

Physical distancing in services and "venue density rules"

The Australian Health Protection Principal Committee have reviewed the physical distancing requirements for early childhood education and care services and determined that the 'venue density rule' of no more than 1 person per 4 square metres is not appropriate or practical in early childhood and learning centres, nor is maintaining 1.5m between children. The full advice is available at health.gov.au/news/australian-health-protection-principal-committee-ahppc-statement-on-early-childhood-and-learning-centres.

Safe Work Australia (SWA) have also updated their advice for services, explaining that children are not to be included in any calculations of 4 square metres per person, however employers are reminded these principles should be adhered to "so far as is reasonably practicable" for adults in services, including visitors. The SWA advice is available at safeworkaustralia.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces/industry-information/early-childhood-education/physical-distancing?tab=tab-toc-employer.

Information for non-government schools - Exceptional Circumstance Supplementary Payment

Following the Australian Government's decision to expand the Exceptional Circumstance Supplementary Payment to support early childhood education and care services that are not eligible for the JobKeeper Payment, services associated with non-government schools have now received a separate payment to cover the period from 6 April 2020. Going forward, these payments will be included with the regular weekly Exceptional Circumstance Supplementary Payment.

If you are a service associated with a non-government school that is not eligible for JobKeeper and you have not received an Exceptional Circumstance Supplementary Payment, you should contact the department.

All services that are receiving Exceptional Circumstance Supplementary Payments must tell the department if:

- the service closes
- the service experiences a decline in attendance or hours of care provided, or
- the service's income increases (including if you receive any government financial assistance such as JobKeeper).

You can keep the department informed by emailing: ECECreliefpackage@dese.gov.au. Your service name and service CRN should be included in the email subject header.

Contacting the department

We have taken on board feedback that some providers have had difficulty contacting or receiving a response from the department regarding the Early Childhood Education and Care Relief Package (Relief Package) announced on 2 April 2020.

These are challenging times and we endeavour to support and maintain communication with the sector to ensure your concerns regarding viability are considered. We are receiving a significantly high volume of emails and have established teams to prioritise management of issues that arise and we apologise for any delay in responding.

We are committed to responding to your concerns in a timely manner and appreciate your patience. If your query/concern has become urgent and you require additional support, or you have not had any response from the department regarding the Relief Package, please contact the Child Care Subsidy Helpdesk at CCShelpdesk@dese.gov.au or on 1300 667 276.

Reminder: Please update your details in the Child Care Subsidy System

As we navigate COVID-19, the department is engaging directly with both providers and services more often, including through the recent ORIMA Survey and Early Childhood Education and Care Relief Package funding arrangements.

Unfortunately, many contact details are out of date, resulting in providers and services missing important information.

The department encourages providers to update both your provider and each service's contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS), particularly email addresses. The provider and service email addresses could be the same, but both may need updating.

You can update your details via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#). Guidance is available in the task card '[How to View and Update Organisation Details in the PEP](#)'.

Alternatively, you can update your details via your third party software. Please contact your software provider if you need assistance updating your details via a third party software program.

Please also check your 'junk mail' folders if you think you may have missed an email from the department.

Updated COVID-19 information

We have updated the [COVID-19 information](#) on our website in line with the recent [response](#) to the Four Week Review of the Early Childhood Education and Care Relief Package.

The updated information includes:

- new [Exceptional Circumstance Supplementary Payment application](#) available for services that have a high number of staff ineligible for the JobKeeper Payment
- updated [Frequently Asked Questions](#), and
- updated information sheets:
 - [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) information for early childhood education and care providers and services from 6 April 2020](#)
 - [Early Childhood Education and Care Relief Package Conditions](#)
 - [Early Childhood Education and Care Relief Package – Exceptional Circumstance Supplementary Payment](#)
 - [Early Childhood Education and Care Relief Package – Information for Family Day Care and In Home Care Providers](#)

Please regularly check the [website](#) to ensure you are using the latest information.

For up to date information on COVID-19 for providers and services visit the [Department of Education, Skills and Employment](#).

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