?

Yes.

What you need to do

- You will need to issue a new six week certificate **prior** to applying for a further determination if a child at your service has been receiving Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) for **continuous periods** over the last 12 months.
- In this circumstance the Child Care Subsidy System will **not** allow you to apply for a further determination. Following the issue of this new certificate, **if the child remains 'at risk'**, you will then need to apply for a further 13 week period determination.
- The exception to this is where your service is **over** its **ACCS (child wellbeing) percentage cap**. Where this occurs, a new certificate cannot to be issued and you will need to apply for a further determination.

For example:

- On 2 July 2018, a certificate was issued for Billy for 6 weeks by the child care service he attends, because he was assessed as being at risk. Billy has remained on 13 week determinations continuously since then. On 13 May 2019 Centrelink made a determination for another 13 weeks for Billy which ceases on 11 July 2019. If Billy is still considered to be at risk, the service will need to give a certificate for another 6 weeks, from 12 July 2019, before another determination can be given.
- However, if the service has gone over its ACCS (child wellbeing) percentage limit, the service must apply for a further determination.

Do I need to issue 6 weeks of ACCS (child wellbeing) certificate in the current 12 month period?

Yes.

What you need to do

- If the start date of the next determination is **before** the end of the 12 month period, the system will check to see if 6 weeks of certificate has been used in the previous 12 months.

- If the full 6 weeks of certificate have **not** been used, you will need to issue a certificate for the balance of the 6 weeks **before** you can apply for a new determination.
- The exemption to this is where your service is **over** its **ACCS (child wellbeing) percentage cap**. Where this occurs, a certificate **cannot** be issued and you will need to apply for a further determination.

For example:

- The child care service Janie attends was not able to issue a certificate for her, after she was assessed as at risk, when she started at the service on 6 July 2018, because the service had exceeded the ACCS (child wellbeing) percentage cap. The service had to apply for a determination from Centrelink who makes a determination for 13 weeks, commencing 9 July 2018. Janie continues to be assessed as at risk and the service makes applications to Centrelink for determinations every 13 weeks.
- The start date of the next determination, before the end of the 12 month period, would commence on 8 March 2019. The system has checked to see if the 6 weeks of certificate has been used in the previous 12 months. In this case, the 6 weeks of certificate was not used, due to the service exceeding its ACCS (child wellbeing) percentage cap. Therefore the service must issue a certificate for the balance of the 6 weeks before they can apply for a new determination.
- However, if the service continues to be over its ACCS (child wellbeing) percentage limit, it must apply for a further determination.

12 July 2019

Child Care Subsidy System maintenance 13 to 14 July

The Department of Human Services will be undertaking scheduled maintenance of their IT systems this weekend. As a result, the Child Care Subsidy System will be unavailable from 10 pm (AEST) Saturday, 13 July 2019 until 10 am (AEST) Sunday, 14 July 2019.

For providers and services, this means no session reports will be processed during this period.

8 July 2019

Child Care Provider Handbook

Version 2 of the [Child Care Provider Handbook](#) is now live. The update is comprehensive and we encourage you to use this version when you have a query.

The updated handbook has been restructured to move background information into appendices to allow providers to focus on core requirements. There is also more information on the use of PRODA and interacting with the child care subsidy system. Scenarios have also been used to help explain more complex matters.

Other changes to the content have been driven by updates to some of the Minister's Rules and feedback from the sector requesting further information on particular topics, such as third-party payment of fees, use of inducements, and care provided by relatives within Family Day Care.

A special thanks to everyone in the early learning and child care sector who provided feedback on the first version. This has been invaluable and your assistance is greatly appreciated. We have consulted with state and territory government representatives, peak sector bodies, through the Implementation and Transition Reference Group and their Communications Working Group.

Feedback can be provided to ChildCareProviderHandbook@education.gov.au.

8 July 2019

What is Child Care Subsidy 'Balancing'?

Balancing, also referred to as 'income review' or 'reconciliation', is the process that occurs after the end of each financial year where the Department of Human Services (DHS) compares families' income estimates with their actual adjusted taxable income to ensure families receive their correct Child Care Subsidy (CCS) entitlement.

Balancing is not new and the process for CCS will be similar to previous years for most families who have previously used subsidised child care.

For some families, however, this will be the first time their actual adjusted taxable income has been used to calculate their CCS.

The new financial year is here – have you submitted your session reports?

By 14 July 2019 - Providers need to submit all session reports for the 2018-19 financial year.

By 28 July 2019 - These session reports need to be accurate and finalised as they are essential for reconciling (or balancing) family CCS entitlements after the end of the financial year.

From 29 July 2019 - the Child Care Subsidy System will be closed for the 2018-19 financial year.

This means providers will not be able to submit new session reports, or vary or withdraw existing session reports, for any period between 2 July 2018 and 30 June 2019.

Are you a new provider or an existing provider with CCS approval who is adding another service?

Where providers have submitted new applications for CCS approval and are granted approval with a start date occurring in the 2018-19 financial year, CCS will still be able to be paid for sessions delivered after the start date. It is important to submit your session reports as soon as possible after approval is received.

Understand CCS balancing with our new webpage

The Department of Education has a new [webpage](#) to help you understand the CCS balancing process. This [webpage](#) has information to help providers and services understand the CCS balancing process and what is required of providers in relation to submitting session reports. DHS also has information outlining the balancing process for families on their website www.humanservices.gov.au/balancing.

Have you registered for our upcoming information webcast *Understanding the CCS balancing process*?

The Department of Education and DHS are holding two webcasts for providers and services to explain CCS balancing. These are being held on Monday 15 July from 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm (AEST) and Tuesday 16 July from 6:30 pm – 7:30 pm (AEST).

The webcasts are designed to assist providers and services to help families understand this process. They will also cover what providers need to do to enable CCS balancing to occur. Both sessions will be identical.

If you would like a particular aspect of balancing explained during the webinar, please let us know by emailing ECCCStakeholderEngagement@education.gov.au.

To register for the webcast please go [here](#).

2 July 2019

The new financial year is here - submit your session reports

Providers need to submit all session reports for the 2018-19 financial year by 14 July 2019.

These session reports need to be accurate and finalised by 28 July 2019 as they are essential for reconciling (or balancing) family Child Care Subsidy (CCS) entitlements after the end of the financial year.

From 29 July 2019, the Child Care Subsidy System will be closed for the 2018-19 financial year. This means providers will not be able to submit new session reports, or vary or withdraw existing session reports for any period between 2 July 2018 and 30 June 2019.

The Department will provide further information over the coming weeks.

Are you a new provider or an existing provider with CCS approval who is adding another service?

Where providers have submitted new applications for CCS approval and are granted approval with a start date occurring in the 2018-19 financial year, CCS will still be able to be paid for sessions delivered after the start date.

The Department will provide further information directly to these providers.

27 June 2019

Understanding the Child Care Subsidy balancing process webcast – register now

The Department of Education and the Department of Human Services will hold a webcast for providers and services to explain the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) balancing process on Monday 15 July from 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm (AEST) and Tuesday 16 July from 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm (AEST).

CCS balancing (also referred to as 'reconciliation' or 'income review' process) is a process that occurs after the end of each financial year whereby the Department of Human Services compares families' income estimates with their actual adjusted taxable income to ensure families have received their correct CCS entitlement.

To register for the webcast please click [here](#).

Closing, selling, or transferring ownership of your service? Let us know at least 42 days before!

It is important you inform the Department of Education **at least 42 days** before you stop operating a child care service.

Notifications regarding the intention to close, sell or transfer ownership of a child care service, can be made by completing this [form](#).

For more information on financial integrity please visit our website [here](#).

Foster carers can access Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing)

Did you know that following the introduction of the child care package, foster carers may be eligible to receive Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) (child wellbeing)? To receive ACCS (child wellbeing) payments, the foster carer must first be eligible for CCS and must have their Customer Reference Number (CRN) linked to the child in their care.

How do I apply for ACCS (child wellbeing) for children in foster care?

Children in long-term foster care or emergency care are taken to be 'at risk', with respect to the evidence requirements, for the purposes of ACCS (child wellbeing).

This does not mean that foster carers are automatically eligible for ACCS (child wellbeing). They must still apply for, and be approved for CCS in order to be eligible for ACCS (child wellbeing). The foster carer will need to contact Centrelink to obtain a CRN and have the child linked to them. They will then need to apply for CCS and complete a Complying Written Arrangement with you. To avoid any delays the foster carer should be encouraged to undertake these steps as soon as they become the primary carer of the child/ren.

