



Australian Government

Department of Education, Employment
and Workplace Relations



Child Care Service Handbook 2008–2009

For all child care services

not currently operating under the Child Care Management System (CCMS)

Creating a productive and inclusive Australia

Quick contacts

To ask for additional copies of the *Child Care Service Handbook*, the current ready reckoner and *Child Care News*:

Phone: **13 36 84**

TTY: **1800 554 609** (Use this Teletypewriter Freecall™ number if you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment. A TTY phone is required to use this service.)



Contacts for child care services to use

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| FAO child care payment team | P: 1800 050 021 F: 1800 700 533 | For FAO-related inquiries including CCB and JET |
| CCB forms | P: 1300 367 676 F: 02 6284 6397 E: telemarketing@centrelink.gov.au W: centrelink.gov.au | To order CCB forms FA020, FA022, FA023, FA024, FA025, FA026, FA027, FA028, FA044—see list at 8.4 (pages 94–95) |
| 24-hour care forms | W: deewr.gov.au/childcarehandbook | To order 24-hour care forms 08-320 (0708), 08-229 (0708), 08-029 (0908)—see list at 8.4 (pages 94–95) |
| Parent forms | P: 1300 367 676 | To order forms used by parents—see list at 8.4 (page 96) |
| DEEWR state and territory offices | P: 13 36 84 W: deewr.gov.au | An Australia-wide number. Callers must identify the state or territory office they want to contact and ask for Child Care Support |
| National Childcare Accreditation Council | P: 1300 136 554 W: ncac.gov.au | For child care quality assurance inquiries |
| Accreditation Decisions Review Committee | P: 1300 734 347 W: adrc.org.au | For accreditation decision review inquiries |
| Child Care Access Hotline | P: 1800 795 433 | For reporting vacancy and usage data and general enquiries |

Contacts for families to use

| | | |
|------------------------------------|---|--|
| Child Care Access Hotline | P: 1800 670 305 TTY: 1800 639 327 | For information about approved child care services in a particular area—between 8am and 9pm, Monday to Friday |
| FAO | P: 13 61 50 TTY: 1800 810 586 W: familyassist.gov.au | For FAO-related inquiries from families |
| FAO Multilingual Telephone Service | P: 13 12 02 | For FAO-related inquiries from families who require translating and/or interpreting assistance |
| Immunisation Register | P: 1800 653 809 | For families to check their children's immunisation records |
| Immunisation information | P: 1800 671 811 W: immunise.health.gov.au | For immunisation-related inquiries about the National Immunisation Program Schedule for the vaccination of all Australian children |
| Australian Tax Office | P: 13 28 61 W: ato.gov.au | For information about payments of Child Care Tax Rebate for costs incurred before 1 July 2006 |



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and Workplace Relations



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Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
Child Care Policy and Payments Branch
PO Box 9880
Canberra ACT 2601
or deewr.gov.au

PHONE: 1300 363 079
TTY: 1800 554 609

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The situations and names appearing in this publication are used to illustrate real life situations and do not refer to actual individuals.

Comments and suggestions

This handbook contains many improvements, but we know there is always scope for change. Your comments or suggestions about the content and layout of the *Child Care Service Handbook 2008–2009* can help us improve future editions. Please write to:

Ⓐ The Editor
Child Care Service Handbook
4th floor, 17 Moore Street
Department of Education, Employment and
Workplace Relations
PO Box 9880
Canberra ACT 2601

or use email feed back form at ⓐ mychild.gov.au with the subject line "Child Care Services Handbook suggestions"

explaining your idea and giving your contact details in case we need more information.

We are interested in your suggestions as part of our annual cycle of improving the handbook and access to related information resources.

If you have questions or suggestions about policy or legislation, please take those up with the relevant department or agency. Your industry body can also help with policy issues.

Some contacts for industry bodies are at

Ⓐ deewr.gov.au/statechildcarepeakbodies

Important notice and disclaimer

This is an important notice to users of the *Child Care Service Handbook 2008–2009* (the handbook). The handbook provides guidance and assistance to all child care services on how the Australian Government Child Care Support System operates.

All child care services should be familiar with the legislation and legislative instruments that form the family assistance law. The family assistance legislation consists of the following:

- A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999
- A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999
- Regulations under A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999
- Schedules 5 & 6 to the A New Tax System (Family Assistance and Related Measures) Act 2000.

The following legislative instruments are relevant to users of this handbook:

- 1 Child Care Benefit (Session of Care) Determination 2000 (section 9 Family Assistance Act)
- 2 Child Care Benefit (Absence From Care—Permitted Circumstances) Determination 2000 (section 11 Family Assistance Act)
- 3 A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Child Care Benefit—Eligible Hours of Care) Determination 2006 (section 57A Family Assistance Act)
- 4 Child Care Benefit (Hours of Eligibility Rules) Determination 2000 (section 57B Family Assistance Act)

- 5 Child Care Benefit (Eligibility of Child Care Services for Approval and Continued Approval) Determination 2000 (section 205 Family Assistance (Administration) Act)
- 6 Child Care Benefit (Receipts) Rules 2000 (section 219E Family Assistance (Administration) Act)
- 7 A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) (Child Care Benefit—Record Keeping Rules) 2006 (section 219F Family Assistance (Administration) Act)
- 8 Child Care Benefit (Rates and Hardship) Determination 2000 (subsection 82(3) Family Assistance Act)

Users of the handbook are reminded that if there is conflict between material contained in this handbook and the legislation and legislative instruments that form the family assistance law, the family assistance law will prevail.

Child care services should also be familiar with the terms of any funding agreement. Users of the handbook are also reminded that if there is conflict between material contained in this handbook and terms of the funding agreement, the terms of the funding agreement will prevail.

While all care is taken the Commonwealth accepts no responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of any material contained in the publication. Additionally, the Commonwealth disclaims all liability to a person in respect of anything, and of the consequences of anything, done or omitted to be done by any such person in reliance, whether wholly or partially, upon any information presented in this publication. Material in this publication is made available on the understanding that the Commonwealth is not

providing professional advice. Before relying on any material in this publication readers should obtain appropriate professional advice.

The legislation and legislative instruments are available at

 comlaw.gov.au

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Message from the Parliamentary Secretary



As the Australian Parliamentary Secretary responsible for early childhood education and child care, I am pleased to introduce this new edition of the *Child Care Service Handbook*.

The Australian Government is pursuing an ambitious early childhood reform agenda that focuses on providing Australian families with high-quality, accessible and affordable child care. The Government recognises the critical importance of the early years and is working to develop a world-class system of integrated early childhood learning and care.

The early childhood education and care sector has a central role to play in ensuring Australian children are happy, healthy and on the path to becoming self sufficient, independent adults. With over 590 000 families expected to have children in approved child care during 2008–09, child care service providers are critical to the success of our reforms.

Underpinning the reform agenda is a comprehensive range of initiatives funded as part of the 2008–09 Budget to take forward our vision. These initiatives include:

- increasing the Child Care Tax Rebate from 30% to 50% of out of pocket child care costs and paying the rebate quarterly
- extending Jobs, Education and Training Child Care Fee Assistance eligibility
- investing to train and retain a high-quality early childhood education workforce

- ensuring all children in the year before formal schooling will have access to high quality early childhood education programs delivered by degree-qualified early childhood teachers, for 15 hours per week, 40 weeks of the year
- establishing up to 260 new Child Care and Early Learning Centres on school sites and community land in areas of unmet demand
- developing a national quality framework with new rigorous, national quality child care standards, an A–E quality rating system, an Early Years Learning Framework and streamlined licensing, regulation and accreditation arrangements.

The *Child Care Service Handbook 2008–2009* provides comprehensive information about Australian Government requirements and the responsibilities of child care services. The Handbook also has details about recent changes to Sustainability Assistance and Operational Support Payments and an expanded civil penalties and infringement notice scheme.

This is an exciting time for early childhood in this country. I encourage child care service providers to continue to deliver their services in accordance with the Child Care Services Handbook and to visit the Office of Early Childhood Education and Child Care website at oececc.gov.au to keep up to date with the upcoming reforms.

The Hon Maxine McKew MP

Parliamentary Secretary for Early Childhood Education and Child Care

How to use this handbook

The *Child Care Service Handbook 2008–2009* is for all child care services that have not yet transitioned to the Child Care Management System (CCMS). We have designed it to help you find what you need to know quickly and easily. The handbook is available online at www.deewr.gov.au/childcarehandbook. A separate Handbook is available for those child care services already using CCMS.

Parts and sections

The handbook is divided into two **parts**, each with a number of sections.

Part 1 is about the policy framework and rules for Australian Government Child Care Support. It contains seven sections. Section 1 begins on page 1.

Part 2 focuses on how to manage Child Care Benefit payments and information requirements for the Child Care Tax Rebate. It contains eight sections. It begins on page 86.

The 'Contents' on page **v** shows you the sections within each part. You will find a list of shortened forms, a glossary (explanation of terms), and an index at the end of the handbook.

At the start of each part and each section, there are short explanations about what they include. These will help you decide if what you are looking for might be in that part or section.

Studying this new edition will bring you up-to-date on how the Australian Government child care funding system works. It will also help you to understand the 'why' and 'how-to' information.

Quick information

The contact details for finding out more about the information in this handbook are on the inside front cover.

See quick contacts ▶

Addresses, the '1800' phone number and fax numbers for Family Assistance Office child care payment teams are on the back cover.

See back cover ▶

Addresses for the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) state and territory offices are also on the back cover.

See back cover ▶

Current Child Care Benefit and Jobs, Education and Training Child Care fee assistance rates are on the inside back cover.

See inside back cover ▶

A summary of Child Care Benefit forms used by services, and how to get them, is at **8.4**, pages 94 to 96.

See 8.4 ▶

A summary of Community Support payment forms is at **3.10**, page 28.

See 3.10 ▶

The sections are **colour-coded** to make them easier to find in the print version.

The online version uses the same colour coding.

Changes

Child care managers asked that news about changes be clearly and conveniently presented. News about the main policy and administrative changes since the last print edition of this handbook is summarised on page xi.

Service icons

This handbook is for all services. Information that relates to a particular service type/s **only** is marked with a service icon above the relevant text. The service indicators are on this page.

Direction indicators

These refer you to relevant information elsewhere in the handbook—for example, **See 8.4 ▶**

Service icons

-  **FDC** Family day care
-  **IHC** In home care
-  **OSHC** Outside school hours care
-  **LDC** Long day care
-  **OCC** Occasional care
-  **NMS** Non-mainstream services

- Text marked with **ALL** service icons is for **ALL** types of services and should be read carefully

Online version

The online version of this handbook has equivalent navigation features to the print version.

- deewr.gov.au/childcarehandbook

Other information resources

The handbook is part of a set of information resources that support the delivery of quality child care across Australia.

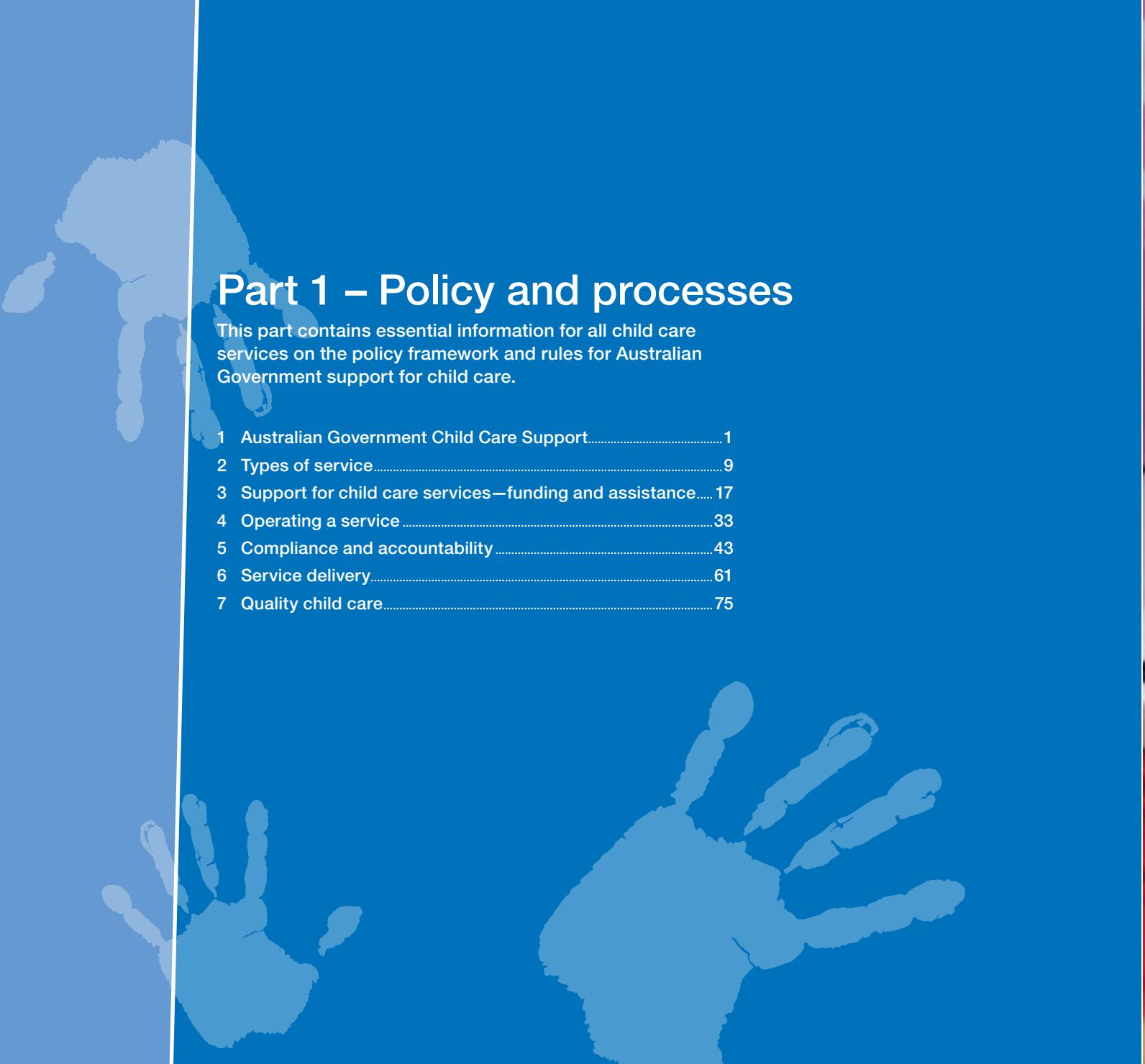
Fact sheets, brochures and forms that relate to the delivery of quality child care are available from all Family Assistance Offices, including Centrelink, the Australian Tax Office and Medicare Australia (formerly the Health Insurance Commission). You can also find child care information on DEEWR's website at

- deewr.gov.au



What has changed?

