



Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) Child Wellbeing Guide

Information on the application process

Carers with children under care arrangements in Queensland are eligible to receive additional financial support through the Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) (child wellbeing).

ACCS (child wellbeing) assists children who are at risk of serious abuse or neglect as a result of current or past circumstances or events. ACCS is a top up payment in addition to the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) (100% of the actual fee charged (up to 120% of the hourly rate cap), up to 100 hours of assistance per fortnight). The subsidy is paid to providers and passed to carers through fee reduction. In most cases, the full costs of child care will be covered.

All children in foster or kinship care who have been assessed as being in need of protection under the *Child Protection Act (CPA) 1999* will automatically satisfy the 'at risk' threshold for the ACCS (child wellbeing). This includes children who are subject to long-term guardianship or permanent care orders.

In addition, a determination ordinarily gives children at risk access to ACCS (child wellbeing) for up to 13 weeks, however for children in formal foster or kinship care, a determination can be in place for up to 52 weeks. While a determination may be in place for over 6 months, evidence to support the determinations must still be supplied by Child Safety every 6 months.

Provider Eligible Arrangement

The steps below must be followed to ensure carers can apply for both the CCS and ACCS (child wellbeing) for a child in their care who is attending child care. However, when children first join a carer's household, and they are yet to have fully completed all steps below, the child-care provider should still be approached to apply a Provider Eligible Arrangement (PEA).

From 1 July 2021, children in formal foster and kinship care arrangements are able to be enrolled under a PEA. The child-care provider will be able to receive ACCS (child wellbeing) payments under a PEA for a child in care for up to 13 weeks. This means children in care will have access to ACCS (child wellbeing) while the carer is assessed for Child Care Subsidy (refer to step 1 and 2) for a maximum period of 13 weeks.

In order to make a PEA, the child-care provider will still require the supporting evidence to be provided as part of the enrolment (see step 3). The child-care provider is expected to work with the carer to identify eligibility and enter a Complying Written Agreement (CWA) before the 13-week PEA period ends.



the period of the PEA, the carer will also need to ensure they apply for the CCS and ACCS as per the steps below (see step 1). If the carer does not receive an assessment in the 13 week period, they will be required to pay full fees until their eligibility for CCS is confirmed.

More information on PEA can be found here [Establishing eligibility for child wellbeing](#)

STEP	CARER	CHILD CARE PROVIDER	CHILD SAFETY	CENTRELINK, SERVICES AUSTRALIA
<p>1. Apply for Child Care Subsidy (CCS)</p>	<p>Carers will need to complete the following steps to lodge an application for the CCS online:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Create myGov account b) Obtain your Customer Reference Number (CRN) from Centrelink c) Link Centrelink to your myGov account d) Obtain the child's CRN and link the child to your Centrelink online account. (Note: carers can obtain the child's CRN when applying for a Health Care Card or by contacting the Grandparent and Non-Parent Carer line on 1800 245 965) e) Start your claim for CCS f) Choose for the subsidy to be paid directly to the child care provider (and passed onto you through reduced fees). Do not choose for the subsidy to be paid to you, as this may mean Child Safety cannot assist you with out of pocket costs while your application is being processed. <p>It is important that an application for CCS is lodged as early as possible because it can only be backdated a maximum of 28 days without exceptional circumstances. With exceptional circumstance an application for backdating can be made up to 13 weeks*.</p>	<p>Where possible, providers should encourage carers to lodge their claim before enrolling their child.</p> <p><i>Note: for someone to be eligible for ACCS (child wellbeing), they must first apply or and be found eligible for CCS.</i></p> <p>It doesn't matter if the entitlement amount is zero due to the activity test requirement, because once ACCS is granted, the foster or kinship carer is exempt from this requirement.</p>	<p>Provide the child care provider with the child's birth registration, Medicare number and immunisation records by accessing MyHealth.¹</p>	<p>If necessary, provide carers with their CRN.</p> <p>Assess and approve CCS entitlement.</p>