Children in foster care arrangements do not 'automatically' get access to ACCS (child wellbeing) - you must follow the same procedure as for other 'at risk' children in order for the additional subsidy to be paid (see page 23 of the Guide to ACCS (child wellbeing)). However you will not need to make a referral to a support agency and the evidence requirements with respect to subsequent determinations will be simplified (see page 27 of the [Guide to ACCS \(child wellbeing\)](#)).

Sometimes a foster carer may be responsible for the care of two or more children from the same family. In this case, they must take the above steps for each child in their care. Similarly,

you must ensure that you apply for ACCS (child wellbeing) for each child individually through the Provider Entry Point.

If you are welcoming a foster child into your service, please speak with the child protection agency and the foster carer to fully explain the CCS and ACCS application process.

Child Care Subsidy System maintenance 29 to 30 June

The Department of Human Services will be undertaking scheduled maintenance of their IT systems this weekend. As a result, the Child Care Subsidy will be unavailable from 10 pm (AEST) Saturday, 29 June 2019 until 10 am (AEST) Sunday, 30 June 2019.

For providers and services, this means no session reports will be processed during this period.

19 June 2019

Child Care Subsidy rates from 1 July 2019

As you may be aware, Child Care Subsidy family income thresholds, the annual cap and the hourly rate caps are adjusted at the start of each financial year based on the Consumer Price Index. A factsheet detailing the new 2019–2020 rates that will apply from Monday 1 July 2019 is available [here](#)

Preparing for the school holiday period

With the end of term 2 fast approaching, now is a good time to re-establish ceased enrolments for children attending your service again in the upcoming school holidays.

Families who have not used your service since the last school holidays will most likely have had their enrolment automatically ceased in the Child Care Subsidy System, as their child will not have attended a session of care for eight or more continuous weeks.

2019 NQF Review – Reminder to Have Your Say – Online Survey closing 30 June 2019

The National Quality Framework (NQF) Review is currently underway and aims to ensure that the NQF is current, fit-for-purpose and implemented through best practice regulation. Your feedback is sought to inform government decision making on the future of quality education and care in Australia.

On the [NQF Review website](#) you will find further information about the review including the [online survey](#), Issues Paper and FAQs.

Visit www.ngfreview.com.au and have your say before 30 June 2019.

13 June 2019

Reminder – Update your details on Child Care Finder

**Families are looking on Child Care Finder now
For priority placement in Child Care Finder's search results,
make sure your details are up to date**

What do I need to do?

Services who have updated all their details get priority placement in the search result rankings on [Child Care Finder](#). If you have not yet updated your details, you can submit or update the required information through your third party software or the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#). Services should allow 24 hours for changes to be reflected in the system.

If you require assistance to submit or update the above information in the PEP, please refer to the task card on the [department's website](#). If you require assistance to submit or update information in a third party software program, please contact your software provider.

Child Care Subsidy System maintenance - 15 to 16 June

The Department of Human Services will be undertaking scheduled maintenance of their IT systems this weekend. As a result, the Child Care Subsidy System will be unavailable from 10pm (AEST) Saturday, 15 June 2019 until 10am (AEST) Sunday, 16 June 2019.

For providers and services, this means no session reports will be processed during this period.

12 June 2019

Reminder – the Survey of Early Learning and Care Services is currently open

The Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) is evaluating the Child Care Package over the next three years using information to be collected from families, services and providers. The Social Research Centre (SRC) is working with AIFS, and will be inviting a sample of Directors and Managers in services across Australia to complete the *Survey of Early Learning and Care Services*, which will feed into the evaluation. All services that completed the survey last year, as well as some additional services, will be approached by SRC to complete an online survey. If your service is selected you will receive a letter by post in June.

The survey will ask about your service's and families' experiences of transition to the new Package including any changes your service may have made. We encourage you to participate, although participation is of course voluntary. No information that could identify services or individuals will be contained in any data or reports submitted to the department.

For more information about the survey or the evaluation, please [email the AIFS child care evaluation team](#) or call them on (03) 9214 7888 or 1800 352 275.

If you are not invited to participate but want to contribute to the evaluation, you can contact AIFS to be placed on their recruitment list to help with other data collections.

Ensure families understand what your fees are

It is important to make sure that families clearly understand what child care fees they will be charged, or may be charged in different circumstances. When preparing Complying Written Arrangements (CWAs) you can choose to include all the fee details in the arrangement itself, or a reference to another document that contains your fee schedule (such as a website), and clarify that your fees may change from time to time. If your fees are detailed somewhere other than the arrangement itself, the arrangement must make clear that the parent has viewed this information and accepts liability to pay the fees as specified.

Families should have a clear understanding about the fee charged for each session of child care, including where different fees apply in certain circumstances. For example, for families who have regular booked sessions with set fees, you may wish to also include a fee schedule that notes a different casual session rate will apply should they need an extra day from time to time.

It's also important to be clear about what fees, if any, your service will charge for booked sessions of care that are not subsidised by the Australian Government, such as absences at the beginning and end of an enrolment. For example, if a child is booked to start at a service on a particular date, but does not attend on that day, Child Care Subsidy will not be paid for any absences until they have physically attended their first session of care. What fees, either full or discounted, your service charges for these sessions of care (where subsidy is not paid) is a business decision, however, families should be made aware of your policy in these circumstances. This also includes, for example, what happens on days where your service is closed for reasons other than a public holiday or period of local emergency, such as for building renovations.

For more information on absences at the beginning and end of care, please see the [email newsletter](#) article on ineligible absences from 25 March 2019.

Payment and Services Finder

Please remind your families that Centrelink's [Payment and Services Finder](#) (the Finder) is a great tool to help estimate the level of Child Care Subsidy available to them.

The Finder does not require any identifying information, nor is any user information stored or collected; it is an opportunity for families to test scenarios that relate to their circumstances and the effects this may, or may not have on any applicable payments they may be entitled to.

The results provided in the Finder are indicative only and are not a guarantee of payments. The Finder does not take into account all circumstances of an individual and should be used as a guide only.

6 June 2019

New - Educational mini videos

Welcome to the first of a series of educational mini videos to help providers and services to understand their obligations under the Family Assistance Law.

This first new mini video helps to explain what to do when a child is going on holidays - [children who are overseas mini video](#).

Have your families provided all the details for their enrolment so Child Care Subsidy can be paid?

Enrolment notices must include accurate details about the child, the parent, the provider, and the care arrangement. It is particularly important to ensure each enrolment notice includes the child's and parent's correct Customer Reference Number (CRN) and date of birth. These details are used to link the enrolment to the parent's Child Care Subsidy (CCS) claim. If these details are missing or incorrect, we will not be able to pay you CCS on behalf of the parent.

Where a family does not have this information on hand when enrolling their child, you can still submit the enrolment notice, if needed, to meet the required timeframe (within 7 days of the end of the week in which you enrolled the child). However, it is important to follow up with the family and update the enrolment notice as soon as possible to minimise any delay in receiving payments and/or to minimise the possibility of CCS payments going to the family.

It is also important to ensure the CRN for the individual who is claiming for CCS is in the enrolment notice. Sometimes payments of CCS have not been made because families have provided the CRN of the parent who didn't claim CCS, meaning the enrolment could not be linked to the claim.

Note: A Complying Written Arrangement can be made with either the parent who has claimed CCS, or their partner.

The [FAQs page](#) on the department's website includes answers to the most common queries we receive about enrolling children. There is also more information about the details that must be included in an enrolment notice at [Chapter 3 of the Child Care Provider Handbook](#).

Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) Certificate – What should I do if I enter incorrect dates?

It is important to submit an Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) certificate with the correct dates to ensure the certificate reflect the dates the child is 'at risk' and to ensure that correct Additional Child Care Subsidy payments are made.

If you submit via the Provider Entry Point (PEP), the date selected in the '*percentage cap calculation date*' field will populate as the start date of the certificate. If you submit via third party software this may be different and you may need to contact your vendor if unclear.

If you have made an error it is important to enter the correct detail as soon as possible. In most circumstances, within the 28 day variance and change period, certificates can be cancelled and replacement certificates given.

Information on how to do this in PEP is outlined in section 2 of the task card [ACCS Child Wellbeing – how to submit a new certificate in PEP](#).

Support available to help you understand your obligations

A range of resources are available on the [department's website](#) to help you gain the necessary skills and knowledge to comply with the Family Assistance Law and understand how the department will ensure child care subsidies are being properly administered.

This includes the [Child Care Financial Integrity Strategy](#) which explains our expectations and describes the range of potential responses to non-compliance.