- 1 Eligibility for Set-up Assistance.....[See 3.2 ▶](#)
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- 7 Changes to Child Care Quality Assurance – the Quality Reform Agenda
- 8 Allowable absence days - clarification for a child who has not yet received care or who has ceased receiving care
- 9 Child Care Tax Rebate – changes in the 2008–09 Budget.....[See 14.1 ▶](#)
- 10 Child Care Tax Rebate – eligibility requirements
- 11 Child Care Tax Rebate – new payment option
- 12 Child Care Tax Rebate – What does this mean for services
- 13 Rates for Set-up Assistance and Sustainability Assistance – changes
- 14 Child Care Benefit– new rates/removal of minimum rate
- 15 Changes to the FAO Payment Teams.....[See back cover ▶](#)



Part 1 – Policy and processes

This part contains essential information for all child care services on the policy framework and rules for Australian Government support for child care.

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Australian Government Child Care Support

This section sets out the legal authority and the policy aims and objectives for Australian Government support for child care. It explains the role of the different levels of government and the allocation of the different kinds of child care places, and outlines the requirements for approval for the purposes of Child Care Benefit and the national standards for child care services.

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1.1 Authority



Authority for approving long day care (LDC), family day care (FDC), in home care (IHC), outside school hours care (OSHC) and occasional care (OCC) services, and providing funding, comes from the provisions in:

- *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999*
- *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999*

When funding is approved, services are required to comply with the conditions and requirements in that legislation, eligibility rules and agreements. Operators' obligations are outlined in this handbook.

The Minister referred to in this handbook is the Minister who has responsibility for Australian Government Child Care Support, currently the Minister for Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

Aims and objectives

The Australian Government's agenda for early childhood education and child care focuses on providing Australian families with high-quality, accessible and affordable integrated early childhood education and child care. The agenda has a strong emphasis on connecting with schools to ensure all Australian children are fully prepared for learning and life. Investing in the health, education, development and care of our children benefits children and their families, our communities and the economy, and is critical to lifting workforce participation and delivering the Government's productivity agenda. The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) helps families to participate in the social and economic life of the community through the provision of support for child care services by:

- assisting families with the cost of child care
- ensuring Child Care Benefit (CCB) and the Child Care Tax Rebate (CCTR) are provided to families who want to access child care to support their workforce participation
- helping families to balance their work and parenting roles by promoting and supporting the provision of flexible child care services

1.2

- supporting quality child care, quality assurance of child care services and professional development for the child care sector
- providing access to early childhood intervention and prevention initiatives for vulnerable families and children by funding quality child care services.

1.2 Responsibilities of different levels of government



The Australian Government and state and territory governments are involved in the operation, funding and regulation of child care services. Each has a separate and vital role to play.

The roles of the Australian Government and state and territory governments are detailed below. If you need more information, please contact the relevant authority direct.

Role of the Australian Government

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations:

- administers CCB and CCTR to families (through the Family Assistance Office (FAO)—
[see next page ▶](#)
- administers financial support to approved services in areas of need—these costs may be shared between state or territory governments and the Australian Government

- maintains some statistical data on the supply of child care places
- manages Jobs, Education and Training Child Care fee assistance (JETCCFA) policy
- assists parents and employers with child care options via the Child Care Access Hotline
- manages the administration of the quality assurance framework. It funds the National Childcare Accreditation Council, the Accreditation Decisions Review Committee and Inclusion and Professional Support Program (IPSP) providers. The professional support element of the IPSP assists child care services to achieve and maintain quality assurance standards. DEEWR also has legislative responsibilities for managing services' non-compliance with quality assurance standards. To be eligible for approval for CCB purposes, FDC, LDC and OSHC services must register for, and satisfactorily participate in, quality assurance.

The **Family Assistance Office** is the main service delivery organisation for CCB. The FAO is a joint venture of **Centrelink**, the **Australian Taxation Office** and **Medicare Australia**. All service outlets of these organisations include FAO agencies.

The following specific services are provided at all FAO agencies:

- registration of families for the payment of CCB by fee reduction (on receipt of a written or phone claim)

- receipt of claims for payment of CCB by lump sum after the end of each financial year
- processing of claims and payment of CCB for registered care
- processing and payment of CCTR
- advising families on issues of eligibility and entitlement to CCB.

The FAO is responsible for processing CCB by fee reduction. This includes:

- allocation of a unique reference number for each family and child
- determination of eligibility for CCB
- calculation of key elements affecting CCB entitlements such as the application of the income test, the maximum eligible hours applicable in each case and the schooling status of each child
- advising services and parents of key elements affecting CCB entitlement for each family/child
- payment of CCB to approved services
- approving JETCCFA for families and paying JETCCFA to approved child care services.

Services should deal with the FAO on day-to-day matters relating to CCB, on payments of CCTR for costs incurred after 1 July 2006, and on JETCCFA.

For child care policy issues, services should deal with DEEWR through its state and territory offices.

See back cover ▶

Role of states and territories

State and territory governments have prime responsibility for family support, child welfare and the regulation of child care services. These regulatory responsibilities include:

- licensing in all states and territories for centre-based LDC and OCC, and in some states and territories for FDC and OSHC—covering aspects of a service's operation such as:
 - the number of children in care
 - the size of rooms and playgrounds
 - the number of staff and their qualifications
 - health and safety requirements
- contributing, in some states and territories, to the capital and operational costs of services
- funding children's services which fall outside the Australian Government's Child Care Support program—for example, preschools, some OCC, and some programs for school children
- implementing and monitoring national standards for LDC, OSHC and FDC
- administering child care grants on behalf of the Australian Government in some states and territories—for example, in South Australia the state government operates (sponsors) FDC
- administering capital funding and supervising construction of jointly funded services
- legislating in areas such as occupational health and safety, and anti-discrimination legislation
- administering corporations law.

1.3

Some states and territories also provide formal complaints' mechanisms including conflict resolution. State and Territory governments are also responsible for establishing Children and Family Centres, primarily targeted at Indigenous families, that will deliver integrated early childhood services, including, early learning, child care and parent and family support. The Council of Australian Governments has agreed to this initiative and the Australian Government is providing funding of approximately \$290 million.

Release of service information

Information about families and child care services collected by the Australian Government is subject to confidentiality provisions contained in the *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999* and the provisions of the *Privacy Act 1988 (the Privacy Act)*.

DEEWR has a policy, consistent with the provisions of the Privacy Act and associated legislation, for the release of information in limited circumstances. The policy specifies the types of information that may be released and the purposes for which such information may be used. The policy is at Appendix 1.

See appendix 1 ▶

The department does not release information such as staff names and qualifications.

1.3 Availability of child care places

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC** **NMS**

Since July 2006, the Australian Government has not restricted the number of new LDC, OSHC and FDC services or places that can be approved for the purposes of CCB.

Operators must continue to meet applicable state and territory licensing regulations and the statutory requirements for Australian Government approval. Eligible parents using these services can claim CCB.

In addition, since 1 July 2006, FDC regional boundaries no longer apply and carers are able to register with the FDC service of their choice.

IHC and OCC places remain regulated by the Australian Government.

For information about 'uncapping' FDC
See 2.1 ▶

For information about 'uncapping' OSHC
See 2.3 ▶

If an applicant is not already an approved child care service, before any child care places can be allocated or used, the applicant is required to apply for approval under the family assistance law for the purposes of CCB.

Approval under the family assistance law for the purposes of CCB

Suitability of applicant

Applicants seeking approval for the purposes of CCB must, under the family assistance law, meet the 'suitability of applicant' criteria.

- When the applicant is an individual, the applicant must be a suitable person to operate a child care service.
- When the applicant is not an individual, and is not a state/territory or local government, the applicant's key personnel must be suitable people to operate a child care service.

In making a decision on suitability, the following criteria will be assessed:

- a the applicant's expertise and experience in providing child care
- b the applicant's ability to meet and provide the appropriate quality of child care
- c if the applicant has been a provider of child care:
 - i the applicant's record of financial management relating to the provision of child care
 - ii the applicant's conduct as a provider of child care
 - iii the applicant's compliance with responsibilities as a provider of child care and obligations arising from the receipt of payments from the Australian Government and

iv whether the applicant has maintained the confidentiality of personal information about people who were liable to pay child care fees, and their families, including information that was in the applicant's possession after the expiry of any approval of a child care service through which the applicant provided the child care

- d any relevant criminal charges against the applicant pending before a court
- e any relevant convictions or findings of guilt against the applicant for an offence.

The Secretary of DEEWR may also consider other matters relevant to the applicant.

Persons must be assessed and deemed suitable to operate a child care service before approval for CCB may be granted.



In working out the number of places to be allocated to approved child care services, the matters to be taken into account are:

- the number and kind of child care places which may be allocated in the area in which the service operates
- the service's ability to provide the type of child care that best meets the needs of people who have work, training or study commitments when:
 - i the service is, or has previously been, an approved child care service or
 - ii the operator of the service was previously a party to a child care assistance agreement

1.4

- the service's or operator's past conduct as a provider of child care, including compliance with any relevant Australian Government, or state or territory requirements in relation to the provision of child care and the management of child care services.

1.4 National standards for child care services



Quality assurance is an important aspect of providing children's services. Quality standards for child care services are a high priority for state and territory governments and for the Australian Government.

The Council of Social Welfare Ministers has endorsed national standards for OSHC, FDC and LDC.

National standards prescribe the minimum standard necessary to ensure that child care provides a safe, nurturing and developmental experience. The standards address facilities, health and safety, programs and administration, and the suitability of the people providing the child care services.

There is a high degree of consistency in the standards across the three service types. This is because many standards are fundamental to the provision of quality service for children of any age, provided in any setting (such as a purpose-built child care centre, a family day care home or school facility). Certain core standards are common to LDC, FDC and OSHC services.

Other standards are specific to a particular service type and are influenced by the age of the children attending the service, the service's hours of operation, or the type of facilities in which the service is provided.

Different approaches are taken by states and territories in ensuring that the standards as defined are implemented in all services, where required. These include incorporation of the standards into regulations, service agreements, funding contracts, or industry-agreed standards of operation.

It is recognised that providing high quality child care services involves much more than meeting minimum standards. Support, explanatory information and availability of resource material to assist service providers to implement the standards are important, as are training and a range of other quality assurance and improvement practices.

Following consultations with key stakeholders, interim standards for IHC were introduced by the Australian Government in 2008. IHC providers are now required to adhere to these standards until such time that they are replaced by National Standards. Introducing minimum requirements and focussing on enhancements in quality will increase the marketability of IHC and improve the quality of care and the safety of carers, families and children. The Commonwealth Government will continue to work with state and territory governments to develop the National Standards for IHC.



2

Types of service

This section defines the different types of child care service—family day care, long day care, outside school hours care, occasional care, in home care, multiple care services and non-mainstream services. These service definitions include important rules about eligibility for funding.

Sections of this handbook may change over the next 12 months. Child care services will be advised of any changes and this handbook will be updated online at

◎ www.deewr.gov.au/childcarehandbook

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2

Types of service



2.1 Family day Care

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC** **NMS**

What is family day care?

Family day care (FDC) services support and administer networks of FDC carers who provide flexible care and developmental activities in their own homes for other people's children. To assist with this, each service receives operational support funding from the Australian Government. Both not-for-profit and for-profit providers may operate a FDC service.

A FDC service is responsible for the effective operation of all components of FDC, including recruiting, training and supporting carers; monitoring care provision; and providing advice, support and information for parents. The service also assists parents to select an appropriate FDC carer for their child.

A FDC service can provide flexible care, including all-day care, part-time, casual, before and after school care, and care during school holidays.

A FDC carer and service must comply with the applicable state and territory regulations when providing care to children. A carer may provide

care in their home for the maximum number of children, including their own children, under their state and territory regulations. Where state and territory regulations do not exist, FDC carers must comply with the National Standards for Family Day Care.

