



Australian Government
Department of Education,
Skills and Employment

COVID-19 national update: extra support for child care services in hotspots

Child care providers and services in [Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 hotspots](#) may now be able to waive gap fees and access extra absences.

[This table lists if you can and when you can.](#)

We remind you to continue to monitor our website for updates as the COVID-19 situation evolves.

We will update you in each state and territory as needed about how restrictions affect child care settings and the support we offer.

Gap fee waiving

Services in Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 Hotspots can now waive gap fees for families who keep their children at home if either of the following applies:

- **The Commonwealth Hotspot runs for more than seven days.** If this applies, gap fees can be waived from day eight of the hotspot declaration.
- **The Commonwealth Hotspot runs for seven days or fewer, but the state or territory government has limited who can access child care.** This could include limiting access to only vulnerable children, children whose parents can't work from home, or the children of essential workers. These circumstances differ across jurisdictions. [Check your state or territory government website](#) to see what applies to your region. If this applies, gap fees can be waived from day one of the hotspot declaration.

Services directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 can also waive gap fees until 31 December 2021.

Where you choose to waive gap fees, you will continue to receive CCS.

[Check this table for regions that can waive gap fees and when this starts.](#)

Extra absences

Services in a [Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 Hotspot](#) can access additional allowable absences if the declaration extends for more than seven days.

Families can use these absences even if they have not used up their 42 days of allowable absences.

You do not need to do anything to access these absences.

If the hotspot declaration extends for more than seven days, the Child Care Subsidy System will automatically assess any absences claimed during that period as emergency additional absences and backdate those absences as required.

[Check this table for regions that can access additional allowable absences and when this starts.](#)

Stay informed

We encourage you to stay informed as state and territory governments place COVID-19 restrictions across Australia.

Details about restrictions in your area and how they affect your operations can be found on your [state or territory COVID-19 response website](#).

We provide answers to your commonly asked questions about Australian Government support on our website. We regularly update our website.

[Go to our COVID-19 webpage.](#)

We also provide updates on what restrictions mean for child care in affected regions.

[Go to Early Childhood announcements.](#)

Survey: we want your feedback

Help us better inform you about early childhood and child care policy and issues by [completing a 10-minute survey](#).

Please also share the [survey link](#) with your colleagues.

The survey will not collect personal information and all responses will remain anonymous.

It has never been more important to us to know how best to reach you. Answering the survey will ensure we can better communicate with you..

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