We encourage you to share this strategy and resources with your services and staff.

More information on the Child Care Financial Integrity Strategy is available by visiting education.gov.au/financial-integrity.

CCS Helpdesk closed on Monday 10 June - Queen's Birthday

The CCS Helpdesk will be closed on Monday, 10 June 2019 and reopen at 9:00am (AEST) on Tuesday, 11 June 2019.

Should you require assistance during this period, please refer to the [information resources for providers](#).

Check your calendar - it's important to plan ahead when ending enrolments

If the last day of a child's enrolment falls on a public holiday and your service is closed, the family **is not entitled to Child Care Subsidy (CCS)** – even if you report this day as an absence. This is because under Family Assistance Law, absence days are only recognised for days occurring after services have begun providing care for a child (i.e. after the child physically started attending care), and **before a service permanently ceases providing care for a child** (i.e. before the last day the child physically attends care).

This rule applies to enrolments that cease on reaching the end date entered in the Child Care Subsidy System, as well as those that cease automatically after 8 weeks of non-attendance.

If you report absences on public holidays after the last day a child physically attends the service, any CCS/Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) paid for these absences will be recovered.

If your service is closed on a public holiday that falls on the first day of a child's enrolment (meaning the child is not able to physically attend), this day is also **not** eligible for CCS/ACCS.

If you choose to begin a child's enrolment on a public holiday or include public holidays at the end of the child's enrolment, the family should be informed about any fees they will have to pay, and that they will not be entitled to CCS/ACCS for those days.

Additional Child Care Subsidy Webcast and FAQ

The ACCS 27 March [webcast video](#) is now available on our website and we have updated the [FAQs](#) based on the questions asked during the webcast.

Further details on ACCS (child wellbeing) can also be found in the [Guide to Additional Child Care Subsidy \(child wellbeing\)](#).

How do I Apply for Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) for Children in Foster Care?

Children in long-term foster care or emergency care are taken to be 'at risk', with respect to the evidence requirements, for the purposes of ACCS (child wellbeing).

This does not mean that foster carers are automatically eligible for ACCS (child wellbeing). They must still apply for, and be approved for CCS in order to be eligible for ACCS (child wellbeing). The foster carer will need to contact Centrelink to obtain a CRN and have the child linked to them. They will then need to apply for CCS and complete a Complying Written Arrangement with you. To avoid any delays the foster carer should be encouraged to undertake these steps as soon as **they become the primary carer of the child/ren**.

Children in foster care arrangements do **not** 'automatically' get access to ACCS (child wellbeing) - you must follow the same procedure as for other 'at risk' children in order for the additional subsidy to be paid (see page 23 of the [Guide to Additional Child Care Subsidy \(child wellbeing\)](#)). However you will not need to make a referral to a support agency and the evidence requirements with respect to subsequent determinations will be simplified (see page 27 of the [Guide to Additional Child Care Subsidy \(child wellbeing\)](#)).

Sometimes a foster carer may be responsible for the care of two or more children from the same family. In this case, they must take the above steps for each child in their care. Similarly,

you must ensure that you apply for ACCS (child wellbeing) for each child individually through the Provider Entry Point.

If you are welcoming a foster child into your service, please speak with the child protection agency and the foster carer to fully explain the CCS and ACCS application process.

Updated Resources Page

We have updated our [information resources page for providers](#) webpage!

You can find on one page links to numerous online resources including the [Child Care Provider Handbook](#), [Guide to Additional Child Care Subsidy \(child wellbeing\)](#), factsheets and a collection of our [previous email newsletters](#)!

24 May 2019

CCS Helpdesk closed on Monday 27 May – ACT public holiday

The CCS Helpdesk will be closed on Monday 27 May 2019 and will reopen at 9:00am (AEST) Tuesday 28 May 2019.

Should you require assistance during this period, please refer to the [information resources for providers](#).

22 May 2019

Child Care Subsidy System maintenance 25 May

The Department of Human Services will be undertaking scheduled maintenance of their IT systems this weekend. As a result, the Child Care Subsidy System will be unavailable from 10pm (AEST) Saturday, 25 May 2019 until 10am (AEST) Sunday, 26 May 2019.

For providers and services, this means no session reports will be processed during this period.

Additional hours in exceptional circumstances

Sometimes families who receive assistance through Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) (child wellbeing) face exceptional circumstances where they require more than 100 hours of subsidised care per fortnight. Exceptional circumstances are short-term events such as a family crisis, or other unforeseen circumstances outside the parent's control, where access to child care enables the children to be safely cared for while their parents/carers are otherwise engaged due to the exceptional event.

Please let your families know that if they do require additional hours of child care, they should apply directly for more hours of Child Care Subsidy (which will provide the family with more hours of ACCS (child wellbeing) if they are eligible) by contacting Centrelink. Please note that not all unforeseen circumstances are exceptional, and each application will be considered by Centrelink on a case by case basis to determine whether additional hours are warranted.

Providers cannot apply on behalf of the families. It also is important to note that a service's charging practices are not considered an exceptional circumstance, and an exceptional circumstances activity test result would not be approved where a service charges an hourly fee for longer than a 10 hour daily session where actual attendance is less than 100 hours per fortnight.

Making a subsequent determination for Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) (child wellbeing)

If a child in receipt of ACCS (child wellbeing) continues to be at risk beyond the first determination period (for example, up to 13 weeks), you will need to apply for a new subsequent determination. You can do this via your third party software or the Provider Entry Point. Note that you will need to upload new or existing evidence to support any new subsequent determination application.

Please note:

- evidence needs to be less than six months old
- uploading evidence to an existing determination will not trigger a subsequent determination assessment, a new subsequent determination application **must** be lodged.

If the evidence previously provided was a statutory declaration, this cannot be used for a subsequent determination. You should talk to the family (where appropriate) and ask for their assistance to gather further information to support the ongoing subsidy. The family may also provide consent for you to approach other third parties. If the required evidence is not provided, then the application for a subsequent determination will be rejected.

For more information on the evidence requirements refer to the [Guide to ACCS \(child wellbeing\)](#).

We have also developed a new [factsheet and checklist](#) to help providers gain relevant evidence from third parties in support of an ACCS (child wellbeing) application for a determination.

What you need when contacting the CCS Helpdesk

Our CCS Helpdesk operators are available to take your calls from 9:00am to 5:00pm Australian Eastern Standard Time, Monday to Friday (except ACT and national public holidays).

So that we can provide a faster service, you need to:

- have your **Service ID** ready to provide to our operators for authorisation verification, and
- be an **authorised contact** for their service.

8 May 2019

Updated Additional Child Care Subsidy FAQs

The Additional Child Care Subsidy [FAQs](#) cover important topics and have been updated to include additional information in response to questions that were asked during the recent webinar. We will continue to update and add information as necessary.

Checklist for third parties providing evidence – Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) application

We have developed a new [factsheet and checklist](#) to help providers gain relevant evidence from third parties in support of an Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) application for a determination.

2019 NQF Review – Have Your Say

The National Quality Framework (NQF) Review is currently underway and aims to ensure that the NQF is current, fit-for-purpose and implemented through best practice regulation. Your feedback is sought to inform government decision making on the future of quality education and care in Australia.

The [NQF Review website](#) is now live. On the NQF Review website you will find further information about the review including the NQF Review [Issues Paper](#), an [online survey](#), [FAQs](#) and you can register to [attend a consultation session](#) in your state or territory. Consultation sessions are occurring across Australia during May and June 2019. If you can't attend a consultation session you still have the opportunity to have your say online.

Visit www.nqfreview.com.au and Have Your Say now.

Updated Resources Page

We have updated our [information resources page for providers](#) webpage! You can find on one page links to numerous online resources including the [Child Care Provider Handbook](#), [ACCS Guide \(child wellbeing\)](#), [FAQs](#), factsheets and a collection of our [previous email newsletters](#).

Child Care Subsidy System maintenance 11 May

The Department of Human Services will be undertaking scheduled maintenance of their IT systems this weekend. As a result, the Child Care Subsidy System will be unavailable from 10pm (AEST) Saturday, 11 May 2019 until 10am (AEST) Sunday, 12 May 2019.

For providers and services, this means no session reports will be processed during this period.

3 May 2019

CCS eligibility and receiving Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing)

In order for someone to be eligible for Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing), they must first apply and be eligible for Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

Where possible, providers should encourage parents or carers to lodge their CCS claim before enrolling their child, or where this has not occurred, as soon as possible. This is because CCS claims can only be granted from the first Monday of a CCS fortnight that is not more than 28 days before the claim was made.

