



Australian Government
Department of Education,
Skills and Employment

Better child care access for vulnerable and disadvantaged children

On 26 February 2020, the Minister for Education, the Hon Dan Tehan MP, introduced legislation to Parliament which proposes changes to the Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) (child wellbeing) to improve access to child care for vulnerable and disadvantaged children and reduce administrative burden for child care providers.

The proposed changes will:

- extend the period of time a provider can apply for an ACCS determination from 13 weeks to up to 12 months for children under a long-term child protection order, such as those in foster care
- enable providers to enrol children who are in foster care under an ACCS provider eligible enrolment type for an initial period of up to 13 weeks, giving an individual foster family sufficient time to lodge their Child Care Subsidy (CCS) claim and have it assessed by Services Australia, and
- enable providers to apply to backdate a family's ACCS beyond the current limit of 28 days, up to 13 weeks in exceptional circumstances.

Once the legislation has passed, the ACCS (child wellbeing) changes will come into effect in July 2021.

Other technical amendments include changes to how CCS balancing works for individuals who change their relationship status during the year, ensuring families' CCS entitlements more accurately reflect their financial circumstances.

We will provide further updates as they become available.

Reminder: We want to hear from you!

There is still time to [complete a short survey](#) to help inform decisions about future arrangements for payments from charitable organisations.

We are seeking your help to provide us with information on what charitable payments you receive to apply to parents' fees and how you manage these payments. Your responses will inform the Government's decisions about future arrangements for payments from charitable organisations.

Please note, for those providers located in a bushfire-declared Local Government Area, this survey is **not** collecting information on payments that have recently been made exempt from the requirement to reduce the total fee before reporting.

Submissions close 5:00pm (AEDST) Monday, 9 March 2020.

If you have any questions, please contact us at ECCCStakeholderEngagement@dese.gov.au.

Reminder: Funding available for services affected by natural disaster

The Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) Special Circumstances program supports services affected by natural disasters, such as drought, bushfire, flood or other unforeseen circumstances that risk closure and consequential market failure for the community.

This \$14 million program comprises \$5 million for child care services affected by bushfire, \$5 million for services in drought affected areas and another \$4 million for services impacted by other natural disasters or other unforeseen circumstances.

Services may seek funds for a range of activities, for example:

- establishing temporary child care premises
- temporarily meeting operational costs, and
- addressing health and safety requirements.

For more information and to apply, visit the CCCF Special Circumstances Grant Opportunity [webpage](#).

Child Care Subsidy System maintenance 6 to 8 March 2020

Services Australia will be undertaking scheduled maintenance of their IT systems this weekend. As a result, the Child Care Subsidy System will be unavailable from 11:00pm (AEDST) Friday, 6 March 2020 until 6:00am (AEDST) Sunday, 8 March 2020.

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

Child Care Subsidy Helpdesk closed on Monday 9 March 2020 – Canberra Day public holiday

The CCS Helpdesk will be closed on Monday, 9 March 2020 and will reopen at 9:00am (AEDST) Tuesday, 10 March 2020.

During this time you can still send your question through via our [online enquiry form](#). It is important to fill out all the relevant information so that your query can be actioned as quickly as possible on the next working day.

Should you require assistance during this period, you can also refer to the [information resources for providers](#) and the [Child Care Provider Handbook](#).

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