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<p>2. Include placement offer, approved case plan or placement agreement</p>	<p>Ensure Child Safety and your foster or kinship care agency are made aware of your requirements for childcare at the time of placement. The childcare needs illustrated in the child's case plan and placement agreement.</p>		<p>Include approved child care arrangements in a placement offer, case plan or placement agreement, this allows Child Safety Service Centres to assist with any out of pocket child care costs.²</p> <p>Update ICMS to include child's CRN in the health tab, the child care provider the child is attending and update as their circumstances change.</p>	
<p>3. Enrol the child into child care and provide supporting evidence to child care provider.</p>	<p>Ensure a claim is first lodged and approved for CCS.</p> <p>Complete a Complying Written Agreement (CWA) enrolment with the child care provider and accept liability for the child care fees.</p> <p>Carers must accept the enrolment on their Centrelink online account.</p> <p>The carer or child protection agency can enrol the child immediately into care before the above steps are complete however, they will need to agree to pay full fees until the carer family is CCS/ACCS eligible.</p> <p>Note: evidence letters must be less than 6 months old, even when a court order is in place, Child Safety will need to provide confirmation every 6 months that the order remains in place. Please speak to your Child Safety Officer (CSO) about Child Safety providing evidence on your behalf.</p>		<p>Provide supporting evidence to the child care provider confirming the child is still under care arrangements under the <i>Child Protection Act 1999</i>. Ensure a copy is also provided to the carer.</p> <p>Evidence must be provided to child care providers to support their application for a Centrelink determination. Evidence should not be older than 6 months and must be in writing (under the Family Assistance Guide 2.8.1.40 and Applying for a child wellbeing determination). The 6 months age of evidence rule also applies to children subject to long-term guardianship orders and permanent care orders. To avoid issue, updates should be planned every 5 months to ensure currency of the evidence provided.</p>	<p>Process the enrolment and send online acceptance to foster or kinship carer via Centrelink online account.</p>



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<p>4. Apply for ACCS (child wellbeing)</p> <p><i>Note:</i> ACCS can only be backdated a maximum of 28 days, without exceptional circumstance. With exceptional circumstance backdating may be sought for up to 13 weeks*.</p>	<p><i>Note:</i> Only child care providers are able to make an application for ACCS (child wellbeing) in relation to a child attending their child care. Child Safety and carers are not able to apply.</p> <p>If a carer feels they need help to support their child's wellbeing, they can talk to their foster or kinship carer agency or CSO.</p> <p><i>Note:</i> For someone to be eligible for ACCS, they must first apply and be eligible for CCS.</p> <p><i>Reminder:</i> Check with the Child Care provider to ensure that they have applied for a new "determination" prior to the expiry. Determinations can be made from 1-52 Weeks for a child in care, depending on the length of statutory intervention outlined in the evidence letter.</p>	<p>Child care providers are responsible for applying for ACCS (child wellbeing).</p> <p>Once the child care provider receives evidence that the child is in care arrangements under the CPA, and the carer is able to complete steps 1- 3 to they can give immediate access to the ACCS (child wellbeing) for up to 6 weeks (called a 'certificate').</p> <p>If the Carer has not yet completed the above steps and the child care provider receives evidence that the child is in care arrangements under the <i>Child Protection Act 1999</i>, they can give immediate access to the ACCS (child wellbeing) for up to 13 weeks as part of a PEA), During that time the carer will need to complete steps 1-3.</p> <p>Once the carer has established their CCS and have entered into a CWA, the child care provider can apply to Centrelink, Services Australia for periods of up to 52 weeks at a time thereafter (called a 'determination'). The length of the determination should be matched to the period outlined in the evidence provided.</p> <p>When ACCS (child wellbeing) is approved, advise or send confirmation to both the carer and Child Safety contact.</p>		