Please be aware, if a child is enrolled and starts attending care before the individual lodges a CCS application with the Department of Human Services, there may be sessions of care where CCS/ACCS is not payable.

For further information please see [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(child wellbeing\)](#).

When Child Care Subsidy cannot be claimed for Family Day Care

Family Day Care educators and their partners are not entitled to receive CCS for their own child's session of care if, on that same day, the educator or their partner provides care in an approved Family Day Care service, **unless specified circumstances apply**. This change came into effect in October 2015 with the intent to end 'child swapping'.

The specified circumstances are where:

- the child has been diagnosed as having a disability, or is undergoing continuous assessment of disability (via the Inclusion Support Programme)
- the child lives in a remote or very remote area within Australia
- the Family Day Care educator is required to work for at least two hours on the same day (other than for an approved Family Day Care service)
- the Family Day Care educator is required to attend particular education or training.

The specified circumstances do not apply unless documentary evidence has been provided to the Family Day Care service within the required timeframes. Providers must keep a copy of the evidence and record the information in the *register of specified circumstances* (see example [here](#)). This must be kept for a minimum period of seven years (starting at the end of the financial year in which the care, to which the information or event relates, was provided) and provided to the Department of Education and Training on request.

The register must be updated within 14 days after the end of each week in which care was provided. It must include the name of parent, name of educator, PRODA ID, child's name and CRN, enrolment ID for child, and service ID.

For further information please see [Information on Child Swapping](#).

Child Care Subsidy System maintenance 4 May

The Department of Human Services will be undertaking scheduled maintenance of their IT systems on 4 May. As a result, the Child Care Subsidy System will be unavailable from 10pm (AEST) Saturday, 4 May 2019 until 10am (AEST) Sunday, 5 May 2019.

For providers and services, this means no session reports will be processed during this period.

Common provider queries

It's been a busy start to the year and we have received a lot of questions through the CCS Helpdesk and through the Implementation and Transition Reference Group, which is a representative group of key early learning and child care stakeholders. Most of the queries are related to the new administrative requirements, particularly for Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) and when Child Care Subsidy payment adjustments are made. To help you find information on the most common queries, we have included links below to resources, including recent communications we have sent out:

- 8 week rule – auto cessation of enrolment ([Email – 16 April and 18 March 2019](#))
- Re-enrolling children after 8 weeks of continuous absence ([Email – 16 April 2019](#))
- [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(child wellbeing\)](#) particularly certificates and determinations ([Email – 27 February and 6 February 2019](#))
 - [New FAQs](#)
 - [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(child wellbeing\) webcast](#)
- [When money is paid directly to parents instead of providers](#)
- [Absences at the beginning and end of an enrolment](#) ([Email – 12 April 2019 and 25 March 2019](#))
- [Immunisation](#) requirements
- Non-payment of Child Care Subsidy [due to not including important information](#) (e.g. child's DOB) in enrolment notices or providing incorrect start dates on enrolments
- [Activity test Preschool exemption](#) ([Email – 21 February 2019](#))
- [Activity test exemptions](#) ([Email – 10 April 2019](#))
- A reminder to submit [enrolment notices](#) ([Email – 16 April and 18 March 2019](#)).

There are a small number of other enquiries that we are still looking at and we will continue to work with our partners, including our colleagues at the Department of Human Services to have more information on those soon.

You may have noticed however we have been sending out email newsletters more often in the last month as we try and respond to feedback and answer your queries. We will continue to send out regular communications with further information and will also be updating our online [factsheets](#) and [FAQs](#), developing mini videos, as well as uploading our previous [email newsletters](#).

If you have queries about the child care package, we encourage you to look at the numerous online resources that are available on the [website](#), including the [handbook](#), [factsheets](#) and [FAQs](#). We also encourage you to [subscribe](#) to our [email newsletters](#) and to follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) to receive up-to-date information.

Payment to provider or parent?

Under the child care package, the vast majority of Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy payments is made directly to providers to pass on to parents as a fee reduction.

In some circumstances, depending on the sequence in which parents claim subsidy and their eligibility and entitlement is assessed, and providers enrol children and submit session reports, backdated payments may be made directly to parents.

It is important you understand how this works and how it intersects with your fee charging practices

Click [here](#) for more information.

Previous email newsletters now on website

You can now access previous email newsletters from 1 February 2019 onwards [here](#)!

If you would like to receive future email newsletters please subscribe [here](#)

Re-enrolment - 8 week rule (ceasing enrolments)

You may notice that some children's enrolments have been ceased by the Child Care Subsidy System. This is because under the Child Care Subsidy, a child ceases to be enrolled if eight continuous weeks pass without the child attending a session of care at the service.

Where this occurs, subsidy amounts will be automatically recovered from providers for any reported absences after a child last physically attends a session of care. When the enrolment ceases, these absences are not eligible for Child Care Subsidy.

Where a child has been absent for several weeks but returns to care before the end of the eighth week, you should submit the session report before the end of that week. In other words, if after a long absence the child returns to care in the eighth week, submit the session report with the attendance in the eighth week (before 9pm (AEST) Sunday of that week). This will avoid the enrolment ceasing.

Where you believe a child may be absent for a lengthy period of time, it is recommended you have a discussion with the family as early as possible to confirm fee charging arrangements. If a long absence is likely or planned, the family may prefer to end the enrolment and re-enrol the child when physical attendance recommences.

If children are returning to care with your service, remember to re-enrol them. Please do not ask families to contact Centrelink about ceased enrolments in these cases. Once you re-enrol the children, parents can log on to their myGov account and confirm the new enrolment themselves.

For more information on enrolments see the department's [FAQs page](#).

Reminder - support your families to receive the correct Child Care Subsidy

The Department of Human Services is communicating with families to encourage them to review their income to make sure they are receiving the correct Child Care Subsidy percentage.

We would greatly appreciate your assistance to remind families about the importance of keeping their details accurate and up to date.

The easiest way for families to update their (and their partner's) income estimate is by using their Centrelink online account through myGov, or the Express Plus Centrelink app.

For more information, families can visit [here](#).

12 April 2019

Easter and Anzac Day Public Holidays affects the timing of Child Care Subsidy payments

Due to Easter and Anzac Day public holidays (Friday 19 April, Monday 22 April and Thursday 25 April) **providers may experience short delays in receiving payments.**

The Department expects payment processing will return to normal from Friday 26 April 2019.

Child Care Subsidy System and myGov maintenance over the Easter period

The Department of Human Services will be undertaking scheduled maintenance of their IT systems over the Easter period. As a result, the Child Care Subsidy System will be unavailable from 11:00pm (AEST) Thursday 18 April 2019 until 12:00pm (AEST) Monday 22 April 2019.

For providers and services this means during the scheduled maintenance period **no session reports will be processed.**

CCS Helpdesk closed on Good Friday, Easter Monday and Anzac Day

The CCS Helpdesk will be closed on Friday 19 April 2019 and will reopen at 9:00am (AEST) Tuesday 23 April 2019.

It will also be closed on Thursday 25 April 2019 and will reopen at 9:00am (AEST) Friday 26 April 2019.

Should you require assistance during this period, please refer to the www.education.gov.au/new-child-care-package-information-resources-providers

Which days can I report as absences?

Day	Date	Status	Can CCS be paid for an initial absence on this day?
Friday	19 th April	Closed for public holiday	Yes, if the child would have normally have attended on this day and if fees are charged.
Saturday	20 th April	Closed or Closed for public holiday	No (note information below) Yes, if the child would normally have attended on this day and if fees are charged.
Sunday	21 st April	Closed or Closed for public holiday	No (note information below) Yes, if the child would normally have attended on this day and if fees are charged.
Monday	22 nd April	Closed for public holiday	Yes, if the child would normally have attended on this day and if fees are charged.

Thursday	25 th April	Closed for public holiday	Yes, if the child would normally have attended on this day and if fees are charged.
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Important reminder about Additional Absences and public holidays

If you normally operate for 7 days a week and are closed for the Easter period, you can report an 'Initial Absence' for a public holiday (National or State/Territory) if the child would normally have attended on any of these days and fees are charged. However, **a public holiday is not an 'Additional Absence' reason**. A child is only eligible for Additional Absences on a public holiday if all of the following conditions apply:

- the 42 initial absences have been used
- it is a day the child normally attends care
- you have charged an individual a fee for the care
- one of the Additional Absence reasons applies (for example, sickness) and
- there is written evidence to support the Additional Absence reason (for example, a medical certificate).

