

Financial support for foster and kinship carers

Quick reference guide — who pays?



Quick reference guide – who pays

Overview

At the 'Partners in Care' workshops held in 2017, you told us that you want clearer information about the financial supports available to support you to care for children in your care.

In response to this, a quick reference guide has been developed for you to help explain which expenses are covered by the foster carer allowances, and which expenses may be reimbursed from Child Related Costs.

This information is meant as a guide and it is important to talk to your Child Safety Officer before making any financial commitments. Reimbursements under Child Related Costs should be pre-planned and require the pre-approval of the Child Safety Service Centre manager.

You also told us that you want carer allowances and reimbursements to be clearer and more streamlined in the future. We are committed to working with Foster Care Queensland on this, commencing in 2018. As a result, some information in this guide will change.

The information in this guide is accurate at the time of publication, March 2018.

Planning

Child Safety is responsible for ensuring the child's physical, emotional, cultural, educational and social needs are met. How the child's needs will be met is documented in the child's case plan. Child Safety will also develop a written placement agreement with you, which will include the existing or required support and services for the child and details about who has financial responsibility for any additional costs incurred, that fall outside of your Fortnightly Caring Allowance. These costs should be planned in advance and approved by the CSSC. Your placement agreement should be regularly reviewed, at least every 6 months, and will address responses to new and emerging support needs.

Child Safety recognises that sometimes unexpected out-of-pocket costs arise. You should contact your Child Safety Officer about these directly as soon as practicable.

Other financial supports

Carers, and children in your care, may be eligible to receive financial support from other sources, and Child Safety and your Foster and Kinship Care service will advise and support you to access other supports. This may include other state and federal government payments and schemes, for example costs paid by Medicare, the National Disability Insurance Scheme, or child care subsidies. It also may include the provision of a flexible support response from your Foster and Kinship Care service, where they are funded by the Queensland Government to provide additional and practical 'wrap-around' supports. Your access to additional carer allowances or child related costs take into account the financial supports you may receive from these other sources, as Child Safety will not duplicate these coverage of these costs.



Carer Allowances

A Fortnightly Caring Allowance is provided to foster and kinship carers for each child, to assist with the basic costs of caring for a child in care. While the allowance may not cover all costs associated with caring for a child, it is expected to help meet the day-to-day costs of caring. It is paid fortnightly in arrears, at different rates depending on the age of the child – refer to Child Safety website for the latest information on the different rates of Carer Allowances.

Where there are ongoing additional costs associated with caring for a child that have been identified in the child’s case plan, Child Safety may provide additional allowances, through fortnightly payment of the high support needs allowance or complex support needs allowance; or cover individual costs through child related costs expenditure or reimbursement (see Child Related Costs from page 5).

Payment	Description
Fortnightly caring Allowance (FCA)	<p>The base payment provided to all approved carers when providing direct care for a child cared for under the <i>Child Protection Act 1999</i>.</p> <p>It is also paid to long-term guardians who were approved carers for the child prior to being granted long-term guardianship.</p> <p>It is paid fortnightly in arrears, at different rates depending on the age of the child.</p>
Regional and remote loading	<p>An additional fortnightly payment in locations with higher retail prices, paid at 10 per cent of the fortnightly caring allowance.</p> <p>It is paid to carers residing in the Child Safety Service Centre areas of Cape York South (including Cooktown), Cape York North and Torres Strait Islands (including Weipa and Thursday Island), Emerald, Gladstone, Mackay, Mt Isa, parts of Roma, and applicable Aboriginal Councils and Indigenous communities.</p>
Dual Payment of Carer Allowances	<p>Provides the carer allowances concurrently to both the primary carer and respite carer for the period of time the child is in respite care, where approved by the CSSC Manager, capped at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 52 days per financial for a child with moderate or high support needs ■ 78 days per financial year for a child with complex or extreme support needs but not exceeding the equivalent of three days per fortnight ■ an additional 20 days per financial year for emergent respite. <p>Where dual payments are not paid, only the respite carer will receive the allowances.</p>
Establishment Allowance	<p>A one-off payment provided the first time a child enters out-of-home care. It is to assist the carer with establishment costs for ongoing placements of one month or longer. Generally the items purchased remain the property of the child.</p> <p>A child subject to an assessment order or a temporary custody order is not eligible.</p> <p>Payment is automatic for carers who meet the eligibility criteria, and payment is processed with the fortnightly caring allowance.</p>

