



## COVID in ACT: what lockdown extension means for child care services

On 16 August, the ACT Government announced the current lockdown will be extended.

Details about the lockdown are available on the [ACT Government COVID-19 response website](#).

Additionally, on 16 August the Australian Government [extended the current Commonwealth Hotspot for the ACT](#).

### Absences

**Services in the ACT can now access additional allowable absences from 13 August 2021.** The absences are available until the end of the Commonwealth Hotspot declaration.

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.

The Child Care Subsidy System will automatically assess any absences claimed during the hotspot declaration period as emergency additional absences and backdate those absences as required.

[Learn about absences in a Commonwealth-declared hotspot on our website.](#)

### Gap fee waivers

Gap fee waivers is an opt-in measure. As previously advised, services in the ACT can waive gap fees for families who keep their children at home during the current lockdown.

You can waive fees from 13 August 2021 and this applies to all service types.

In addition, services directed to close by a local authority because of COVID-19 can waive gap fees until 31 December 2021.

### Stay up to date

We continue to update the sector on restrictions, Australian Government support and the impact on child care services.

Please check in regularly to our [Early Childhood COVID-19 home page](#).

### Support for services

The [COVID-19 Disaster Payment](#) provides financial support for workers who have lost hours as a result of a state or territory public health order.

Providers and services in the ACT 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 must request funding after an event has occurred and they have accessed other COVID support.

### Support for families

The [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#) is available to support families experiencing temporary financial hardship.

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

### If you have to close

You must 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 [ACT Government COVID-19 response website](#) for local updates.

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