In home care cannot be provided in the home of a child while the parent is present and providing FDC.

Different models of FDC may be eligible for approval as Australian Government-funded services. This may include a stand-alone FDC service with a coordination unit that monitors care provided and administers the service; Family Day Care In Venue Care where FDC is provided in a facility other than a family home; or where FDC is part of a multiple care service that provides other types of child care. The essential element is that carers are supported, trained and monitored.

FDC services can now offer care based on demand, providing they meet the licensing and quality assurance approval process, including state/territory government licensing and regulations. These new

2.2

places would be approved for Child Care Benefit purposes.

Regional boundaries do not apply. This enables existing services to broaden their business base. It also provides an opportunity for service providers operating other child care types to branch out and offer FDC services, which improves choices for families.

Family Day Care In Venue Care

Family Day Care In Venue Care is a form of FDC where the care is delivered in a facility other than a family home—usually in a school or community hall. This includes requirements that no other care is available or possible within reasonable travelling distance for families; the site is located in a regional or remote area; and approval is time-limited to a maximum of 12 months.

Existing sites that are found to be duplicating services already available in the area, or which could be viable as a mainstream type of child care, will be transitioned to a mainstream form of child care such as long day care (LDC), outside school hours care (OSHC) or home-based FDC.

Who can use family day care?

Provision of care to near relatives

Child Care Benefit (CCB) and the Child Care Tax Rebate (CCTR) are not payable for a carer's or their partner's children if the children are at home with the carer. Children can be accepted for placement with a near relative if the carer is prepared to continue providing care to new and existing children in care who are not relatives and, if there is a waiting list, the child is the next one due to be placed.

Services must ensure that placement of children with carers is in line with the Priority of Access Guidelines.

See 6.3 ▶

2.2 Long day Care

FDC IHC OSHC LDC OCC NMS

What is long day care?

Long day care (LDC) is a centre-based form of child care service. LDC services provide quality all-day or part-time care for children of working families and the general community. For-profit and not-for-profit organisations, local councils, community organisations and employers may run these services.

Services must ensure that placement of children is in line with the Priority of Access Guidelines.

See 6.3 ▶

LDC services must comply with applicable state and territory regulations when providing care to children.

Who can use long day care?

The Australian Government funds LDC services to provide care mostly for children not yet attending school, whose parents are working, undertaking vocational study, training or looking for work.

Services may provide care for school children before and after school and during school holidays.

The service must:

- provide care to children, the majority of whom are children not yet attending school and who attend the service at least one day a week. If there are vacancies at the beginning or end of the day, the service may provide care for school children if this meets their state or territory licensing guidelines
- be open to the general public. This does not apply to employer-operated services or employer-sponsored places in funded services unless they are under-utilised (see 'Employer-sponsored child care' below).

Non work-related care

Services may provide respite care and other non work-related child care but must ensure care is offered to families in line with the Priority of Access Guidelines.

See 6.3 ►

Employer-sponsored child care

The Australian Government encourages employers to get involved with providing flexible child care to suit their employees' needs. There are various ways in which employers can do this. They can:

- sponsor a child care service
- reserve places in a service or services that may be convenient to the workplace or to areas where employees live
- use an agency to find suitable child care places in the wider community.

There may be other ways to form agreements between employers and services in your area. Innovative ideas for business–community partnerships on child care provision are always welcome.

For more information about how employer-sponsored child care works or can work for you, contact your DEEWR state or territory office.

See back cover ►

For information about employers and child care payments

See 10.4 ►

2.3 Outside school hours Care

FDC IHC OSHC LDC OCC NMS

What is outside school hours care?

Outside school hours care (OSHC) services provide care before and/or after school and/or care during vacation time. In some services, care is also provided on pupil-free days during the school term. Not-for-profit and for-profit organisations may operate OSHC services.

These services focus on stimulating developmental, social and recreational activities for children, while meeting the care requirements of families.

They are usually set up in or close to primary schools. They may also be in other locations such as

community centres, halls, neighbourhood houses or recreation centres.

There is no longer any limit on the number of CCB-approved OSHC places a service can provide. This means that all OSHC services are able to set up or expand to meet demand, providing they meet the licensing and quality assurance approval process. These new places would be approved for CCB purposes.

OSHC services must comply with applicable state and territory regulations when providing care to children.

Who can use outside school hours care?

OSHC services provide child care mostly for children attending school, but can care for children that have not started school. However, as a general rule, when an OSHC service fills vacant places, it must give school children priority over children who have not yet started school (exceptions arise in the case of employer-sponsored child care places). An OSHC service has the discretion to provide child care to children with high support needs and disabilities.

OSHC must ensure that the placement of children is in line with the Priority of Access Guidelines.

See 6.3 ▶

Self-referred children

Services should not encourage self-referred children (those who arrive at a service without being enrolled) to attend a service without permission from a parent or guardian. Every effort should be made to contact the parents and seek their permission for the child to be there. This is to protect the service from a possible accident or insurance claim.

2.4 Occasional Care*

FDC IHC OSHC LDC OCC NMS

What is occasional care?

Occasional care (OCC) is centre-based child care that supports families by providing flexible care for children. Families can access OCC regularly on a sessional basis, or irregularly. OCC allows the flexibility to leave children for short periods in an early childhood learning environment to socialise and interact with other children. Community organisations, not-for-profit organisations or local councils may run OCC services.

*A revised definition of occasional care has been approved for implementation from 1 July 2009. For more information visit the Office of Early Childhood Education and Child Care website at oececc.gov.au

The Australian Government provides funding to approved OCC services through Operational Support funding under the Child Care Support Services Program. All services that have ministerially approved OCC places allocated by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and are approved for CCB purposes as an OCC service, can receive Operational Support.

Who can use occasional care?

While OCC is available to all children, most of the children in care will not have started school.

2.5 In home Care



What is in home care?

In home care (IHC) is a flexible form of child care where an approved carer provides care in the child's home. IHC places remain capped and are allocated to services by DEEWR.

Who can use in home care?

In home care services are targeted at families with children who:

- cannot be cared for by other child care services or whose circumstances mean that an existing child care service cannot meet their needs **and**
- to whom one or more of the following applies:
 - the child has, or lives with another child who has, an illness or a disability

- the child's guardian (or guardian's partner) has an illness or disability that affects their ability to care for the child
- the child lives in a rural or remote area
- the work hours of the child's guardian (or guardian's partner) are hours when no other approved child care service is available
- the child's guardian (or guardian's partner) is caring for three or more children who have not yet started school.

DEEWR will continue to have discretion to allow exemptions to the eligibility criteria for a family in special and exceptional circumstances. Services are required to contact DEEWR to seek an exemption.

2.6 Multiple Care services



Multiple care services are approved services designed to provide flexible care to meet the needs of their communities. They offer an integrated service delivery model where more than one care type is available.

Services are accessible to the general community and focus on care for children not yet attending school, but can also provide older children with care outside school hours and during school breaks.

Factors determining whether a service is a multiple care type include:

- the same funding recipient **and**
- the same director/coordinate/administrative staff **and/or**

- shared use of existing services such as building/address, facilities and resources.

2.7 Non-mainstream services

FDC IHC OSHC LDC OCC NMS

Several types of non-mainstream services are funded by DEEWR. Non-mainstream services are provided by not-for-profit organisations and are delivered mainly in rural, remote or Indigenous communities, providing access to early childhood learning and child care where the market would otherwise fail to deliver. These services are generally not approved for purposes of administering Child Care Benefit (CCB) and parents using these services are not eligible to receive CCB or the Child Care Tax Rebate. The cost to families for using these services, however, is minimal as the Australian Government meets the majority of the costs involved in providing these services.

Non-mainstream services are not necessarily licensed and are not required to meet quality assurance standards that apply to CCB approved services. These services are, however, subject to relevant children's services' state and territory regulations.

Types of non-mainstream services include:

- flexible/innovative services
- mobile child care services
- Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Services
- Indigenous playgroups
- Indigenous outside school hours care and enrichment programs

- crèches including Jobs, Education and Training (JET) crèches.

Flexible/innovative services

Flexible/innovative child care services provide flexible early childhood education and care to families living in rural and remote communities with dispersed populations, where quality child care may not be available or is not suited to local circumstances.

A flexible/innovative child care service may include OSHC, LDC, OCC, mobile multi-purpose services, on-farm care, multi-sited child care, and overnight care.

The weeks, hours and days that the services operate are worked out in consultation with the parents who use the services.

Innovative services assist families and communities where conventional mainstream services do not meet their particular needs.

Mobile child care services

Mobile child care services visit rural and remote areas and may provide flexible children's sessions, including playgroups, vacation care, on-farm care, parenting support, toy and video lending libraries, and parent resource library services.

Mobile child care services provide children with an opportunity to socialise with other children and participate in early childhood education opportunities that would not otherwise be available to them.

Some mobile services also provide regular LDC sessions in community venues, visiting small rural communities each week.

Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Services

Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Services (MACS) are not-for-profit community-based services funded to meet the educational, social and developmental needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Long day care is provided for preschool children with each MACS providing at least one other form of child care or activity such as outside school hours care, playgroups, nutrition programs and/or parenting programs.

Indigenous playgroups

Indigenous playgroups provide children not yet attending school with a wide range of culturally-appropriate developmental, educational and socialisation activities that are relevant to the local community. The social and educational development aims to prepare children for preschool, school and relationships within the wider community. Playgroups also provide an opportunity for families to support each other and share common experiences.

Indigenous outside school hours care and enrichment programs

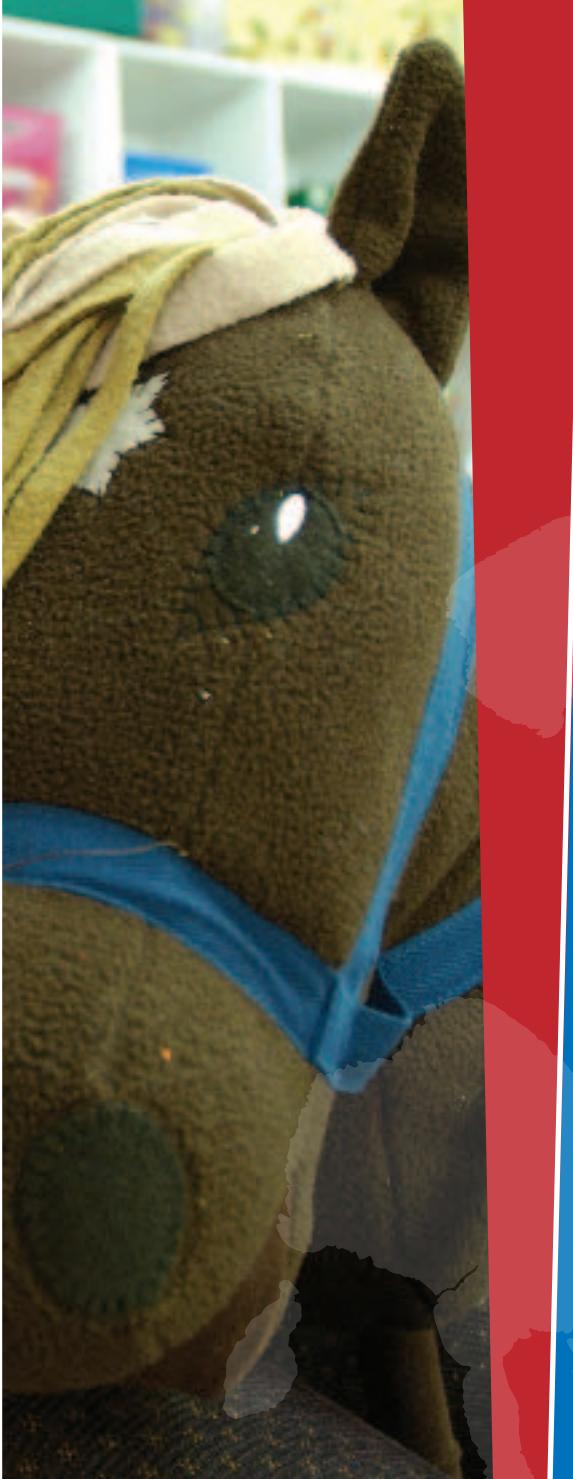
Indigenous outside school hours care and enrichment programs provide care for Indigenous school children and teenagers. Enrichment programs operate from a community venue and may provide supervised care, organised activities, homework centres and nutrition services.

Crèches (including JET crèches)

The crèche model provides a flexible form of child care where other forms of child care are not available. Crèches are centre-based and operate for flexible hours.

Crèches offer culturally-appropriate child care programs and provide families with an introduction to early learning and child care opportunities. These services foster individual children's strengths, abilities and interests by providing developmentally and culturally-appropriate play and learning experiences.

Crèches established before 2008 are known as 'JET crèches' which were set up to assist eligible unemployed parents wanting to undertake study, work or job search activities to help them enter or re-enter the workforce. New services are known as 'crèches' as they will offer child care services to a broader group of clients.



3

Support for child Care services— funding and assistance

This section outlines the different types of Australian Government support for child care services.

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3.1 Types of assistance available

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC** **NMS**

The Child Care Services Support Program is Australian Government funding that supports child care and related services.

The Community Support Program is one element of the Child Care Services Support Program. The Community Support Program includes a range of payments designed to support access to child care for children and families when the market would otherwise fail to provide child care services.