Payment	Description
<p>Start-up/Outfitting Allowance</p>	<p>A one-off payment for initial set up costs to establish appropriate accommodation and resources for a new placement longer than 5 nights, including respite care placements.</p> <p>May be paid for placements less than 5 nights depending on the child’s need and the individual circumstances of the carer.</p>
<p>High Support Needs Allowance (HSNA)</p>	<p>To assist a carer with the direct care costs of a child assessed as having high support needs <u>and</u> the needs consistently result in costs exceeding the fortnightly caring allowance.</p> <p>The Child Safety Officer will discuss with the carer and the agency support worker at a placement meeting, and will submit an application for the CSSC Manager’s approval. The application will provide evidence of the assessment of the child’s high level of strengths and needs, and describe how the allowance will be used to respond to the child’s strengths and needs.</p> <p>A carer can make an application for the high support needs allowance.</p> <p>The high support needs allowance will be approved for a set period (for example for 6 months) or on an ongoing basis (for a child with ongoing medical or psychological needs).</p> <p>The high support needs allowance does not cover additional mileage or travel costs, medical expenses or costs associated with transition from care, as these can be provided through Child Related Costs.</p>
<p>Complex Support Needs Allowance (CSNA)</p>	<p>To assist a carer meet the direct and additional indirect costs of caring for a child assessed as having complex or extreme support needs, that consistently result in costs exceeding both the fortnightly caring allowance and high support needs allowance, due to there being more costly expenses, a wider range of expenses and/or a greater frequency of expenses.</p> <p>The Child Safety Officer will discuss with the carer and the agency support worker at a placement meeting, and will submit an application for the CSSC Manager’s approval. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the assessed strengths and needs of the child ■ the available support options for the child ■ how and to what extent the child’s needs result in increased costs to the carer ■ the longevity and frequency of the expected additional costs ■ the additional indirect costs. <p>The complex support needs allowance is paid fortnightly at one of three different rates.</p> <p>It is expected the payment will cover the child’s medical needs, transport, recreation and leisure, skills development, family contact and additional indirect care costs.</p> <p>For information about the effect of NDIS on complex support needs allowance, refer to https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/resources/childsafety/foster-care/foster-carer-ndis-factsheet.pdf</p>

Child Related Costs

Carers have the right to receive support that will contribute towards ensuring a safe and caring environment in which the needs of the child are met. Child Safety understands that sometimes there may be large or unexpected expenses relating to the child in care.

Child related cost reimbursements may be approved to meet costs arising from a child’s individual needs, over and above the financial support provided through carer allowances and other government payments. Wherever possible, these costs are will be pre-approved as part of the child’s case planning process.

Category	What Child Safety may provide	Approvals and other considerations
Outfitting		
Clothing	<p>The fortnightly caring allowance includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ day to day or reasonable clothing and footwear needs. ■ personal care items including toiletries, haircuts, general hygiene items, nappies. <p>An additional outfitting payment may be made in extraordinary or emergent circumstances, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ child arriving or returning to carer with little or no clothing or belongings ■ loss or theft of clothing ■ a period of rapid growth ■ maternity clothing for young person ■ additional needs due to child’s medical condition. 	Additional payment is approved by the CSSC Manager.
School uniforms	<p>The fortnightly caring allowance includes one school outfitting per school year.</p> <p>An additional outfitting payment may be made in extraordinary or emergent circumstances, such as successive placement changes resulting in school changes, damage or loss of school clothing.</p> <p>May also be for graduation clothes hire.</p>	Additional payment is determined on a case-to-case basis and approved by the CSSC Manager.
Child care		
Babysitting	<p>The fortnightly caring allowance includes babysitting costs and occasional care. Note - you can make informal babysitting arrangements with friends or relatives that does not involve a cost and does not require approval.</p> <p>Reimbursement of babysitting costs arising from the carer’s attendance at carer training, foster carer forums and other similar activities may be met through ‘Child Related Costs’.</p>	<p>Approved by the CSSC Manager.</p> <p>If high support needs allowance is paid, this may cover part or all of these additional babysitting costs.</p>

