



Australian Government
Department of Education,
Skills and Employment

COVID-19 in NT update: extra support for services in Greater Darwin, Katherine hotspots

On 18 August, Greater Darwin and Katherine were declared Commonwealth COVID-19 Hotspots.

Child care services in [Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 Hotspots](#) can waive gap fees for families who keep their children at home because the state or territory government has restricted access to child care for children of essential workers only.

The hotspot declaration covers the Belyuen Community Government Council, City of Darwin, City of Palmerston, Litchfield Council, Wagait Shire and Katherine Town Council (including Tindal), and the localities of Bynoe, Charlotte, Cox Peninsula, Dundee Beach, Dundee Downs and Dundee Forest.

Gap fees

This means services in the hotspot area will be able to waive gap fees from the first day of the declaration for the duration of the hotspot.

Gap fee waiving helps parents keep their children enrolled without having to pay for a service they are not using.

Gap fee waivers is an opt-in measure. Where services choose to waive gap fees, they can do so either in full or partially.

Charging practices are a business decision for individual services.

Where services choose to waive gap fees, they continue to receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

[Check this table for a list of regions that can now waive gap fees.](#)

Absences

At this stage, there is no change to absences in relation to the lockdown. Services in a Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 hotspot can access additional allowable absences only when the declaration exceeds seven days.

Families have access to 42 absence days per financial year that can be used for any reason. These were reset on 1 July 2021.

COVID-19 Disaster Payment

Information about the [COVID-19 Disaster Payment](#) is available on the Services Australia website.

Support for families

Families experiencing difficulty may be eligible for support under [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#).

Families looking for alternative child care options during an emergency can visit [Starting Blocks](#) or [Child Care Finder](#).

Support for services

Providers and services in the Northern Territory may be eligible for a range of COVID-19 support funding. For information on whole-of-Australian Government support for businesses affected by COVID-19, [visit business.gov.au](#).

Some services may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund Special Circumstances Grant](#). Applicants can request funding after an event has occurred and they have accessed other COVID support.

If you have to close

You must also tell us if you are temporarily closing your service for any reason and for any period. To do this, use the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software.

These notifications are additional to those you must give your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

For action

- Update your vacancy details in the [Child Care Finder](#). Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure children receive continuity of care and early learning.
- Keep an eye on the [Northern Territory COVID-19 response website](#) for local information.

We are monitoring the situation and will work closely with the Northern Territory Government and peak organisations from the sector as the situation evolves.

Subscribe to Department of Education, Skills and Employment updates and emails

Forward this email to a friend

View past issues



Twitter



Facebook



DESE early childhood website

Copyright © 2020 Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment,
All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is: ECCCDigitalCommunication@dese.gov.au