It is also important to note that if a child is ceasing care at your service and their last day is before the enrolment ceases on one of the upcoming public holidays where your service will not be open, and an absence is reported for the child, the family is **not entitled to Child Care Subsidy**. Under Family Assistance Law, if a provider submits absences after a child's last day of physical attendance, any Child Care Subsidy/Additional Child Care Subsidy paid for these absences will be recovered.

This applies to enrolment notices which are automatically ceased by the Child Care Subsidy System, or where the provider ceases an enrolment notice by updating it with an arrangement end date. Services will then need to pursue recovery of full fees from families.

It is important that both providers and families are aware of this legislative requirement and the financial consequences. It is a business decision for each child care provider whether or not they charge families full fees for sessions of care before or after a child commences and ceases care.

A factsheet on absences is available at www.education.gov.au/new-child-care-package-information-resources-providers

Helping families to understand activity test exemptions and how volunteering and irregular work hours count towards the activity test

Exemptions

Where a family does not meet the activity test requirements they may, depending on their circumstances, be eligible for an exemption. In most cases, if they are eligible for an exemption, they are entitled to 100 hours of subsidised care per fortnight.

Remember, in two parent families, where one person has an exemption, the hours of subsidised care for the family is based on the person with the lowest activity test result.

To read the fact sheet and find out more, [click here](#).

Volunteering

Voluntary work can be a recognised activity for the activity test. One or more of the following must apply:

- it is voluntary work which improves your work skills or employment prospects (or both); or
- it is voluntary work for a charitable, welfare or community organisation; or
- it is voluntary work for a school, preschool or Centre Based Day Care service, but only if the work directly supports the learning and development of the children there.

To read the fact sheet and find out more, click [here](#).

Irregular work hours

We know that a lot of services receive questions about the activity test, especially about how families who work irregular hours should provide their hours. There's an easy way for them to do this - they just need to **estimate, provide and update**.

The [fact sheet](#) has everything families need to know - you can provide it directly to families or refer to it when talking to them about the activity test.

You can tell families they only need to remember the following three easy steps:

- 1) **Estimate** the highest number of hours they expect to work in any one fortnight within a three month period.
- 2) **Provide** the number of hours to Centrelink (via myGov) and tick the box to indicate they are in 'casual employment' (working irregular hours)
- 3) **Update** this information if things change, for example, if they stop working or start full-time work (see the fact sheet for more examples).

To read the fact sheet and find out more, click [here](#).

9 April 2019

Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) Webcast

Thank you again to all those who tuned in for the ACCS webcast on 27 March.

As requested by many of you, a copy of the presentation slides is available [here](#).

Frequently asked questions raised during the webcast included:

Certificates and Determinations

- Submitting certificates and the application process in the system.
- Determinations and the submission of Determination information in the system, including when a new Determination is required.
- Eligibility requirements on what is considered 'at risk'.

Provision of Subsidy

- Circumstances where subsidy might be provided to the family rather than the service.

Applying for ACCS

- Applying for ACCS under specific circumstances, for example, in foster care arrangements, when there is no Customer Reference Number (CRN) available.
- How to apply for other elements of the ACCS, for example, Temporary Financial Hardship.

Keep an eye on our website as we will be updating our [FAQs](#) and the [Guide to Additional Child Care Subsidy \(child wellbeing\)](#) to include the answers to these questions and others frequently asked during the webinar.

4 April 2019

Enrolling children and Child Care Subsidy claims

Thank you to all those who tuned in for last week's Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) Webcast, we received a large number of questions which we will be addressing in upcoming emails and by updating the [FAQs](#) on our website.

To be eligible and entitled to Child Care Subsidy (CCS) families must lodge a claim through Centrelink. Where families enrol a child with your service prior to claiming CCS, you should encourage them to promptly lodge a claim for CCS, and if relevant for ACCS, as they will be required to pay full fees until the claim has been processed and finalised. Please note that in order to be eligible for any ACCS payment, families must meet the eligibility requirements for CCS.

Some CCS and ACCS claims require additional documents to be provided by families. Where possible, you should also encourage families to provide any documentation or extra information required for their claim to Centrelink as promptly as possible. This will ensure that the finalisation of their claim is not delayed.

Where possible, you should encourage parents to lodge their claim **before** they enrol their child in child care.

CCS, and where relevant ACCS, will be paid for sessions of care you provide only once a family's CCS claim has been finalised and eligibility and entitlement is established (and the parent has confirmed the enrolment).

The Department of Education and Training recommends you do **not** estimate fee reduction amounts in advance, including where families are waiting on the finalisation of their claim. This is because it is possible the actual amount of subsidy paid (if any) could vary from your estimate, for reasons you may not be aware of and are therefore not able to account for in your estimate. If a family's subsidy amount is lower than your estimate, it is your responsibility as the provider to recover any unpaid amounts directly from families.

For further information:

- [How to claim CCS](#)
- [Supporting documents for CCS/ACCS claims](#)

CCCF Grant Applications closing soon

The Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) grant application period will close this **Friday, 5 April 2019 at 11pm AEDT**.

Child care services are encouraged to read the [grant opportunity guidelines](#) for more information, including eligibility requirements.

For more information regarding the CCCF open competitive grant opportunity, please contact the Community Grants Hub Hotline on 1800 020 283 or support@communitygrants.gov.au.

Support available to help you understand your obligations

A range of resources are available on the [department's website](#) to help you gain the necessary skills and knowledge to comply with the law and understand how the department will ensure child care funding is being properly administered.

The department has launched a new Integrity Strategy which explains the department's expectations, potential intervention responses and the assistance we provide to help providers,

services, educators and families gain the necessary skills and knowledge to comply with the law.

New resources on a range of topics will be added to the department's website as they become available – watch this space.

Absences

When Child Care Subsidy is payable for a child's absence from care

Child Care Subsidy can be paid for up to 42 absence days per child, per financial year, and can be taken for any reason, without the need for families to provide documentation.

Once a child's 42 initial absence days have been exhausted, Child Care Subsidy can only be paid for additional absence days where they are taken for a reason defined in the Family Assistance Law. Evidence is required to be kept by providers for additional absences.

When Child Care Subsidy is NOT payable for a child's absence from care

Child Care Subsidy will not be paid for an absence **before an enrolled child physically attends a session of care**, including where:

- a child is booked in to start at a service on a particular date, and does not attend on that day, or
- a provider charges a family to reserve a place for a child who has not yet physically attended care.

A child care service is taken to have permanently ceased providing care for a child on the day the child last physically attends a session of care. Child Care Subsidy will not be paid **for absences submitted after a child's last day of child care**. This includes where:

- a family has confirmed their child's last day at a service, but that child does not physically attend their last booked sessions of care, or
- a provider continues to charge fees for sessions of care after a child has left the service, because the family did not give the agreed period of notice that they no longer require child care.

Reporting a child's absence from care

Child care providers are required to submit session reports, which include any absences, no later than 14 days after the end of the week in which care was provided (or the session of care was booked). This requirement helps ensure that an individual's entitlement to Child Care Subsidy is correctly applied in a timely way. Timely submission of session reports is especially important where an individual's eligibility for Child Care Subsidy ends, such as:

- where an enrolment automatically ceases after eight weeks of non-attendance, or
- the individual claiming subsidy for the child is overseas for more than six continuous weeks, or
- where a child has already been subsidised for 42 absence days and there is no eligibility for Child Care Subsidy to be paid for additional absences.

Where a provider is aware that a child who has been absent for some time returns to care before the eight week period lapses (e.g. in the 7th or 8th week), providers can and should submit an attendance session for that child before the end of that week in order to avoid the enrolment automatically ceasing.

For more information about absences, please refer to the [absences from child care fact sheet](#). Further information can also be found on the [FAQ page](#).

Remember to register for the Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) Webcast Information Session

The Australian Government Department of Education and Training is presenting a provider/service webcast session on the Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) with a particular focus on ACCS (child wellbeing).

To register your interest to participate in the *ACCS Webcast Information Session* on:

Wednesday 27 March 2019
from 1:30 pm - 3:00 pm
Australian Eastern Daylight Time*
[click here](#).

*Time zones note:

- 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm Australian Central Daylight Time
- 12:30 pm - 2:00 pm Australian Eastern Standard Time
- 12:00 pm - 1:30 pm Australian Central Standard Time
- 10:30 am – 12 pm Australian Western Standard Time

20 March 2019

Did you know that your specified personnel must be registered in **PRODA, have completed **background checks** and be **linked** to your CCS approval before you can be approved for a new service?**

When an existing CCS provider applies to add a new service, they are required to comply with the legislative requirements for specified personnel.