Category	What Child Safety may provide	Approvals and other considerations
<p>Child care Kindergarten Vacation care Before/after school care</p>	<p>For children aged 1-5 years and attending a centre-based approved child care service or kindergarten, carers will be paid up to \$40 per week per child, up to \$2000 per year towards the 'gap' costs, i.e. after Child Care Benefit (CCB) and Child Care Rebate (CCR) deductions. If the amount payable is less than \$40 per week, then it will be the actual amount. The carer is required to lodge an application for CCB to the Australian Government through Centrelink.</p> <p>Reimbursement for further child care costs may be provided for the 'gap' between the actual fees and the cost after the CCB and CCR deductions. Includes payment or contribution to costs of centre-based child care, kindergarten, family day care, vacation care and before/after school care programs.</p>	<p>Guaranteed payment of up to \$40 per week for eligible children.</p> <p>Further reimbursement is at the approval of the CSSC Manager.</p>
Education		
<p>Schooling</p>	<p>The fortnightly caring allowance includes general schooling and education expenses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ school lunches ■ travel to and from school ■ stationary items ■ school excursion costs ■ school related sporting activities ■ school uniforms. <p>Further reimbursement is considered for costs specific to a child's needs, as recorded in their case plan, and may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ payment of compulsory fees ■ fees for educational activities or elective subjects approved in case plan or Educational Support Plan ■ the gap between the Department of Education and Training's Textbook and Resource Allowance and the full costs of the book levy ■ the purchase of specific items that assist in meeting the child's educational needs ■ one regular school camp per year, with exceptions for additional camps where, for example, a child has changed schools during the school year. 	<p>Approval for additional educational costs is by the CSSC Manager.</p> <p>Pre-approval of the Regional Director is required for the payment of private or boarding school fees.</p>
<p>Tutoring</p>	<p>Costs for tutoring by an educational specialist or other relevant qualified professional, where this is part of child's approved case plan or Educational Support Plan. The qualification of the proposed tutor must be reviewed/assessed as appropriate.</p>	<p>Approved by the CSSC Manager.</p>

Category	What Child Safety may provide	Approvals and other considerations
Vocational training	<p>Reimbursement may be considered for approved fees and the cost of course-related items for a young person to attend a vocational course, TAFE course, university or other tertiary institution.</p> <p>Payment for special uniforms or equipment relating to vocational training (eg. knives and chefs uniform) will be considered.</p>	<p>Approved by the CSSC Manager.</p> <p>Also consider the Department of Education and Training's 'What's Next OOHC Fund'.</p>
Healthcare		
Health assessments for Child Health Passport (CHP)	<p>Child Safety will cover the full costs from the initial health assessment required for the Child Health Passport (CHP).</p>	<p>Health professional must agree if payment is to be made through an invoice. Otherwise receipts are required prior to reimbursement.</p>
General medical	<p>The fortnightly caring allowance includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ costs for consulting GP, including the Medicare gap ■ one-off and initial specialists visits ■ all ad hoc prescribed and non-prescribed pharmaceuticals. <p>Child Safety may also provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ongoing GP visits as part of child's approved health plan ■ diagnostic tests referred by GP/Specialist as part of ongoing medical treatment ■ extra-ordinary or ongoing pharmaceutical costs not covered through the Health Care Card, including non-prescribed medications and treatments recommended by a GP, pharmaceuticals outside PBS; vaccination / immunization costs ■ specialist meal supplements (disability) as determined by an approved case plan unless covered by HSNA/CSNA ■ interstate ambulance costs. 	<p>Receipts or invoices are required prior to reimbursement.</p> <p>The high support needs allowance does not cover ongoing medical costs.</p>
Specialist – physical health	<p>The fortnightly caring allowance includes one-off and initial specialist visits.</p> <p>Further reimbursements may be provided for costs arising from ongoing specialist assessment and/or treatment for physical health needs such as physiotherapy, speech therapy as recommended by GP or qualified professional. Costs must be part of child's case plan and detailed in a child health needs assessment (except in emergencies).</p> <p>Mobility aids and equipment (glasses, hearing aids, equipment for disability) as recommended by a GP or other qualified professional.</p>	<p>Approved by the CSSC Manager.</p> <p>Child's approved NDIS plan may cover some of this items.</p>