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<p>5. Payment of the ACCS</p>		<p>Receives payment of ACCS (child wellbeing), and reduces fees passed onto carer.</p>		<p>Pay ACCS (child wellbeing) directly to approved child care services to reduce the cost of child care for foster and kinship carers.</p>
<p>6. Liability for child care fees</p>	<p>In most cases where a carer is eligible for ACCS (child wellbeing), the full costs of care will be covered. Where the child care fee charged is higher than the ACCS hourly rate cap, carers may be issued with a bill for the gap fee.</p> <p>Where a carer is charged for the gap fee, a tax invoice or receipt of payment must be provided to Child Safety as soon as possible.</p>		<p>When the Manager of the Child Safety Services Centre (CSSC) has supported the child care arrangements, for example in a placement offer, approved case plan or placement agreement, it is not appropriate for the carer to be out-of-pocket for the costs incurred due to delays outside of their control, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a delay in child care provider applying for ACCS, or • delays in Centrelink processing or re-processing the subsidy. <p>Early childhood education minimum gap payment of \$40 per week per child is used first to assist carers to meet the costs arising from the child's attendance at centre-based child care and kindergarten.</p> <p>Child related costs will then be used to pay any outstanding gap fees charged to the carer under the case plan or placement agreement. To support the carer, Child Safety may request a copy of the statement and negotiate payment arrangements directly with the provider.</p>	



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<p>7. Further information</p>	<p>See Services Australia's support for Non-Parent carers website, for information on payments and services, and to subscribe to email updates for carers.</p> <p>Contact Grandparent and Non-Parent Carer line on 1800 245 965.</p>	<p>The CCS Helpdesk (Department of Education, Skills and Employment) provides support for child care providers on 1300 667 276 or ccshelpdesk@dese.gov.au.</p> <p>Providers can also email the Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) team directly at ACCS.CWB.REVIEW@servicesaustralia.gov.au to enquire about the status of a determination application, or to seek further clarification as to why an application was rejected.</p>	<p>See Applying for a child wellbeing determination) for information for Child Protection Agencies on the application process for ACCS, including the eligibility and evidence requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact the CCS Helpdesk on 1300 667 276 or ccshelpdesk@dese.gov.au or • the grandparent and Non-Parent Carer line 1800 245 965 or • via email grandparent.adviser.qld@servicesaustralia.gov.au <p>Note: calls to this line will go to a voicemail message and your call will be returned in 24-48 hours.</p>	
<p>8. Reviews and appeals</p>	<p>Carers with enquiries should contact Centrelink directly on the Grandparent and Non-Parent Carer line on 1800 245 965.</p> <p>Note: Child Safety and your foster or kinship care agency cannot apply for or enquire about a carer's CCS application to protect the carers privacy.</p>	<p>The decision whether to give or not to give an ACCS (child wellbeing) certificate, or apply for an ACCS (child wellbeing) determination rests with the child care provider, they are not required to make an application.</p> <p>Importantly, the purpose of the ACCS (child wellbeing) is to ensure that child care costs are not a barrier to vulnerable 'at risk' children from entering or remaining engaged with child care.</p>	<p>Enquiries should be directed to the CCS Helpdesk on 1300 667 276 or ccshelpdesk@dese.gov.au.</p> <p>Child Safety should support carers, including by negotiating with providers, assisting with other suitable options such as enrolling the child in alternative child care centre etc.</p>	<p>Centrelink, Services Australia is responsible for assessing ACCS (child wellbeing) determinations. Both carers and child care providers have a right of review and can apply to have the decision reviewed.</p>

Backdating ACCS (child wellbeing)

For usual processes, the ACCS (child wellbeing) will be backdated up to 28 days. When exceptional circumstances exist, backdating of up to 13 weeks may be provided. When applying to backdate an ACCS (child wellbeing) Certificate or Determination, evidence must demonstrate the relevant exceptional circumstances. This is in addition to the evidence required to show that a child is considered at risk. Exceptional circumstances to backdate an ACCS (child wellbeing) includes when a long-term child protection order is in place for the child. A childcare provider will need to apply for backdating and include an evidence letter about the time period the child was subject to a child protection order. This will need to be provided by Child Safety in the same ways as Step 3 above. The Department of Education, Skills and Employment (Australian Government) will assess each backdating application and make a decision on the appropriate length of time (up to 13 weeks) that a certificate or determination can be backdated.

Further details about backdating certificates and determinations in exceptional circumstances, including the acceptable types of evidence are outlined in section 36 of the [Guide to ACCS \(child wellbeing\)](#).