The Community Support Program includes the following sub-programs:

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC** **NMS**

Establishment sub-program

The Establishment sub-program provides Set-Up Assistance, a payment aimed at improving access to child care in areas of need determined by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), especially in regional and remote areas. Set-Up Assistance is only available

for new Child Care Benefit (CCB) approved child care services in their first year of operation.

See 3.2 ▶

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC** **NMS**

Sustainability sub-program

The Sustainability sub-program provides a range of payments aimed at improving and supporting access to established child care services for families in areas of need determined by DEEWR. Payments under the Sustainability sub-program that may be available for existing CCB approved child care services include:

- Sustainability Assistance (long day care (LDC) and outside school hours care (OSHC) services only)

See 3.5 ▶

- Operational support payments for:
- Family Day Care Network Support
- In Home Care Service Support
- Operational Support for Occasional Care

See 3.6 ▶

- Regional Travel Assistance Grant

See 3.7 ▶

Budget-Based Funding sub-program



Budget-Based Funding provides payments to support a range of non-mainstream child care services.

Non-mainstream services operate in areas of need approved by DEEWR, particularly in regional, remote and Indigenous communities and do not generally administer CCB. Service types that receive the payment include:

- flexible/innovative child care services
- Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Services
- mobile child care services
- Indigenous outside school hours care and enrichment programs
- crèches (including Jobs, Education and Training (JET) crèches)
- Indigenous playgroups.

See 3.8 ▶

Conditions of funding

Australian Government funds must be used as soon as practicable for the operation of the service, and the organisation must not enter into any arrangements or commitments inconsistent with the funding purpose.

Child care services that receive Child Care Services Support Program funding are required to comply with the terms of their funding agreement, including (but not limited to):

- providing high quality child care services
- maintaining approval to administer CCB on behalf of families (except for non-mainstream services)
- complying with the conditions of their funding agreement and all applicable state and territory laws
- submitting all agreed deliverables to DEEWR by the specified due dates (such as Utilisation Reports, Activity Reports and financial acquittal documentation)
- providing address details of carers (family day care (FDC) services only).

For more information on these and other obligations to be met by Child Care Services Support Program funding recipients, visit the DEEWR website at
○ deewr.gov.au

or contact your state or territory office of DEEWR.

See back cover ▶

How does a service apply for funding?

For more information about what funding is available and how to apply for it:

- contact your state or territory office of DEEWR

See back cover ▶

- visit the DEEWR child care website at

○ deewr.gov.au

3.2 Set-up Assistance

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC** **NMS**

Set-up Assistance is a payment to help organisations to establish new child care services in areas of need.

Funding is provided to eligible new services to assist in meeting set-up costs such as:

- employing staff
- advertising for staff/carers and parents
- purchasing toys and equipment
- phone expenses
- insurance.

Who is eligible for Set-up Assistance?

To be eligible to receive Set-up Assistance a **new service** must be:

- approved to administer CCB on behalf of families
- not have commenced providing child care
- not be a relocation of an existing service
- not be taking over or replacing any child care service or other early childhood program that has operated at any time in the previous 12 months
- allocated places by DEEWR (in home care (IHC) services only)
- located in an area of need as determined by DEEWR (LDC only).

For more information about the eligibility criteria for Set-Up Assistance payments for each care type, visit the DEEWR website at:

○ deewr.gov.au

or contact your state or territory office of DEEWR.

See back cover ▶

New services that establish as **multiple care services** are only eligible to receive one Set-up Assistance payment.

Eligible OSHC services will receive a one-off Set-Up Assistance payment to assist with the establishment of each new Before School Care, After School Care and Vacation Care component.

All new services are expected to start providing care within three months of receiving a Set-up Assistance payment.

A service that is operating prior to approval for CCB, and services that are approved under the Long Day Care Incentive Scheme (LDCIS), are not eligible to receive Set-up Assistance. No other Child Care Services Support Program funding is available to services established under the LDCIS.

In certain exceptional circumstances, Set-up Assistance may be payable to LDC services, at the discretion of DEEWR.

Large for-profit organisations are no longer eligible for Set-Up Assistance payments

From 1 July 2008 large for-profit child care organisations will not be eligible for Set-Up Assistance payments over a certain threshold under the Child Care Services Support Program.

Eligible OSHC for-profit organisations may receive a Set-Up Assistance payment for up to **10** services only. For-profit OSHC organisations will not be eligible for further Set-Up Assistance payments if they are receiving a Set-Up Assistance payment up to and including the 10-service limit.

If eligible, a for-profit OSHC service may receive a Set-Up Assistance payment for each new Before School Care, After School Care or Vacation Care component operated by the service.

In rare instances, LDC services have received a Set-Up Assistance payment at the discretion of the responsible department.

The restriction does not apply to not-for-profit OSHC or LDC services.

For more information about Set-up Assistance, contact your DEEWR state or territory office

See back cover ▶

For information about the rates for Set-up Assistance

See appendix 4 ▶

When is Set-up Assistance paid?

Set-up Assistance is paid in full within 10 days of a service entering into a funding agreement with DEEWR. Services that receive Set-up Assistance are required to commence providing care within three months of receiving the payment.

3.3 Family Day Care Start Up Payment

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC** **NMS**

Family Day Care Start Up Payments aim to encourage people to consider FDC as a career option by providing assistance in meeting some of the initial set-up costs involved in establishing a family day care business. The payments aim to reduce the initial cost disincentive to potential FDC carers.

The FDC Start Up Payment of \$1500 has been available since 1 July 2006. The \$1500 payment may be used to meet expenses associated with satisfying legislative, regulatory or licensing requirements associated with the provision of FDC. This could include first aid certificates, insurance, minor building upgrades and buying equipment.

A **Remote Area FDC Start Up Payment** of \$5000 is available to potential carers who are living on a property in a remote or very remote location. Payments are available nationally to assist carers to undertake required changes to their home or its immediate surrounds so they can provide quality child care. It recognises that carers living on a property in a remote or very remote area may experience higher costs in making these improvements.

The \$5000 payment may be used to meet the costs of modifying infrastructure to comply with safety, legislative and regulatory requirements associated with the provision of FDC. This could include installing a fence around the home to protect children from the inherent dangers on a rural property.

For more information, and for the guidelines and selection criteria for the Family Day Care Start-Up Payment, visit the DEEWR website at
⑤ deewr.gov.au

3.4 Capital funding

FDC IHC OSHC LDC OCC NMS

Capital funding is available to eligible operating LDC services to upgrade existing infrastructure to meet the needs of the community.

Who is eligible for capital funding?

To be eligible, LDC services must:

- meet all the eligibility criteria to receive Sustainability Assistance
- provide evidence that there is demand in the community for the facilities or infrastructure that they propose to expand or upgrade
- secure equal funding (either in cash or in-kind) from state/territory government; local government; legal charitable trust; legal charity; philanthropic

* FDC and IHC services that received Sustainability Assistance in 2007–08 will continue to receive this funding in 2008–09. The payment is no longer available to new applicants for FDC and IHC.

institution; fundraising activities; or a combination of these sources to apply for this funding

- be operating from the facilities identified for upgrade or expansion.

This funding is intended to help existing services to upgrade or expand their facilities. It cannot be used to establish a new service or to fund construction of a new centre.

For more information about capital funding, contact your DEEWR state or Territory office.

See back cover ▶

3.5 Sustainability Assistance

FDC* IHC* OSHC LDC OCC NMS

Sustainability Assistance is a payment to support small child care services in areas of need determined by DEEWR. It is designed to help communities retain access to child care where the operation of a child care service is not likely to be financially viable.

See appendix 4 ▶

Outside School Hours Care

From 1 July 2008 Sustainability Assistance—Outside School Hours Care (Year 1) and Assistance—Outside School Hours Care (Ongoing) have been combined into one payment. For-profit and not-for-profit services

can receive Sustainability Assistance in their first year of operation. It is available to all OSHC services that have an average daily rate of attendance of 30 or less in their first year of operation.

OSHC services that are approved for CCB purposes during their first year of operation are eligible to receive this payment at a pro-rata rate covering the period from the date of approval to the day the service has been operating for 12 months.

Only not-for-profit services are eligible for funding beyond their first year of operation.

From 1 July 2008, the Australian Government is providing half-rate Sustainability Assistance to OSHC services with 21 to 30 places located in inner and outer regional, remote and very remote areas. This additional support is in recognition of the extra cost of providing child care in these areas.

Where an existing service transfers ownership to a new entity during its first year of operation, the new entity will be entitled to a pro-rata amount of Sustainability Assistance funding.

Services taking over or replacing any service that has been in operation for more than one year are not eligible.

Existing services relocating to new premises are not eligible.

When Sustainability Assistance is paid for the first year of operating

For the initial six months of funding, Sustainability Assistance-OSHC payments will be made in advance, based on a service's expected daily rate of attendance in its first year of operation.

After six months, the expected rate of daily attendance figure will be compared with the average actual rate of daily attendance experienced by services during the initial six months of funding. If the average actual rate of daily attendance differs materially from the expected rate of daily attendance, the level of funding will be revised to reflect the actual rate of daily attendance.

Who is eligible for Sustainability Assistance?

LDC and not-for-profit OSHC services which operate in an area of need determined by DEEWR may be eligible for Sustainability Assistance. Sustainability Assistance is also available to for-profit OSHC services which operate in an area of need, but is limited to their first year of operation only.

In determining whether a service is in an area of need, the following factors are taken in account:

- The service's number of occupied places
- The remoteness of the service as measured by the Australian Standard Geographical Classification
- The socio-economic status of the community, derived from Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics to provide a measure of socio-economic disadvantage).

When considering whether a LDC service is in an area of need, two additional factors are taken into account:

- The proportion of baby places (0-2 years) to be provided

- Whether the service is the sole provider of centre based LDC in the community.

Services with low utilisation and services located in regional and remote locations are eligible for greater support than services with high utilisation, or those located in major city areas.

More detailed information on a service's eligibility for Sustainability Assistance can be located in the program guidelines on the Office of Early Childhood Education and Child Care website at

○ oececc.gov.au

Services that were approved for funding under the Long Day Care Incentive Scheme (LDCIS) or the Private Provider Incentive Scheme (PPIS) are not eligible to receive Sustainability Assistance. No other Child Care Services Support Program funding is available to services established under the LDCIS or PPIS.

Multiple care services

Sustainability Assistance applies differently for each care component of a multiple care service.

- Centre-based component—Where a LDC service is co-located with a CCB-approved Occasional Care (OCC) service, the combined number of occupied places is used to assess eligibility for Sustainability Assistance.
- Home-based component—Where a FDC service is co-located with an IHC service, the combined number of occupied places is used to assess eligibility for Sustainability Assistance. Services that are ineligible for Sustainability Assistance may be eligible for operational support payments.

FDC services that received Sustainability Assistance in 2007–08 will continue to receive this funding in 2008–09. The payment is no longer available to **new** FDC applicants.

When is Sustainability Assistance paid?

Sustainability Assistance payments are paid quarterly in advance.

For information about the rates for Sustainability Assistance

See appendix 4 ▶

3.6 Operational support payments

FDC | **IHC** | **OSHC** | **LDC** | **OCC** | **NMS**

The Australian Government provides CCB-approved FDC, IHC and OCC services with operational support payments to assist them to deliver **flexible** services.

- Family Day Care Network Support (FDC NS) is provided to assist FDC services to support a network of carers who provide flexible care and operate in a number of different locations.
- In Home Care Service Support (IHC SS) is provided to assist IHC services with the costs of recruiting, monitoring and supporting a network of carers and allocating carers to provide flexible care for children in their family home.

- Operational Support for Occasional Care (OS OCC) is provided to OCC services to provide flexible, short-term care for families.

Who is eligible for FDC NS?

The payment is available to both **not-for-profit** and **for-profit** FDC services that are approved for CCB purposes.

Who is eligible for OS OCC?

All services that have been allocated approved occasional care places can receive operational support.

When are operational support payments paid?

Operational support payments are calculated, reviewed and adjusted each year and are paid quarterly in advance.

Calculating, claiming and adjusting operational support payments

See appendix 2 ▶

FDC NS and IHC SS funding is calculated based on actual use (occupied places) of child care places. Funding is based on the number of equivalent full-time (EFT) places that the service utilises. Services report actual use of child care, which enables DEEWR to monitor use of child care places and to accurately calculate funding. One EFT is equal to 35 hours of

care per week. It is possible for one EFT to be used by more than one child on a part-time basis.

Both FDC NS and IHC SS are calculated on an incremental rate-per-place. FDC NS is based on the geographical location of a service and/or the majority (51 per cent or more) of its carers. IHC SS is based on the geographical location of a service and/or where the majority (51 per cent or more) of care is provided. An IHC service with 21 per cent or more of its carers in remote or very remote areas can access the higher rates of funding.

FDC and IHC services in remote and very remote areas receive a higher rate-per-place than services in metropolitan and inner and outer regional areas. The increments recognise the higher costs associated with service delivery outside major cities.

| FDC NS and IHC SS | |
|-------------------------------|----------|
| Metropolitan area (base rate) | \$22.35* |
| Inner regional area | \$22.80* |
| Outer regional area | \$29.05* |
| Remote area | \$39.40* |
| Very remote area | \$45.65* |

* Indexed annually

The formula for calculating Network Support and Service Support is:

| | | | | |
|----------------|---|---------------------------|---|----------------------|
| Rate-per-place | × | number of occupied places | × | number of weeks open |
|----------------|---|---------------------------|---|----------------------|

The maximum IHC SS payment that an in home care service is eligible to receive is based on its approved EFT level. In home care services may accept additional children at a peak time and average their care over each quarter, but must not exceed their total approved EFT limit for care provided in any one quarter.