What do CCS approved providers need to do?

Ensure all of the specified provider and service personnel in their organisation have:

- registered in PRODA
- completed the required background checks
- been added to the provider or service record either through the Provider Entry Point (PEP) or their child care software.

Why do providers need to do this?

By ensuring that all of the relevant personnel are notified to the department, providers are complying with the law and avoiding delays and administrative disruption when applying to add a new service.

What personnel need to be included?

The [CCS Specified Personnel Fact Sheet](#) and [CCS Specified Personnel Quick Reference Guide](#) published on the department's [How to Apply for CCS Approval](#) webpage explains which individuals must be included from your organisation.

What background checks must be undertaken?

The [CCS Fit and Proper Requirements for Child Care Providers and their Personnel Fact Sheet](#) published on the department's [How to Apply for CCS Approval](#) webpage specifies the required fit and proper checks for each category of personnel in your organisation.

Need more information?

If you have any questions about the information in this email, you can contact the CCS Helpdesk on 1300 667 276 (9.00am to 5.30pm Mon-Fri AEDT).

19 March 2019

Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) Webcast Information Session

The Australian Government Department of Education and Training is presenting a provider/service webcast session on the Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) with a particular focus on ACCS (child wellbeing).

To register your interest to participate in the *ACCS Webcast Information Session* on:

Wednesday 27 March 2019
from 1:30 pm - 3:00 pm
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- 12:00 pm - 1:30 pm Australian Central Standard Time
- 10:30 am – 12 pm Australian Western Standard Time

18 March 2019

Re-enrolment 2019 – 8 week rule (ceasing enrolments)

You may notice that some children's enrolments have been ceased by the Child Care Subsidy System. This is because under the new Child Care Subsidy, a child ceases to be enrolled if eight continuous weeks pass without the child attending a session of care at the service.

Where this has occurred, amounts may be automatically recovered if absences are reported after a child last physically attends a session of care. If children are continuing in care with your service, remember to re-enrol them.

For more information on enrolments see the department's [FAQs page](#).

15 March 2019

Online resources

We have heard your feedback that you would like more resources to help you understand particular elements of the package.

So we have developed fact sheets and frequently asked questions to help clarify issues such as the [8 week rule](#), [absences](#) and [preschool exemption](#).

We have this information on our website, including:

- [Fact sheets](#)
- [FAQs](#)
- [Videos](#)
- [Guide to ACCS \(child wellbeing\)](#)
- [Compliance resources](#)

We send out regular emails and encourage you to [subscribe](#).

We also post news items on social media so follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Child Care Provider Handbook

One of the best resources available is the [Child Care Provider Handbook](#).

The Handbook is a great way to check your obligations and requirements.

It includes sections on provider and service approvals, enrolling children, submitting reports, receiving payments and seeking additional subsidies and grants.

The version on the website will always be the most up-to-date version, so we encourage you to go online rather than print out a copy.

Future online resources

We will be holding further information sessions across the country and holding more webinars over the coming months on Additional Child Care Subsidy and other topics. Keep an eye out for invitations to the information sessions, coming soon.

Any new resources we develop will be made available on our [website](#).

13 March 2019

Child care services and providers can now apply for the Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) Round 2

CCCF grants are available to eligible child care services to help improve their sustainability, increase child care participation, and create more child care places.

The [CCCF Round 2](#) focuses on priority disadvantaged communities, in particular regional and remote areas. The application period is now open and will close at 2:00 pm AEDST on 5 April 2019.

Child care services are encouraged to read the [grant opportunity guidelines](#), for more information, including eligibility requirements.

Claiming payment when a child is absent

Child Care Subsidy will not be paid for absences where a provider charges a family to reserve a place for a child who has not yet physically started care.

If a child is booked in to start at a service on a particular date, and does not start on that day, no Child Care Subsidy will be paid until the child physically attends a session of care.

Similarly, a child care service is taken to have permanently ceased providing care for a child on the day the child last physically attends a session of care. This means that Child Care Subsidy will not be paid for absences submitted after a child last physically attends a session of care.

If a family has confirmed their child's last day at a service, but that child does not attend their last booked sessions of care, no Child Care Subsidy will be paid for any days after the child's last physical attendance at the service.

If a provider continues to charge fees for sessions on days after a child has left the service because the family did not give the agreed period of notice, Child Care Subsidy will not be payable for these sessions of care. If absences are reported in the above circumstances and Child Care Subsidy is incorrectly paid, these amounts will be recovered from the service.

If a provider continues to charge fees for sessions on days after a child has left the service because the family did not give the agreed period of notice, Child Care Subsidy will not be payable for these sessions of care. If absences are reported in the above circumstances and Child Care Subsidy is incorrectly paid, these amounts will be recovered from the service.

8 March 2019

Helping families understand what they can include when counting hours of activity for the Child Care Subsidy

Do your families know everything they can include when counting their hours of activity per fortnight? For example:

- paid work includes
 - being self-employed or
 - paid or unpaid leave (including paid or unpaid parental leave)
- participating in an approved course of education or study includes
 - contact hours and self-directed hours of study and
 - term/semester breaks (once the course begins until the course is completed)
- travel time from the child care service to your place of activity and back to the child care service can be included (but not between home and the child care service).

Hours spent engaging in different recognised activities can be combined together to determine their entitlement of subsidised hours.

To read the fact sheet and find out more, [click here](#).

Formalising informal enrolments

As you would be aware, services can no longer access the Child Care Management System (CCMS) to cancel or submit sessions of care. However, there are some limited functions which you are able to perform up until **31 March 2019**.

One of these functions is the ability to formalise an enrolment. If you have submitted sessions of care for a child under an informal enrolment and you now have the correct CRNs for a child and their parent/guardian, you should formalise the enrolment to allow these sessions to correctly process in the CCMS. Any enrolment that has not been formalised by **31 March 2019** will need to be managed between the family and Centrelink.

If you have any questions about how to formalise an enrolment in the CCMS please contact the CCS Helpdesk on **1300 667 276**.

CCS Helpdesk closed on Monday 11 March 2019 – ACT public holiday

The CCS Helpdesk will close from 9.00 am (AEDT) on Monday 11 March 2019 and will reopen at 9.00 am (AEDT) on Tuesday 12 March 2019.

Should you require assistance during this period, please refer to the [new Child Care Package for providers](#).

28 February 2019

Support for services affected by recent extreme weather events and fires

Providers whose viability has been impacted by recent extreme weather events and bushfires, particularly those affecting areas in Queensland and Tasmania, are now able to apply for a one-off Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) special circumstances grant of up to \$10,000, under a new streamlined application process.

CCCF special circumstances grants are available to support services in disadvantaged communities at risk of closure due to viability issues caused by an unforeseen event, such as a natural disaster. The amount of funding provided to successful applicants will be determined on a case-by-case basis, depending on the activity being funded and the degree to which the service has been impacted by the event.

Further information is available on the [CCCF Special Circumstances Grant Opportunity page](#).

Additional information regarding assistance available to families and providers in various types of potential emergencies and natural disasters, such as bushfires or floods, is available in the [Emergencies and Natural Disasters fact sheet](#).

It's easy to understand exemptions to the activity test

If families cannot meet the activity test requirements, they may be eligible for an exemption. In most cases, if they are eligible for an exemption, they can receive 100 hours of subsidised care per fortnight.

Remember, in two parent families, where one person has an exemption, the hours of subsidised care for the family is based on the person with the lowest activity test result.

To read the fact sheet and find out more, [click here](#).

What is the role of the CCS Helpdesk?

The CCS Helpdesk assists providers and services with policy advice and payment queries.

The Department of Human Services (Centrelink) is responsible for assessing and distributing entitlements for families. Centrelink can also assist families with confirming enrolments that have ceased.

The CCS Helpdesk does not have visibility of parent or child details or their entitlements, this should be managed between the family and Centrelink directly.

Making a subsequent determination for Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS)

Now is the time when the next, or subsequent, determination for a child 'at risk' needs to be lodged. If the child continues to be at risk, you will need to apply via your third party software or the Provider Entry Point and upload new or existing evidence to a new subsequent determination application.

Please note:

- Evidence needs to be less than six months old,
- Uploading evidence to an existing determination will not trigger a subsequent determination assessment, a new subsequent determination application **must** be lodged.

If the evidence previously provided was a Statutory Declaration, this cannot be used for a subsequent determination. You should talk to the family (where appropriate) and ask for their assistance to gather further information to support the ongoing subsidy. The family may also provide consent for you to approach other third parties. If evidence is not provided, then the determination may cease.