Category	What Child Safety may provide	Approvals and other considerations
Specialist – mental health	<p>The fortnightly caring allowance includes one-off and initial specialist visits.</p> <p>Consideration will be given to reimbursement for ongoing psychiatry, psychology specialist assessment and/or treatment, where the treatment is approved as part of the case plan.</p>	Approved by the CSSC Manager.
Travel		
Travel specific to family contact	<p>Additional reimbursement may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ mileage and associated travel costs for family contact as recorded in the child’s case plan. ■ Translink Go Card purchased by Child Safety. ■ bus, train and taxi fares. 	Approved by the CSSC Manager.
General travel costs	<p>The fortnightly caring allowance includes all general travel costs including local bus/train expenses.</p> <p>The fortnightly caring allowance also covers fuel costs up to 250km per week per child. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ court attendance ■ to/from school and child care ■ to/from respite ■ carer assisted driving lessons. <p>When the 250 km per week threshold is exceeded, a kilometric motor vehicle allowance may be paid for the distance travelled after 250 km, when travel is part of an approved case plan.</p> <p>Child Safety may also consider providing further financial support for travel costs arising from a child’s attendance at a specific school which is not the closest to them, as part of their case plan e.g. boarding school.</p>	<p>Approved by the CSSC Manager</p> <p>Carers intending to transport children in care are required to have a current driver’s license and either comprehensive motor vehicle insurance or third party property damage to receive the kilometric allowance reimbursement.</p>
Overseas travel	<p>Child Safety may provide expenses relating to approved overseas travel e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ passport photographs ■ travel insurance ■ the purchase of passports and visas ■ domestic air travel to enable overseas travel. <p>In rare circumstances, airfare and accommodation costs may be considered in essential and/or exceptional circumstances.</p>	<p>Guardian consent is required for child to travel overseas, regardless of who pays. The guardian will either be the child’s parent or Child Safety, depending on the type of child protection order.</p> <p>The Minister’s approval is required for costs of overseas travel over 5 hours, and Director-General can approve costs of overseas travel under 5 hours.</p>

Category	What Child Safety may provide	Approvals and other considerations
Recreation		
Recreational costs	<p>The fortnightly caring allowance includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ leisure and recreational activities including pocket money, purchase of gifts, hobbies, entertainment, holiday expenses ■ safety equipment, such as baby capsules, car seats, helmets, knee and elbow protectors. <p>Child Safety may also consider providing further financial support for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ costs for child with a talent or ability for a particular activity that should be encouraged e.g. sport, music, art ■ ongoing costs for activities recommended by a medical practitioner. ■ advanced coaching or tuition to allow child to develop higher levels of proficiency in an ongoing activity. 	<p>Approved by the CSSC Manager.</p> <p>All other avenues of financial support have been explored.</p>
Family and cultural connection		
Family contact Cultural connection	<p>Child Safety may consider providing financial support for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ accommodation and associated costs where overnight stays or other supports are required for family contact ■ one set of school photographs per year for family ■ life diary costs ■ gifts for the child’s parents/siblings who are not in care or are in a different placement, typically to a value of \$20 ■ cultural activities and events ■ costs associated with attending Family Group Meetings, e.g. fuel, public transport costs, parking fees, toll charges. 	<p>Approval by the CSSC Manager, for a specified period.</p>
Other costs		
Birth certificate	<p>Although each child will have a copy of a birth certificate on their Child Safety file, another birth certificate or certified copy may be obtained for the carer.</p>	<p>Approval by the CSSC Manager.</p>
Transition from care	<p>All young people aged 15 years or more should have a transition to independence plan as part of their case plan. Financial support may be provided, as agreed in the plan and may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ independent living establishment expenses ■ life skills development ■ driving lessons ■ assistance with bond or white goods for a rental. 	

Category	What Child Safety may provide	Approvals and other considerations
Funeral arrangements	Costs associated with the funeral of a deceased child in care.	Approved by the CSSC Manager required for costs. Arrangements are made in accordance with the wishes of the child’s parent.
Carer household and property		
Housing	<p>The fortnightly caring allowance includes a contribution to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ maintenance costs for the dwelling including general wear and tear, and repairs ■ home and contents insurance to cover theft, loss or damage. You are required to claim on your own insurance in the first instance ■ cleaning items/costs. <p>On a case-by-case basis, Child Safety may provide redress for property damage or loss due to the actions or inactions of Child Safety or a child, where this is not covered by insurance. In rare circumstances, financial support may be provided for some property modifications in support of a long term placement, e.g. to support a child with a disability.</p>	Submission for property modifications requires prior approval by Regional Executive Director.
Vehicle running costs	<p>The fortnightly caring allowance includes a contribution to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ registration and road worthiness ■ maintenance and running costs ■ fuel ■ motor vehicle insurance <p>In rare circumstances, Child Safety may lease a vehicle for a specified period or purpose where this is part of an approved case plan.</p>	Regional Director approval is required prior to any lease arrangement occurring.
Household goods and services	<p>The fortnightly caring allowance includes a contribution to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ furniture and household goods including bedding and furnishing items for a child ■ routine maintenance on household goods including wear and tear and repairs ■ household services such as phone and internet service providers and utility expenses – electricity, water, gas, and oil. <p>On a case-by-case basis, Child Safety may approve the purchase of furniture and/or other items for the child, to facilitate their placement with a particular carer. As a general rule, the items purchased would move with the child.</p>	Approved by the CSSC Manager