Service support payments for in home care

| | | | | | |
|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|
| FDC | IHC | OSHC | LDC | OCC | NMS |
|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|

In home care services that are approved for CCB purposes and have IHC places allocated by DEEWR can receive service support (IHC SS). Subject to availability of places and approval by DEEWR, the allocation of additional places to IHC services may be based on demand for child care. The level of demand is assessed using evidence of utilisation of approved places (occupied places) that services provide in their reporting.

Funding based on **approved places and location of the service and its carers** for two quarters is provided from the next scheduled quarterly payment when you sign a Variation to Funding Agreement. This level of initial funding is approved to ensure that

* Indexed annually

services have the capacity to dedicate staff, to recruit new carers, and to build up utilisation. After the two quarters, funding is then based on **occupied places and location of the service and its carers**.

Operational support payments for occasional care

| | | | | | |
|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|
| FDC | IHC | OSHC | LDC | OCC | NMS |
|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|

Occasional Care funding is paid on a rate-per-place payment. The number of approved OCC care places determines a service's funding amount. Operational support applies for the period from the date of the CCB approval to the date the service has been operating for 12 months. The service should commence providing care within three months of receiving the initial payment.

The maximum rate of operational support is based on a standard 40-hour week.

| OCC OS | |
|-----------------------------|----------|
| Major Cities/Inner Regional | \$27.35* |
| Outer regional area | \$32.80* |
| Remote/Very Remote | \$35.55* |

The formula for calculating OS OCC is:

| | | | | |
|----------------|---|---------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| Rate-per-place | × | approved OCC places | × | weeks that the service is operating |
|----------------|---|---------------------|---|-------------------------------------|

A pro-rata rate applies for occasional care services open less than 40 hours per week.

Employer-sponsored places—when a service receives an operational support payment, the number of occupied places advised in the Utilisation Report must not include any usage of employer-sponsored places.

3.7 Regional Travel Assistance Grant

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC** **NMS**

The Regional Travel Assistance Grant (RTAG) is a payment to assist with travel costs associated with supporting the network of FDC/IHC carers in rural and remote areas.

Who is eligible for RTAG?

To be eligible for RTAG, FDC and IHC services must:

- be located in outer regional, remote or very remote areas
- have a majority of their FDC carers/IHC families located in these areas.

Where a service is located outside an area of need, but the majority of carers (FDC) or families (IHC) attached to the service live in areas of need, RTAG is based on travel to visit all carers/family homes in the service, irrespective of where they live.

When is RTAG paid?

RTAG is paid quarterly in arrears based on a claim form submitted by the service each quarter. Services need to keep records for accountability purposes.

[See appendix 3 ▶](#)

For information about how to calculate RTAG

[See appendix 3 ▶](#)

3.8 Budget Based Funding

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC** **NMS**

Budget Based funding is a payment to assist non-CCB non-mainstream services with costs associated with operating a child care program.

3.9 Reporting obligations for all child care services receiving Community Support payments

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC** **NMS**

All child care services receiving Community Support payments are required to report regularly to DEEWR to provide data on their performance and utilisation. Providing this information is a condition of each

service's funding agreement with DEEWR and payments to services are not made if their reporting obligations have not been met.

Utilisation Report (UR)—services must submit URs to DEEWR at regular intervals. Some Community Support payments are in part determined by a service's level of utilisation. Variations in usage may alter the level of funding a service is entitled to receive.

Activity Report (AR)—CCB-approved services must submit an Activity Report at the end of their funding agreement with DEEWR. The AR's purpose is to report on a service's progress in meeting the outcomes against performance indicators specified in the funding agreement with DEEWR. The AR provides the framework for services to describe their activities and strategies they have implemented during the period for which they received funding.

Service Progress Report (SPR)—Non-mainstream services must submit a SPR six months after beginning the funded activity. The SPR's purpose is to report on a service's progress in meeting the outcomes against performance indicators specified in the funding agreement with DEEWR. The SPR provides the framework for services to describe their activities and strategies they have implemented during the period for which they received funding.

Acquittal reporting at the end of the funding agreement—all service operators receiving Community Support payments are required to demonstrate that they have spent the payments solely for the purpose for which they were intended, and in accordance with the conditions of the funding agreement.

For templates of these reports visit the DEEWR website at deewr.gov.au or contact your DEEWR state or territory office.

See back cover ▶

For more information about reporting, see your funding agreement with DEEWR or contact your DEEWR state or territory office.

See back cover ▶

3.10 Accessing Community Support payment forms

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC** **NMS**

These forms are available from the DEEWR website at

deewr.gov.au

| |
|---|
| Application for Family Day Care Set Up Assistance and Network Support Funding |
| Application for Family Day Care Start Up Payment |
| Application for Set-up Assistance Outside School Hours Care |
| Application for Sustainability Assistance Long Day Care |
| Application for Sustainability Assistance Outside School Hours Care |
| Application for Operational Support Occasional Care |
| Application for Regional Travel Assistance Grant |

3.11 Inclusion and Professional Support Program



The Inclusion and Professional Support Program (IPSP) is an integrated approach to meeting the inclusion and professional support needs of child care services.

The aim of the IPSP is to promote and maintain high quality care and inclusion for all children in eligible child care services, by increasing the skill level of carers and service staff.

For information about the IPSP, visit the DEEWR website at

◎ deewr.gov.au

3.12 Inclusion Support Program



The Inclusion Support Program provides assistance and support to help child care services to include all children, including those with additional needs, in the child care environment. Regionally-based Inclusion Support Agencies (ISAs) coordinate assistance from a network of specialist workers, known as Inclusion Support Facilitators who work at the local level with child care services.

Inclusion Support Facilitators provide practical advice and facilitate access to a range of support designed

to strengthen the service's ability to create a quality care environment which is inclusive of all children. These supports include, but are not limited to, onsite 'inclusion readiness' planning, access to specialist equipment, specialist bicultural support, and funding to assist with the costs of employing additional workers to increase staff-to-child ratios.

A key role of Inclusion Support Facilitators is to assist services to develop a Service Support Plan. These plans identify and document a plan of action to build the capacity of a service to provide inclusive practices. These plans also identify whether or not the service requires additional funding, resources or equipment to include children with additional needs into a particular child care environment.

For details about the Inclusion Support Agency for your region, visit the DEEWR website at

◎ deewr.gov.au

3.13 Professional Support Program



The Professional Support Program is a responsive and nationally coordinated approach to supporting the professional development needs of the child care sector. State/territory-based Professional Support Coordinators (PSCs) and Indigenous Professional Support Units (IPSUs) coordinate and manage the delivery of professional development and support to child care services.

PSCs provide support to eligible child care services requiring professional development. IPSUs provide culturally-appropriate advice and support for eligible Indigenous child care services.

The support services available to eligible child care services through PSCs and IPSUs include:

- phone advice and support
- resource materials
- flexible professional development options
- online resource collections, including fact sheets, training information and useful links
- referral to appropriate agencies for more advice and information.

IPSU also advise PSCs about professional support that meets the needs of eligible mainstream child care services with Indigenous staff or children.

For details about the Professional Support Coordinator or Indigenous Professional Support Unit for your state or territory visit the DEEWR website at

○ deewr.gov.au

3.14 Bicultural support

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC** **NMS**

Bicultural support is time-limited, free-of-charge, specialist assistance to child care services to help them successfully include children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and Indigenous children. Examples of bicultural support are onsite or phone language assistance and advice on cultural practices that will help services to develop a good relationship with a child's family.

Child care services can contact their local ISA, PSC or IPSU to discuss the specific cultural support they require—for example, a bicultural worker who can talk with a non-English speaking family and also explain the cultural customs and beliefs of that family to the service staff.

For information about your local Inclusion Support Agency, the Professional Support Coordinator or the Indigenous Professional Support Unit for your state or territory, visit the DEEWR website at

○ deewr.gov.au

3.15 Inclusion Support Subsidy



The Inclusion Support Subsidy (ISS) is available to child care services to assist in the inclusion of children who have a demonstrated ongoing need for a high level of support in a child care environment.

The eligible groups are:

- children with disabilities (diagnosed physical, sensory, neurological, intellectual)
- children undergoing continuing assessment for such disabilities or developmental delay
- refugee children who have been subjected to torture or trauma, either in their country of origin or during their refugee experience.

Eligibility for the ISS does not mean automatic entitlement to the subsidy. Consideration of the need, type and level of ISS is undertaken on a service-by-service or carer-by-carer basis.

For eligibility details, including requirements of documentary evidence, see the ISS guidelines. They are available from your local Inclusion Support Agency or visit the DEEWR website at

○ deewr.gov.au

Child care services can apply for the ISS through a Service Support Plan. This Service Support Plan is based on the child care environment and will assess a child care service's eligibility for ISS.

Inclusion Support Subsidy funding may be approved for any of the following purposes:

- to engage an additional worker in the service to increase the staff-to-child ratio when the child with ongoing high support needs is in care
- to purchase specialist equipment for a child with ongoing high support needs, without which the child could not be included in care
- to pay a relief worker while permanent staff or carers attend training related to the inclusion of a child with high support needs
- to pay an extra worker to accompany an eligible carer caring for a child with ongoing high support needs on out-of-home excursions
- to provide an additional payment to home-based carers who care for a child or children with ongoing high support needs in recognition of the additional care and attention that such children require, and the impact that this has on the care environment.

3.16 Flexible Support Funding



Flexible Support Funding (FSF) is **time-limited support** provided to eligible child care services to build their capacity to include a child with ongoing high support needs, including children with a disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.

For centre-based child care, FSF may be used to employ an additional worker to increase the staff-to-child ratio above licensing requirements for a time-limited period. For FDC and IHC, FSF may be used to employ an additional worker to enable a child with ongoing high support needs to participate in out-of-home excursions such as playgroups or vacation care excursions. FSF may also be used to provide relief care so that permanent staff can attend training or prepare Service Support Plans.

The funding amount is a contribution towards the costs associated with employing the additional worker and FSF is not intended to cover the full costs associated with employing that worker.

A Service Support Plan will assess the need for FSF on a case-by-case basis. Eligibility for FSF does not mean automatic entitlement to payment.

Child care services should first contact their local ISA or their state or territory PSC or IPSU. An Inclusion Support Facilitator will then visit the child care service, observe the child and, if appropriate, help the service to complete a streamlined application form and plan to assist with the appropriate inclusion of the child. Currently, ISAs are responsible for approving applications locally to ensure funding is responsive to needs.

If the child care service employs an additional worker, they should submit a claim to their local ISA in accordance with national guidelines.

For information about the national guidelines, and to contact your local Inclusion Support Agency, or the Professional Support Coordinator or Indigenous Professional Support Unit for your state or territory, visit the DEEWR website at

◎ deewr.gov.au

For future updates on changes to the Inclusion and Professional Support Program, see the online Child Care Services Handbook at

◎ deewr.gov.au/childcarehandbook

4

Operating a service

This section sets out information about operating a child care service. This includes providing documents about the operator's business entity, employing staff lawfully, meeting the financial responsibilities of a business including paying applicable taxes, keeping accurate attendance records and complying with the *Privacy Act 1988*. Operators' rights to cease or substantially change their operations are limited by their relationship with the Australian Government, which may cancel approval or terminate funding under some conditions.

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4.1 Legal responsibilities for operating a service

FDC IHC OSHC LDC OCC NMS

Becoming the operator of a child care service means accepting the legal responsibilities associated with setting up and administering the service. The operator of an approved child care service has many obligations, including under the family assistance law. The operator has a legal responsibility to:

- comply with the family assistance law (in particular, to reduce fees in accordance with notices issued by the Family Assistance Office (FAO))
- comply with child care laws (for example, state or territory licensing laws)
- account for Australian Government funds
- ensure that the operator and their key personnel are suitable persons to operate a child care service
- comply with Australian Government child care funding agreements
- ensure the service remains financially viable and can meet its debts and other obligations as they fall due.

Some operators may decide to contract out, or devolve to another committee or organisation, some aspects of their service's management. This can affect their eligibility for funding. The Australian Government does not intend to restrict the funding available to operators contracting out or devolving part of their operation, such as staff management.

Operators who contract out or devolve aspects of management must advise the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations in writing.

See back cover ▶

In some circumstances, the level of responsibility for a service contracted out or devolved to another person or body could be such that the successful contractor becomes the operator of the service. In this case, any existing funding approvals with the program will be terminated, and the successful contractor should submit a new application for funding.

Legal obligations are set out in Australian Government child care legislation, rules and funding agreements. Adherence to these conditions ensures that the Australian Government achieves its objectives in the

child care area, and also ensures the service is operating in accordance with legislation and in a financially responsible manner.

For important information on the conditions for continued approval

See section 5 ▶

Any funding agreement with the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) should be stored securely.

4.2 Business type and provision of documentation



To apply for approval as an eligible child care service to receive Australian Government funding under the Child Care Services Support Program, which provides operational support funding to eligible child care services, a service must be one of the following organisational types.