For more information on the evidence requirements refer to the [Guide to ACCS \(child wellbeing\)](#).

Uploading evidence – file format

Uploading evidence for application for determinations

When submitting an application for a determination please note the following:

- The file format of the application needs to be confirmed and submitted in the system prior to uploading.

For example:

- If the evidence is in “.pdf” format, the evidence will need to be uploaded and confirmed in the system in the same file format.
- If the evidence is in “.docx” format, you will need to upload and confirm the same file format.

If an incorrect file type is selected the Department of Human Services will be unable to view the evidence uploaded, which may result in the application being rejected.

Not sure how the ACCS applies to you and your families?

These [FAQs](#) cover important topics and answer our most commonly asked questions.

Still need help?

Please don't hesitate to contact the Helpdesk on 1300 667 276 or at ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au

For queries relating to any of the below, please choose the appropriate contact point as follows:

If your ACCS query relates to

ACCS (child wellbeing) determination reviews and appeals

IT issues with your third party software

IT issues not related to third party software, Payments, or The Provider Entry Point (PEP)

Please contact

Department of Human Services,
ACCS.CWB.REVIEW@humanservices.gov.au

In order to protect personal information, please do not send personal information, including evidence, child names and CRNs to this email address.

Your software provider

Department of Education and Training
Child Care Subsidy Helpdesk
ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au
1300 667 276

21 February 2019

\$17 million in grant funding to be made available under the Community Child Care Fund

Round two of the Community Child Care Fund will open in **March 2019**. This funding will help child care services in many disadvantaged regional and remote areas to improve access to early learning opportunities for families in their local communities.

Child care services are encouraged to read the [grant opportunity guidelines](#), to check their eligibility, and to start planning their grant applications. Services will be advised of the grant round opening soon.

Reminder – Are any children in your service eligible for the preschool exemption?

Preschool aged children can receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS) even where families do not meet the activity test.

All families with children attending a preschool program in 2019 should ensure their child's expected school start date is correct and up to date with Centrelink.

For more information about the process, please refer to the [preschool exemption fact sheet](#). Further information can also be found on the [FAQ page](#).

Child Care Finder video

The Child Care Finder is a simple way for families to find a service that suits their needs. Families can find services, their vacancies, fees, opening hours and ratings.

Check out the video here! Please share with your families.

Time is running out...CCMS is closing down, applications to amend data in CCMS must be received by the Department by 28 February 2019

The Child Care Management System (CCMS) is closing and you need to submit requests to amend any data by **28 February 2019**.

Put in your request to amend CCMS data now

Providers should contact the CCS Helpdesk as soon as possible and no later than **28 February 2019** on 1300 667 276 or ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au to discuss any changes you need to make to your CCMS data for previous financial years. This will ensure that all your information is up to date before CCMS closes on 30 June 2019.

Under the Family Assistance Law, records must be kept for 36 months from the end of the calendar year in which the care or event took place. This means you will need to store your

historical CCMS data to ensure you are meeting your legal obligations. You may wish to discuss your options regarding data storage with your software provider and/or look into other ways to store your CCMS data.

What you need to do

To ensure you are compliant under the Family Assistance Law:

- apply for any changes to your data in CCMS by contacting the CCS Helpdesk as soon as possible but no later than **28 February 2019**, and
- organise for your historical CCMS data to be stored and backed up by **30 June 2019**.

Dates to note

- **28 February 2019** – cut off for requesting changes to CCMS data
- **1 April 2019 – 30 June 2019** – read only access to CCMS data
- **30 June 2019** – historical CCMS data is stored and backed up
- **1 July 2019** – CCMS is closed.

Please note that the Inclusion Support Programme will continue to be administered through CCMS.

If you have any questions about the closing down of CCMS, please contact the CCS Helpdesk on 1300 667 276 or ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au.

20 February 2019

Email To Tas & Qld Services - Disaster Response

Dear child care providers and services

Support for services affected by recent extreme weather events and fires

Child care providers whose viability has been impacted by recent extreme weather events and fires, particularly those affecting areas in Queensland and Tasmania, are now able to apply for a one-off Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) special circumstances grant of up to \$10,000, under a new streamlined application process.

CCCF special circumstances grants are available to support services in disadvantaged communities at risk of closure due to viability issues caused by an unforeseen event, such as a natural disaster. The grants are intended to help services to restore and maintain child care while their communities recover from the impact of such events.


Grant funding can be used for activities such as temporarily meeting standard operating costs and covering other reasonable expenses to ensure continuity of child care.

The amount of funding provided to successful applicants will be determined on a case-by-case basis, depending on the activity being funded and the degree to which the service has been impacted by the event. All care types are able to apply.

Child care services must be approved under the Family Assistance Law to be eligible to apply for this funding, as well as meeting other eligibility criteria outlined in the grant opportunity guidelines.

Further information is available on the [CCCF special circumstances grant opportunity page](#), or by emailing cccf@education.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Jane Hayden

Branch Manager

Community and Indigenous Child Care Branch

Department of Education and Training

15 February 2019

Support Your Families To Receive The Correct Child Care Subsidy Percentage

Dear Provider

Please forward the information below to your families

The Department of Human Services has commenced communications with families to encourage them to review their income to make sure they are receiving the correct Child Care Subsidy percentage.

We would greatly appreciate your assistance to remind families about the importance of keeping their details accurate and up to date. We have prepared some text below that you might like to forward to your families.

Kind regards

Stakeholder Engagement Team

Dear Families

It has been seven months since the new Child Care Subsidy started! It is a good time to check in on your family income estimate. Make sure it is up to date and reflects your and your partner's income for the whole financial year.

If your estimate is lower than your actual income, you may get a debt, which you will have to pay back. It is also a good time to check and update your activity test if your circumstances have changed.

The easiest way to update your family income estimate is by using your Centrelink online account through myGov, or the Express Plus Centrelink app.

While you are there, do not forget to make sure your and your partner's activity details are up to date too.

For more information, please visit [here](#).

6 February 2019

CCMS is closing down, applications to amend data in CCMS must be received by the Department by 28 February 2019

The Child Care Management System (CCMS) is closing and you need to submit requests to amend any data by **28 February 2019**.

Put in your request to amend CCMS data now

Providers should contact the CCS Helpdesk as soon as possible and no later than **28 February 2019** on 1300 667 276 or ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au to discuss any changes you need to make to your CCMS data for previous financial years. This will ensure that all your information is up to date before CCMS closes on 30 June 2019.

Under Family Assistance Law, records must be kept for 36 months from the end of the calendar year in which the care or event took place. This means you will need to store your historical CCMS data to ensure you are meeting your legal obligations. You may wish to discuss your options regarding data storage with your software provider and/or look into other ways to store your CCMS data.

What you need to do

To ensure you are compliant under the Family Assistance Law:

- apply for any changes to your data in CCMS by contacting the CCS Helpdesk as soon as possible but no later than **28 February 2019**, and
- organise for your historical CCMS data to be stored and backed up by **30 June 2019**.

Dates to note

- **28 February 2019** – cut off for requesting changes to CCMS data
- **1 April 2019 – 30 June 2019** – read only access to CCMS data
- **30 June 2019** – historical CCMS data is stored and backed up
- **1 July 2019** – CCMS is closed.

Please note that the Inclusion Support Programme will continue to be administered through CCMS.

If you have any questions about the closing down of CCMS, please contact the CCS Helpdesk on 1300 667 276 or ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au.

ACCS (child wellbeing) assists children at risk

ACCS (child wellbeing) provides a higher rate of assistance than the Child Care Subsidy to ensure the cost of child care is not a barrier to supporting children 'at risk'.

A provider is generally able to give a certificate for up to six weeks if they consider a child is 'at risk'. If the provider thinks the child will continue to be at risk for longer than six weeks, they may make an application for a determination to the Department of Human Services.

The determination could be rejected

The Department of Human Services (DHS) may reject an application for determination if the evidence does not meet the evidence requirements as set out in the [Guide to ACCS \(child wellbeing\)](#). We recommend that all services become familiar with the evidence requirements within the guide to ensure that determination applications are lodged with adequate supporting documents.

Some common reasons applications are rejected include:

- an application does not meet the **minimum** amount of evidence required for DHS to determine whether a child remains at risk, and/or
- the evidence supplied is older than the maximum **6 month age** of evidence requirement.

More information on this can be found on the department's [FAQs page](#).

Link to emergencies and natural disasters fact sheet

A reminder for all early learning and child care services, there is assistance available to families and providers in various types of potential emergencies and natural disasters, like bushfires or floods. A fact sheet is available [here](#).

30 January 2019

Reminder – Update your details on Child Care Finder

The Australian Government's new [Child Care Finder](#) website has been launched and over 80 per cent of services are now reporting their fees.

Families are looking on Child Care Finder now

**For priority placement in Child Care Finder's search results,
make sure your details are up to date**

What do I need to do?

Services who have updated all their details get priority placement in the search result rankings on [Child Care Finder](#). If you have not yet updated your details, you can submit or update the required information through your third party software or the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#). Services should allow 24 hours for changes to be reflected in the system.

If you require assistance to submit or update the above information in the PEP, please refer to the task card on the [department's website](#). If you require assistance to submit or update information in a third party software program, please contact your software provider.

In the coming months, [Child Care Finder](#) will also be able to alert families when a suitable child care vacancy becomes available at a service they are interested in.

Reminder – Updated free resources for Family Day Care providers and new educators

The updated [Family Day Care Educator Toolkit](#) and [Compliance self-assessment tool](#) has resources for Family Day Care providers and new, or potential, Family Day Care educators.

These updated resources provide information about the support available to help Family Day Care providers, services and educators to comply with their obligations under the Family Assistance Law. The resources also include additional guidance on compliance matters raised by providers.

Family Day Care Educator Toolkit

The [Family Day Care Educator Toolkit](#) comprises seven brochures highlighting specific Family Day Care educator issues and topics in a range of community languages, in addition to English, as follows:

1. What is a Family Day Care Educator?
2. Questions to ask Family Day Care Services
3. Family Assistance Law: Your obligations and rights
4. Being a Family Day Care Educator: Things you need to know
5. Tips for New Educators
6. Starting Out Right – Making sure you are acting lawfully
7. Consequences of Non-Compliance with the Family Assistance Law

23 January 2019

Helping families understand how volunteering counts towards the activity test

Volunteering can be a recognised activity for the activity test. One or more of the following must apply:

- it is voluntary work which improves your work skills or employment prospects (or both); or
- it is voluntary work for a charitable, welfare or community organisation; or
- it is voluntary work for a school, preschool or Centre Based Day Care service, but only if the work directly supports the learning and development of the children there.

To read the fact sheet and find out more, click [here](#).

Re-enrolment 2019 – 8 week rule

Some services may notice that after re-opening after the Christmas/New Year break, some children's enrolments have been ceased. This is because under the new Child Care Subsidy, a child 'ceases to be enrolled' if eight continuous weeks pass without the child attending a session of care at the service.

Where this has occurred, if children are continuing in care with your service, remember to re-enrol them.

For more information on enrolments see the department's [FAQs page](#).

14 January 2019

Reminder – from today you must report actual attendance times

From 14 January 2019, child care providers will be required to include children's actual attendance times in families' statements of entitlement and in session reports (except absences).

What you need to do

If you **are** already providing children's actual attendance times in families' statements of entitlement and session reports using your software or the Provider Entry Point (PEP), there is nothing more for you to do except continue to provide this information.

If you are **not** currently providing children's actual attendance times in families' statements of entitlement and/or session reports, you need to commence doing this from 14 January 2019.

- If you are unsure how to enter this new information using your third party software, you should contact your third party software provider so that you continue to meet your requirements.
- If you use the PEP, a [task card](#) on how to input these details into session reports (slide 5) is available on the department's website.

Why it is important to report actual attendance times

From 14 January 2019, it will be a legal requirement for child care providers to include children's actual attendance times in families' statements of entitlement and session reports to the Australian Government.

Reporting actual attendance times is intended to help parents understand the relationship between the fees they are charged, the amount of subsidy paid to their child care provider on their behalf, and their out of pocket expenses.

If you've got any questions on this topic, please contact the CCS Helpdesk on ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au or **1300 667 276**.

10 January 2019

Reminder - only 4 days to go until you must report actual attendance times

What you need to do

If you **are** already providing children's actual attendance times in families' statements of entitlement and session reports using your software or the Provider Entry Point (PEP), there is nothing more for you to do except continue to provide this information.

If you are **not** currently providing children's actual attendance times in families' statements of entitlement and/or session reports, you need to commence doing this from 14 January 2019.

- If you are unsure how to enter this new information using your third party software, you should contact your third party software provider so that you continue to meet your requirements.
- If you use the PEP, a [task card](#) on how to input these details into session reports (slide 5) is available on the department's website

Why it is important to report actual attendance times

From 14 January 2019, it will be a legal requirement for child care providers to include children's actual attendance times in families' statements of entitlement and session reports to the Australian Government.

Reporting actual attendance times is intended to help parents understand the relationship between the fees they are charged, the amount of subsidy paid to their child care provider on their behalf, and their out of pocket expenses.

If you've got any questions on this topic, please contact the CCS Helpdesk on ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au or **1300 667 276**.

CCMS is closing down, applications to amend data in CCMS must be received by the Department by 28 February 2019.

The Child Care Management System (CCMS) is closing and you need to submit requests to amend any data by **28 February 2019**.

Providers should contact the CCS Helpdesk as soon as possible and no later than **28 February 2019** on 1300 667 276 or ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au to discuss any changes you need to make to your CCMS data for previous financial years. This will ensure that all your information is up to date before CCMS closes on 30 June 2019.

Under Family Assistance Law, records must be kept for 36 months from the end of the calendar year in which the care or event took place. This means you will need to store your historical CCMS data to ensure you are meeting your legal obligations. You may wish to discuss your options regarding data storage with your software provider and/or look into other ways to store your CCMS data.

What you need to do

To ensure you are compliant under the Family Assistance Law:

- apply for any changes to your data in CCMS by contacting the CCS Helpdesk as soon as possible but no later than **28 February 2019**, and
- organise for your historical CCMS data to be stored and backed up by **30 June 2019**.

Dates to note

- **28 February 2019** – cut off for requesting changes to CCMS data
- **1 April 2019 – 30 June 2019** – read only access to CCMS data
- **30 June 2019** – historical CCMS data is stored and backed up
- **1 July 2019** – CCMS is closed.

Please note that the Inclusion Support Programme will continue to be administered through CCMS.

If you have any questions about the closing down of CCMS, please contact the CCS Helpdesk on ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au or 1300 667 276.

Are any children in your service eligible for the preschool exemption next year?

Preschool aged children can receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS) even where families do not meet the activity test.

Families can access 36 hours of subsidised care per fortnight if they:

- would usually be entitled to less than 36 hours of subsidised child care per fortnight because they do not meet the activity test, and
- have a preschool aged child attending an early education program at a centre-based day care service.

This is called the 'preschool exemption' to the activity test. It applies for the period of the preschool program and only for preschool aged children. A preschool aged child is a child who is in the year before primary school. For example, if a child is starting school in February 2020, the child is considered to be a preschool aged child from February 2019.

It is important that families provide their child's expected school start date when making a CCS claim, or later updating their details with Centrelink (either in Centrelink Online via [myGov](#) or the Express Plus mobile app), because this triggers eligibility to the preschool exemption if required.

The service must then indicate in the child's session reports when a session of care for a child was, or included, a preschool program.

When processing session reports, Centrelink will check if the family is entitled to receive Child Care Subsidy under the preschool exemption, based on the above.

If parents who receive the preschool exemption change their mind about when to send their child to school (i.e. decide to defer commencement for another year), it will affect their entitlement. As soon as parents decide their child will not start school the following year, they are required to update their child's expected school start date with Centrelink. This will mean the family will stop receiving the preschool exemption until the child is in the year before primary school again (i.e. the following year).

All families with children attending a preschool program in 2019 should ensure their child's expected school start date is correct and up to date with Centrelink.

For more information about the process, please refer to the [preschool exemption fact sheet](#). Further information can also be found on the [FAQ page](#).

Important information about enrolments

Enrolment notices include important details about the child, parent, provider, and the care arrangement. We use these details (along with information provided in parents claims and subsequent session reports) to work out whether parents are eligible for Child Care Subsidy, so it's important that you provide the right information at the right time.

The information on the department's [FAQs page](#) answers the most common queries we get about enrolments.

2 January 2019

Updated link to Emergencies and natural disaster fact sheet

With the holiday season happening, all early learning and child care services need to know what assistance is available to families and providers in various types of potential emergencies, like bushfires or floods. A fact sheet is available [here](#).

Please note that the link to the fact sheet provided on 24 December has now been updated. Apologies for any inconvenience caused.