Incorporation

Community-based service operators must be incorporated under relevant state or territory legislation. Incorporation helps to protect the members of a service's management committee from personal liability.

Incorporated associations

Incorporated associations are bodies formed under state or territory legislation governing incorporation of associations.

Incorporated associations must provide DEEWR with a copy of their:

- rules of association
- certificate of incorporation
- notice of appointment and address of public officer
- registration from the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (if applicable).

DEEWR accepts the certificate of incorporation as evidence of incorporation.

Companies

Companies are formed under the corporations law. Since the amendments to the corporations law in July 1998, companies are no longer required to have a memorandum and articles of association.

Instead, they may have:

- **either** a single set of rules known as a 'constitution'
- **or** basic rules of internal management which are contained in the corporations law known as 'replaceable rules'

Companies formed before the 1998 amendments ('pre-July 1998 companies') may continue to have a memorandum and articles of association, or they may repeal them and adopt the 'replaceable rules', or they may decide on a new constitution.

When a pre-July 1998 company continues to have a memorandum and articles of association it is required to submit the following information to DEEWR:

- articles of association
- memorandum of association
- certificate of incorporation.

A new company (that is, one formed after the 1998 amendments), or an existing company that has repealed its memorandum and articles of association, is required to submit the following to DEEWR:

- a copy of the certificate of registration (proof of incorporation)
- a copy of company documentation indicating who can act on behalf of the company (the approved signatories)
- a company extract report, containing:
 - Australian Business Number (ABN)
 - registered office address
 - principal address
 - names and addresses of directors and the company secretary.

Trusts

An operator who intends to operate the service as a trustee on behalf of a trust must provide to DEEWR a copy of the trust deed.

Sole proprietors and owner-operators

An unincorporated owner or sole proprietor who is operating the business in a name other than their own must provide to DEEWR details of the business name together with the following details:

- Australian Business Number (ABN)
- other business number (for example, if registered with state, territory or local government)
- business name
- registered address

- place of business
- name(s) of person(s) carrying on the business.

Partnerships

A child care service operating as a partnership should provide to DEEWR a copy of the partnership agreement identifying all members of the partnership.

When there is no formal partnership agreement, supporting documents may consist of a letter from the partnership's solicitors clearly identifying all members of the partnership and confirming the right of an individual to act on behalf of that partnership. Partners themselves may sign a declaration that they are acting in partnership.

4.3 Industrial awards and agreements

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LCD** **OCC** **NMS**

Staff employed by your service are not employees or agents of the Australian Government. Staff must be allowed rates and conditions in accordance with applicable awards and agreements.

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LCD** **OCC** **NMS**

Some family day care or in home care services may be able to access the National Family Day Care Council's national insurance plan for carers.

For more information about the insurance plan, visit

○ familydaycare.com.au

4.4 Fees



If the service provides before and after school care, the service should charge separate fees for both before and after school care.

Non-mainstream services must have an appropriate fee setting policy which is based on a family's capacity to pay.

4.5 Goods and Services Tax



The Goods and Services Tax (GST) applies to all goods delivered and services performed, except for those goods and services exempted.

Fees charged for access to approved child care services and services provided by registered carers are not subject to GST.

Child care services pay GST on some items purchased for their service, but can claim the GST component back.

For more information about GST, visit the Australian Taxation Office website at

 ato.gov.au

4.6 Attendance records



All services must ensure that they keep accurate attendance records.

Accurate attendance records are required to confirm that a particular child for whom Child Care Benefit (CCB) is paid actually attended the service or home where the care was provided for the hours or the sessions of care stated, or was absent for a booked period of care that would have otherwise been provided on that day.

Services also need attendance records to satisfy insurance, public liability and workers' compensation obligations, as well as protecting the service against possible future legal action by parents.

State and territory government regulations relating to attendance records may require additional information, such as the parent's signature or initials, and compulsory daily signatures by parents or guardians.



Your service must keep accurate attendance records, including records of absences, to confirm that a particular child for whom CCB is paid actually attended the service for the sessions stated, or was absent for a period of care that was booked and paid for.

Complying with applicable state and territory regulations is a condition of the continued approval of your service for Child Care Benefit purposes.

See 5.3 ▶

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC** **NMS**

Signing arrangements

The custodial parent (including guardian or authorised person) should, if possible, record the arrival and departure times of their child or children attending care. It is best practice for the service to ensure these entries are signed or initialled by the custodial parent at the time of arrival and departure on each day of care.

This is important because attendance records are used to determine the hours or sessions of care for which CCB and Jobs, Education and Training Child Care fee assistance can validly be claimed. Where state or territory legislation allows staff to sign, it is still a good idea to ask the parent or guardian to countersign regularly (weekly is recommended).

This should be done even in situations when staff or carers are required to take children to and from school and in other circumstances, as agreed with custodial parents (for example, in outside school hours care situations). This ensures parents share responsibility for the record of the hours the service reports as child care usage, creates transparency for parents and staff, and can help to keep compliance visits, which involve the inspection of records, as brief as possible.

Services must still ensure that records of attendance, including absences, meet all requirements of applicable state or territory laws.

4.7 Who is responsible for ensuring attendance records are kept?

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC** **NMS**

It is your service's responsibility to ensure that attendance records are maintained accurately and clearly. If you fail to do so you have breached family assistance legislation. This may lead to penalties for your service.

An attendance record format that uses parents' signatures or initials and that meets accountability requirements is available from the Family Assistance Office.

See back cover ▶

Alternatively, services can use their own forms or records as long as they provide the necessary information.

4.8 Absences from Care

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC** **NMS**

Absences from care fall into two categories that relate to eligibility for the payment of CCB—'allowable' and 'approved' absences.

Allowable absences

Each child is eligible for CCB for 30 days of allowable absences from care across all approved child care services during each financial year. Allowable absences can be taken for any reason and do not require supporting documentation, but they are only available on a day on which care would otherwise have been provided if the child was not absent.

All allowable absences should be noted on attendance records. It is best practice to get a parent signature where each absence is noted on the attendance record.

Allowable absences do **not** apply to occasional care services.

Services, carers or in home carers must give families a regular—at least once a statement period—statement of the number of allowable absences each child has used in the financial year-to-date. You may either include this information on a receipt or statement or provide it separately.

Approved absences

Child Care Benefit is payable for all approved absences and there is no limit on the number, provided that:

- the absence relates to a day on which care would otherwise have been provided if the child were not absent **and**
- the absence is one of the approved types of absence **and**
- your service obtains and keeps the required documentation **and**

- you meet the requirements for recording attendance and absences **and**
- child care fees are charged.

See 12.2 ▶

To ensure that CCB is paid correctly, services and carers must keep a record of all absences for each child, including the date and reason for absence. All approved absences must be noted on the attendance record. It is best practice to get a parent signature where each absence is noted on the attendance record.



CCB is paid if a parent books and pays for care provided by an approved occasional care service and the child does not attend that care. In approved occasional care services, this is an approved absence or 'permitted circumstance' for CCB purposes. To ensure that CCB is paid correctly in these circumstances, services must keep a record of all absences for each child.

Absences must be noted on the attendance record form. It is best practice to get a parent signature where each absence is noted on the attendance record.

The CCB absence provisions also apply to the payment of Jobs, Education and Training Child Care fee assistance.

All records are to be retained by the service for at least 36 months from the end of the calendar year in which the relevant care was provided. Remember, the family assistance law requires you to retain these records even if your service closes or is sold.

4.9 Information management

FDC | IHC | OSHC | LDC | OCC | NMS

National Privacy Principles

Child care services are subject to the National Privacy Principles (NPPs) under the Privacy Act in their handling of personal information. Compliance with these principles is also a condition of the continued approval of a child care service. A summary of these principles is set out below. This summary gives you a general idea of your obligations.

For more information about NPPs, visit the Privacy Commissioner's website at

◎ privacy.gov.au/act/npps

Principle 1 – Collection of information

You should:

- only collect personal information that is necessary for your functions or activities
- use fair and lawful ways to collect personal information
- collect personal information directly from an individual if it is reasonable and practicable to do so

- at the time of collection of personal information, or as soon as practicable afterwards, take reasonable steps to make an individual aware of:
 - why you are collecting information about them
 - who else you might give it to
 - other specified matters
 - take reasonable steps to ensure the individual is aware of this information even if you have collected it from someone else

Principle 2 – Use and disclosure

You should make sure to only use or disclose personal information for the primary purpose of collection, unless one of the exemptions in NPP 2.1 apply (for example, all related secondary purposes are within the individual's reasonable expectations, you have consent, or there are specified law enforcement or public health and public safety circumstances).

Note that if the information is sensitive the uses or disclosures allowed are more limited.

A secondary purpose within reasonable expectations must be directly related and the direct marketing provisions of NPP 2.1(c) do not apply.

Principle 3 – Data quality

You should take reasonable steps to ensure the personal information collected, used or disclosed is accurate, complete and up-to-date. This may require the service to correct information.

Principle 4 – Data security

You should:

- take reasonable steps to protect the personal information the service holds from misuse and loss, and from unauthorised access, modification or disclosure
- take reasonable steps to destroy or permanently de-identify personal information if it is no longer needed for any purpose for which the service may use or disclose information.

Principle 5 – Openness

You should:

- have a short document that sets out clearly expressed policies about how personal information is managed and make it available to anyone who asks for it
- if an individual asks, take reasonable steps to let them know what sort of personal information the service holds, for what purposes it is held, and how the service collects, uses and discloses that information.

Principle 6 – Access and correction

People have the right of access to their personal information held by a service.

You should, if an individual asks, give them access to the personal information held about them unless particular circumstances apply that allow the service to limit the extent to which it gives access—these include emergency situations, specified business imperatives, and law enforcement or other public interests.

Principle 7 – Identifiers

You should only adopt, use or disclose an Australian Government identifier if particular circumstances apply that would allow the service to do so.

Principle 8 – Anonymity

You should, if it is lawful and practicable to do so, give people the option of interacting anonymously with you.

Principle 9 – Transborder data flows

You may only transfer personal information overseas if you have checked that you meet the requirements of NPP 9 as set out in the full guidelines.

Principle 10 – Sensitive information

You must:

- not collect sensitive information unless the individual has consented, it is required by law, or in other special specified circumstances, for example, relating to health services provision and individual or public health or safety
- get consent to collect sensitive information unless specified exemptions apply.

Compliance and accountability

This section details the conditions for continued approval for child care services under the *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999*, and also provides some information about responsibilities under funding agreements. It also describes the operation of some other key legislative provisions.

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5.1 Compliance monitoring

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC** **NMS**

In the 2005–06 Budget, the Australian Government announced a strengthened compliance framework for child care, with increased monitoring and a tougher stance on non-compliance. This involves closer monitoring of compliance with rules under both the family assistance law and funding agreements. Monitoring visits are generally unannounced, and services need to be ready to provide access to records to demonstrate compliance with responsibilities.

5.2 Approved child care services

An approved child care service is a service that is approved under section 195 of the *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999* ('the Act').

Continued approval of an approved child care service is subject to the following conditions:

- compliance with any 'eligibility rules' determined under the Act. The eligibility rules are set out in

the Child Care Benefit (Eligibility of Child Care Services for Approval and Continued Approval) Determination 2000

See 5.4 ▶

- an approved child care service must not contravene an obligation imposed on it under the family assistance law

See 5.5 ▶

- cooperation with a person exercising compliance monitoring powers (the powers of a person authorised under the Act to enter child care service premises and inspect records)

See 5.6 ▶

- compliance with all applicable requirements relating to child care imposed by laws of the Australian Government, and of the state or territory in which the service is located

See 5.7 ▶

- if child care places are allocated to a service under the Act, that it does not provide child care in excess of the number of allocated places.

See 5.8 ▶

Additional conditions for continued approval may also be imposed on child care services under the Act.

5.3 Sanctions, offences and financial penalties

Approved child care services are subject to possible sanctions if they do not comply with any condition for continued approval. Sanctions include suspension and cancellation of approval. In the case of certain obligations, non-compliance is also a criminal offence and carries significant financial penalties. These are identified throughout this section, with maximum penalties shown.

The Australian Government recently expanded the civil penalties and infringement notice scheme introduced in 2007, which initially only applied to Child Care Access Hotline reporting. An infringement notice is a monetary penalty that can be issued to a service for failure to comply with an obligation under family assistance law. Civil penalties are monetary penalties determined in the courts that do not involve a criminal liability. The Minister may seek a civil penalty order directly, or alternatively an infringement notice may be issued by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) to a non-compliant service. If a service receives an infringement notice and pays the amount set out in the notice, a civil penalty can be avoided.

Civil penalties and infringements now apply to a range of obligations that also carry a criminal offence. Infringement notices can be issued where a service provider contravenes an obligation. Penalties range from \$220 to \$4400 for an individual and \$440 to \$8800 for a body corporate. If the fine is not paid within 28 days, action will be taken through the civil courts.

More serious contraventions may be taken directly to the civil courts. The maximum penalty per contravention is \$22 000 for an individual and \$44 000 for a body corporate. The courts determine the size of the penalty based on all relevant matters.

Under the family assistance law DEEWR may also write directly to families who are using a child care service that has not complied, or is not complying with a condition for its continued approval, about the non-compliance and to inform them of the effect on their Child Care Benefit (CCB) entitlement if the approval is suspended or cancelled.

In addition to the above actions, **DEEWR now has the discretion to publicise information** relating to the sanctioning or suspension of a service for non-compliance with the conditions for continued approval. Details of the sanction or suspension, and the service they apply to, may be published, for example, on DEEWR web sites.

5.4 Eligibility rules

The eligibility rules impose a range of requirements. **An approved service that does not comply with one or more of the eligibility rules may be sanctioned. Where other penalties also apply this is noted in the relevant description.**

Suitability

The operator of a service and the operator's key personnel must remain suitable persons to operate a child care service.

In the case of an operator who is a body corporate, key personnel are the people who are responsible for

the executive decisions of the operator or any other person who is concerned with, or takes part in, the management of the operator.

At a minimum, matters that are relevant to the suitability of a body corporate operator and its key personnel include:

- ability to meet and provide the appropriate quality of child care
- record of financial management
- conduct as providers of child care
- compliance with responsibilities as providers of child care and obligations arising from the receipt of payments from the Australian Government
- maintaining confidentiality of personal information, including information in their possession as former operators of an approved child care service
- any relevant criminal charges pending
- any relevant convictions or findings of guilt for an offence.

The staff of a service (and in the case of family day care (FDC) and in home care (IHC), the carers contracted by the service) must remain suitable people to provide child care, and services must continue to take reasonable steps to ensure that this is the case.

When a service employs a new member of staff, or a FDC or IHC service contracts a new carer, the service must undertake checks on that person for any relevant criminal charges or convictions or findings of guilt against the person for an offence.

If the operator of a service becomes aware of anything that affects the suitability of a member of staff or a carer to provide child care, the operator must give DEEWR written notice within seven days, setting out the action taken, or that will be taken, to deal with the issue.

See back cover ▶

Provision of care



An approved long day care (LDC) service must continue to ensure that:

- most of the children provided with care will not have started school, and are children that attend at least one day a week
- it operates on all normal working days in at least 48 weeks of the year
- it remains available to provide care for any child for at least eight continuous hours on each normal working day on which it operates
- when a child attends a session of care, the service does not prevent the child from attending any part of that session.



An approved FDC service must continue to ensure that:

- most of the children provided with care attend the service at least one day a week
- it operates on all normal working days in at least 48 weeks of the year

- it remains available to provide care for any child for at least eight continuous hours on each normal working day on which it operates
- when a child attends a session of care, the service does not prevent the child from attending any part of that session.

These responsibilities fall to the approved child care service, not to carers; services must therefore enter into arrangements with carers that ensure compliance with these responsibilities or they may be sanctioned.

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC** **NMS**

An approved IHC service must continue to ensure that:

- it provides child care places only to children who cannot be cared for by other child care services, or who cannot otherwise be suitably cared for in the following circumstances:
 - a child who has, or who lives with another child who has, an illness or disability
 - a child whose guardian (or guardian's partner) has an illness or disability that affects their ability to care for the child
 - a child who lives in a rural or remote area
 - the work hours of a child's guardian (or guardian's partner) are hours when no other approved child care service is available

- a child whose guardian (or guardian's partner) is caring for three or more children who have not yet started school
- it operates on all normal working days in at least 48 weeks of the year
- it remains available to provide care for any child for at least eight continuous hours on each normal working day on which it operates
- when a child attends a session of care, the service does not prevent the child from attending any part of that session.

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC** **NMS**

An approved occasional child care (OCC) service must ensure that:

- most of the children provided with care will not have started school
- it operates for a maximum of nine hours per day.

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC** **NMS**

An approved outside school hours care (OSHC) service must ensure that:

- most of the children provided with care are attending school
- if it provides before or after school care, it operates on each school day
- if it provides vacation care, it remains available to provide care for any child for at least eight continuous hours on each normal working day in at least seven weeks of school holidays in the year.

Priority of access



Approved child care services other than OCC services must ensure that they continue to provide child care places according to the Priority of Access Guidelines.

For detailed information about the Priority of Access Guidelines

See 6.3 ▶

Insurance



Approved child care services must continue to have workers' compensation, public liability and other appropriate insurance, and must provide a copy of any such policy and a certificate of currency when asked.

Continuity of operator

An approved child care service must continue to be operated by the person who applied for its approval. If it ceases to be operated by that person, the Act requires that its approval be cancelled.

For the purposes of the Act, the service is treated as a new service and the new operator must make a new application for its approval.

Notifiable events

You must give DEEWR **written notice of at least 30 days before:**

- entering into a contract for the sale of the child care service premises
- terminating the lease of the premises
- changing the address of the service **or**
- ceasing to operate the service (a criminal offence also applies under the Act—penalty of \$6600 for an individual and \$33 000 for a body corporate).

You must give DEEWR **written notice within 14 days** of any change to the details contained in the service's application for approval (other than the address, which is subject to the special requirement above).

See back cover ▶

Information regarding child care services

DEEWR may require you to give information for a survey of child care services, or information about the operation of child care services.

Information requested may include, for example:

- in the case of carers employed or contracted by a FDC service, personal details of each carer and the address and telephone number of the premises where the carer provides the care
- in the case of all approved child care services, the number of child care places provided, or likely to be available, in a specified period.

Any requested information must be accurate and given when, and in the manner, required.

All child care services are required to report child care usage (excluding OSHC services) and child care vacancy information as part of this condition.

See 6.10 ▶

In addition to sanctions, this usage and availability reporting requirement is also subject to an infringement notice scheme involving financial penalties. A service that does not report on time may receive an infringement notice, and has the option of paying the lesser penalty set out in the notice or having the liability determined in court.

Personal information

Your service must not disclose personal information about a member of any family that uses the service, other than to DEEWR or the Family Assistance Office (FAO), unless the disclosure is legally required.

Personal information must be securely stored and people's personal details not be discussed other than for the purpose of conducting the service. All child care services must comply with the National Privacy Principles under the *Privacy Act 1988* in handling personal information.

See 4.9 ▶

Information that may identify a child as being at risk of serious abuse or neglect must not be disclosed to any member of a family.

Child care quality assurance

FDC IHC OSHC LDC OCC NMS

Approved LDC services must:

- participate in quality assurance in accordance with requirements published by the National Childcare Accreditation Council ('the council')
- maintain quality child care or make satisfactory progress to improve the quality of child care in accordance with the Quality Improvement and Accreditation System as assessed by the council.

FDC IHC OSHC LDC OCC NMS

A FDC service that is required to be registered with the council to participate in Family Day Care Quality Assurance must:

- participate in accordance with requirements published by the council
- maintain quality child care or make satisfactory progress to improve the quality of child care in accordance with Family Day Care Quality Assurance as assessed by the council.

FDC IHC OSHC LDC OCC NMS

An OSHC service that is required to be registered with the council to participate in Outside School Hours Care Quality Assurance must:

- participate in accordance with requirements published by the council

- maintain quality child care or make satisfactory progress to improve the quality of child care in accordance with Outside School Hours Care Quality Assurance as assessed by the council.

See section 7 ▶

Family day care services and in home care services—in home care agreements



An IHC service of an FDC service that operates in home care must enter into a written agreement with the in home carer and the family of the child receiving the care. The agreement must set out the terms and conditions of the care and must include:

- details of the care to be provided, any particular requirements of children with disabilities, and arrangements for emergencies
- the names of the children provided with care and the period for which it is being provided
- arrangements for insurance
- confirmation that the carer is not required to carry out duties other than child care
- details of any training and support to be provided to the carer
- any safety requirements to be met by the premises where the care is provided
- details of the fees to be charged for the care
- details of alternative arrangements if the usual carer is unavailable.

24-hour care



An approved child care service must not provide a period of 24-hour care to a child unless the period of 24-hour care has been approved.

For circumstances in which a period of 24-hour care can be approved

See 6.4 ▶

Change of location

If your service has an allocation of child care places under the Act, the location of the service must not be changed without approval from DEEWR.

Standard hours for family day care and in home care



FDC and IHC services must identify their standard hours in their publications and in information given to people using the service. Unless other specified times are approved by DEEWR the standard hours must be:

- hours that are between 7.00am and 6.30pm
- 10 continuous hours each day, from Monday to Friday
- hours during which the service normally provides care for the greatest number of children.

(‘Non-standard’ hours are any hours that are not standard hours as described above.)

5.5 Key obligations imposed on approved child care services under the family assistance law



A service may be sanctioned or a financial penalty imposed if it contravenes any obligation imposed on it under the family assistance law as amended from time to time.

Obligation to act on Family Assistance Office notices or act on other things that are certified by a service

If an approved child care service provides care to the child of a person who is conditionally eligible for Child Care Benefit (CCB) by fee reduction, the service will receive **notices from the FAO** in connection with those fee reductions. A notice may contain information about a range of things, including information:

- that a person is conditionally eligible for CCB by fee reduction
- about the hourly rate of fee reductions for a person in hardship or for care provided to a child at risk
- about a person's eligibility for the special grandparent rate of CCB
- that a person is no longer conditionally eligible for CCB by fee reduction **or**

- about a variation to a person's weekly limit of eligible hours, CCB percentage or schooling percentage.

In certain circumstances a **child care service can certify**:

- the hourly rate of fee reductions (child at risk or person in hardship)
- the weekly limit of eligible hours (child at risk)

See section 13 ▶

- the need for a period of 24-hour care (due to work-related commitments of both parents or exceptional circumstances).

A service must act in accordance with any such notice from the FAO or with a thing it has certified itself under the Act. That is, it must apply the relevant information in calculating amounts of fee reduction, reduce fees by those amounts and charge only those reduced fees (or cease to do so as the case may be), and it must do so as soon as practicable.

Apart from being subject to sanctions, a service that does not comply with this obligation, or does not do so as soon as practicable, is also committing a criminal offence (penalty of \$6600 for an individual and \$33 000 for a body corporate). Infringements and civil penalties may also be imposed. **See 5.3 ▶**

Obligation to charge no more than the usual fee

In certain circumstances the Australian Government pays all or nearly all of the full fee charged by a child care service. This includes circumstances when there is eligibility for Special Child Care Benefit (SCCB), the special grandparent rate, and Jobs, Education and Training Child Care fee assistance.

In each of these circumstances a child care service must ensure that it does not set fees that exceed the amount of the fees it would set for the same child in the same session if there were no such eligibility.

Apart from being subject to sanctions, a service that does not comply with this obligation is also committing a criminal offence (penalty of \$6600 for an individual and \$33 000 for a body corporate). Infringements and civil penalties may also be imposed.

See 5.3 ▶

Obligation to reduce fees accordingly when Special Child Care Benefit is payable for a child at risk (service is eligible under the Act for CCB by fee reduction)

Using the applicable rate and weekly limit of hours, a service must calculate the amount of fee reductions in relation to a child at risk, reduce the fees by the amount of CCB, and charge only the reduced fees.

Apart from being subject to sanctions, a service that contravenes this obligation is also committing a criminal offence (penalty of \$6600 for an individual and \$33 000 for a body corporate). Infringements and civil penalties may also be imposed.

See 5.3 ▶

Obligation to pass on additional fee reductions if additional amount becomes payable to a service for care provided to a child at risk

If a service has received amounts of advance for SCCB for care provided to a child at risk, and more is paid to the service because the entitlement amount is more than the amount already paid, the service must pass the amount on to the person responsible for paying the child care fees.

Apart from being subject to sanctions, a service that contravenes this obligation is also committing a criminal offence (penalty of \$6600 for an individual and \$33 000 for a body corporate). Infringements and civil penalties may also be imposed.

See 5.3 ▶

Obligation if a service is notified that its approval is suspended or cancelled

A service that receives notice of suspension or cancellation of its approval must cease to reduce fees for care provided **on or after the day the notice is received**.

A service that receives notice that suspension of its approval is lifted must start reducing fees again for care it provides from **the day after the notice is received**.

Apart from being subject to sanctions, a service that contravenes either of these obligations is also committing a criminal offence (penalty of \$6600 for an individual and \$33 000 for a body corporate). Infringements and civil penalties may also be imposed.

See 5.3 ▶

Obligation to provide receipts

Services must issue receipts for reduced child care fees. Receipts must show:

- the name of the service
- if applicable, the service's Australian Business Number (ABN)
- the name of the person to whom the receipt is issued
- the name of the child provided with care
- the fees paid
- the amount of fee reductions
- the period to which the payment relates

- the signature of the person who issued the receipt
- the receipt number
- the date of issue of the receipt
- the total number of days during the current financial year to which an allowable absence has been attributed.

Apart from being subject to sanctions, a service that contravenes this obligation is also committing a criminal offence (penalty of \$6600 for an individual and \$33 000 for a body corporate). Infringements and civil penalties may also be imposed.

See 5.3 ▶

Different rules apply to a service after it transitions to the Child Care Management System. In the interim, if the information is provided regularly in writing it may be in a format other than a receipt, such as a statement.

Obligation to keep records—approved child care services

All approved child care services **must** keep the following kinds of records:

- if applicable, the licence to operate a child care service issued by the state or territory where the service operates
- records of attendance for every child provided with care, including records of any absences which, in the opinion of the service, took place in permitted circumstances ('approved absences')

- or on a permitted absence day ('allowable absences')
- records of any instances in which the service certified something under the family assistance law (for example, for eligible hours or a CCB rate for a child at risk or an individual in hardship, or for the need for a period of 24-hour care, the record must include the reasons for doing so)
- copies of reports given under section 219N of the Act (*Statement of child care usage* (FA020) and *Child Care Benefit statement for payment summary* (FA026))

See section 15 ▶

- copies of notices of any determinations (CCB percentage, eligible hours limits, and so on) given to the service by the Secretary of DEEWR for CCB purposes
- copies of receipts
- enrolment forms
- any statements or other documents for the purposes of documenting an approved absence

See 12.2 ▶

- insurance policies and any other documentation relating to insurance
- accounting records, including cash books and journals
- copies of any in home care agreements **and**

in the case of **family day care only**:

- current records of the full name, residential address and contact number of each carer employed or contracted by the service

- if care is provided at a place other than the carer's residence, the address and telephone number of those other premises.

Records must be kept for 36 months from the end of the calendar year in which the care or event recorded occurred.

Apart from being subject to sanctions, a service that contravenes these obligations is also committing a criminal offence (penalty of \$6600 for an individual and \$33 000 for a body corporate). Infringements and civil penalties may also be imposed.

See 5.3 ▶

Services must also take note of their record keeping responsibilities under the conditions of any funding agreement.

Obligation to keep records—former approved child care service

A person who operates an approved child care service that ceases to be approved must keep records as if the service continued to be approved—that is, the same records, and for the same period.

This includes a service that is sold to another operator as an ongoing business, as the law requires the approval of a service to be cancelled in these circumstances, and a new application for approval made by the new operator. The seller must therefore retain records relating to their period of operation.

Within 14 days after the service ceases to be approved, the person must notify DEEWR in writing of the premises at which the records are kept.

If the location changes during the period for which the records must be kept, the person must, within 14 days of the change, notify DEEWR in writing of the new location.

See back cover ▶

A person who contravenes any of these obligations is committing a criminal offence (penalty of \$6600 for an individual and \$33 000 for a body corporate). Infringements and civil penalties may also be imposed.

See 5.3 ▶

Operator's obligation to notify intention to stop operating an approved child care service

A person who intends to stop operating an approved child care service must notify DEEWR **30 days or more** before ceasing.

See back cover ▶

Apart from being subject to sanctions, a service that contravenes this obligation is also committing a criminal offence (penalty of \$6600 for an individual and \$33 000 for a body corporate). Infringements and civil penalties may also be imposed.

See 5.3 ▶

Services must also take note of their obligation to notify intention to stop operating under the conditions of any funding agreement.

Obligation to give reports—*Statement of child care usage and Child Care Benefit statement for payment summary*

Approved child care services must submit their Statement of child care usage and CCB statement for payment summary for each reporting period, containing all of the information required in the report format for each child of any person who is conditionally eligible for CCB by fee reduction, or for whom SCCB is payable.

For children of families who are not receiving fee reduction, reports must contain the following information:

- child's name
- the number of hours in sessions of care for which fees would be reduced if the children were children of families receiving fee reduction, if the service has charged for those hours of care
- any other information required in the report format.

Reports for each period must be submitted by the end of the following reporting period (usually a quarter).

Services that did not trade or were closed over the reporting period must lodge a nil claim using the form FA020.

Apart from being subject to sanctions, a service that contravenes this obligation is also committing a criminal offence (penalty of \$6600 for an individual and \$33 000 for a body corporate). Infringements and civil penalties may also be imposed.

See 5.3 ▶

Services must also take note of their reporting responsibilities under the conditions of any funding agreement.

Former operators to give reports—*Statement of child care usage and Child Care Benefit statement for payment summary*

A person who ceases to operate an approved child care service must submit, for the service's final reporting period, a *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) and *Child Care Benefit statement for payment summary* (FA026).

Reports must be submitted by the former operator within 90 days of the service ceasing to be an approved child care service.

Services that did not trade or where closed over the reporting period must lodge a nil claim using the form FA020.

A person who contravenes this obligation is guilty of a criminal offence (penalty of \$6600 for an individual and \$33 000 for a body corporate). Infringements and civil penalties may also be imposed.

See 5.3 ▶

5.6 Cooperation with authorised officers under the Act—inspection of records and monitoring of compliance

Entry, and inspection of records and monitoring of compliance

Officers appointed under section 219H of the Act may enter the premises of an approved child care service at any time during the service's hours of operation. Authorised officers will only enter if the occupier of the premises, or another person who apparently represents the occupier, gives consent and the officers have shown the occupier their identity cards. The occupier may withdraw consent at any time. Entry is for the purposes of inspecting records required to be kept by the service under the Act and to monitor the service's compliance with the conditions for the continued approval of the service.

However, approved child care services have a responsibility under subsection 196(2A) of the Act to cooperate with a person exercising the powers of an authorised officer. A service that refuses consent to the entry of an authorised officer, or withdraws consent, is not complying with that responsibility. This can result in a sanction being imposed on the service under section 200 of the Act. Sanctions can include suspension or cancellation of a service's approval for CCB purposes.

Services must also be aware of their responsibilities under funding agreements to allow access to records by officers monitoring compliance with funding conditions. These responsibilities are independent of the conditions for child care service approval under the Act, and officers inspecting the relevant records do so under the terms of the funding agreement and are not exercising powers under the Act.

Occupier to provide authorised officers with access to records and assistance

The occupier of the premises, or another person who apparently represents the occupier, must produce to an authorised officer or any other person assisting the officer, the records required to be kept by the service.

Apart from being subject to sanctions, a service that contravenes this obligation is also committing a criminal offence (penalty of \$6600 for an individual and \$33 000 for a body corporate). Infringements and civil penalties may also be imposed.

See 5.3 ▶

All reasonable facilities and assistance must be given to the authorised officer for the exercise of their power to inspect the records and monitor the service's compliance with the conditions for continued approval.

Apart from being subject to sanctions, a service that contravenes this obligation is also committing a criminal offence (penalty of \$1100 for an individual and \$5500 for a body corporate). Infringements and civil penalties may also be imposed.

See 5.3 ▶

Entry and inspection of records—premises of former operator

Authorised officers may also enter the premises of a former operator, with consent, to inspect records. Former operators have the same responsibilities as approved child care services to keep and to produce records.

A former operator who does not produce the records is guilty of an offence (penalty of \$6600 for an individual and \$33 000 for a body corporate). Infringements and civil penalties may also be imposed.

See 5.3 ▶

A former operator who does not provide all reasonable facilities and assistance for the inspection of the records is guilty of an offence (penalty of \$1100 for an individual and \$5500 for a body corporate). Infringements and civil penalties may also be imposed.

See 5.3 ▶

5.7 Compliance with all applicable laws imposed by the Australian Government, and the state or territory where the service is located

It is a condition for the continued approval of a child care service that it complies with all child care-related laws of the Australian Government, and of the state or territory in which it is located.

A service that does not comply with applicable laws may be sanctioned.

Services should make the effort to identify all applicable laws that relate to them and ensure that all necessary members of their personnel or contracted carers are aware of the requirements they impose.

5.8 Allocation of child care places not to be exceeded

If a service is subject to an allocation of places under the Act, it must not provide child care in excess of the number of places allocated to it.

A service that does not meet this condition may be sanctioned.

5.9 Some other things you should know about the family assistance law and associated rules

There are many stipulations in the family assistance law. If you are unsure about your obligations under the law, contact your DEEWR state or territory office.

[See back cover ▶](#)

Operation of allowable absences

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC** **NMS**

Some services continue to charge fees for sessions on days after a child has left the service because the family did not give the agreed period of notice. This is a business decision for the individual service. However, it is not legally possible for an allowable absence to occur on such a day. This is because an allowable absence for CCB purposes can only be attributed to a day on which care would otherwise have been provided.

A day after a child has left a service, regardless of the individual service's procedures for families giving notice, cannot be a day on which care would have been provided. The Act therefore does not permit CCB to be paid for these days and services can neither record nor report these days as allowable absences.

[See section 12 ▶](#)

Notification of matters affecting eligibility

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC** **NMS**

An approved service must notify DEEWR in writing as soon as practicable if the service becomes aware of:

- any reason why it should not have been approved or
- anything that occurred after its approval that has resulted in non-compliance with a condition for its continued approval.

Failure to give notice as required is a criminal offence (penalty of \$2200 for an individual and \$11 000 for a body corporate).

Infringements and civil penalties may also be imposed.

See 5.3 ▶

Sessions of care

For the purposes of the Act, a session of care is the minimum period for which a service charges a fee for providing care in any particular case. A service may determine this to be an hour (as is the case with many FDC services) or longer. However, a session must not exceed 12 hours.

Sessions of care—outside school hours

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC** **NMS**

For **before school care**, a 'standard period' means the period of two hours ending immediately before school starts. A standard session is the minimum period for which a service charges a fee for providing before school care in the standard period.

If a child attends a standard session of before school care for more than one hour, and on the same day the service provides an additional period of care for the child immediately before or after the standard period, sessions of care in the additional period must not exceed half an hour each.

For **after school care**, a 'standard period' means the period of three and a half hours starting immediately after school finishes. As for before school care, a standard session is the minimum period for which a service charges a fee for providing after school care in the standard period.

A standard session cannot exceed the standard period. A standard session of after school care is therefore limited to a maximum of three and a half hours. If a child attends a standard session longer than one hour, and on the same day the service provides an additional period of care for the child immediately before or after the standard period, sessions of care in the additional period must not exceed half an hour each.

Sessions of care when a limit of more than 50 hours applies and more than 50 hours of care is provided in the week

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC** **NMS**

If, in a particular case, a weekly limit of more than 50 hours applies and more than 50 hours of care is provided in that case (whether by one or more approved child care services), a session of care over the 50-hour threshold must not exceed one hour.

5.10 How to find out more

For more information about child care compliance, including changes from time to time, visit the DEEWR website at

⌚ deewr.gov.au/childcarepaymentcompliance

5.11 Responsibilities under funding agreements

In addition to the other responsibilities described in this section, you may have obligations under a funding agreement, including record-keeping, reporting, and facilitating access to records for the purposes of inspection by DEEWR officers.

A service that does not comply with the terms of its funding agreement may have its funding terminated or recovered, or both.

You must ensure that all necessary personnel are familiar with the requirements of any agreement.

For more detailed information, visit

⌚ deewr.gov.au



6

Service delivery

This section outlines the laws and rules that govern conduct of a child care service, including priority of access and hours of operation. It also outlines responsibilities to parents, children and carers, and the process for handling complaints.

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6.1 Conduct of the service



The service must be conducted in accordance with the following:

- *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999*
- *FaCS (2000 Budget and Related Measures) Act 2000*
- *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999*
- legislative instruments made under this legislation
- this handbook
- funding agreement/s.

For a service to remain an approved Child Care Benefit (CCB) service, it must:

- continue to satisfy eligibility requirements
- hold an allocation of child care places (occasional care and in home care only)
- not exceed its Australian Government child care place limit (occasional care and in home care only)
- comply with the family assistance law

- comply with Australian Government and all other relevant laws
- comply with child care laws
- comply with other conditions as notified.

See 4.1 ▶

If a service breaches its conditions of operation, the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) may impose one or more sanctions. These include:

- varying the conditions for continued approval
- imposing additional conditions for continued approval
- reducing the number of child care places in the service's allocation of child care places
- suspending or cancelling the service's approval.

See 5.7 ▶

Before imposing a sanction or sanctions, DEEWR must write to the service:

- advising that the department is considering imposing one or more sanctions
- setting out the grounds for the possible imposition of the sanction/s
- summarising the effect of the notice (including the review process)

- inviting the operator to make a written submission to the Secretary of DEEWR within 28 days, stating why the sanction/s should not be imposed.

Decisions made by DEEWR to impose additional conditions or sanctions on services under provisions of the family assistance law are reviewable by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. If DEEWR imposes additional conditions or sanctions on a service, information about the tribunal's review process will be provided to the service.

Send written submissions by mail to:

- The Secretary
Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
PO Box 9880
Canberra ACT 2601

6.2 Who can use a service?

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC** **NMS**

Child care services must be open to the general community. Parents do not have to be Australian residents to use a service. Child Care Benefit, however, is usually only paid for children whose parents are Australian residents.

See 8.3 ▶

Extra support is available to assist the inclusion of children with additional needs through the Inclusion and Professional Support Program and the Inclusion Support Subsidy.

See 3.11 and 3.15 ▶

6.3 Priority of access

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC** **NMS**

One of the main reasons the Australian Government funds child care is to meet the child care needs of Australian families. However, the demand for child care sometimes exceeds supply in some locations. When this happens, it is important for services to allocate places to those families with the greatest need for child care support.

The Australian Government has Priority of Access Guidelines for allocating places in these circumstances. These guidelines apply to centre-based long day care (LDC), in home care (IHC), family day care (FDC) and outside school hours care (OSHC) services. They set out the following three levels of priority, which child care services must follow when filling vacant places:

- Priority 1—a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect
- Priority 2—a child of a single parent who satisfies, or of parents who both satisfy, the work, training, study test under section 14 of the *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999*
- Priority 3—any other child.

Within these main categories, priority should also be given to the following children:

- children in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families
- children in families which include a disabled person

- children in families which include an individual whose adjusted taxable income does not exceed the lower income threshold or who or whose partner are on income support
- children in families from with a non-English speaking background
- children in socially isolated families
- children of single parents.

There are some circumstances in which a child who is already in a child care service may be required to leave the service.

When a service has no vacant places and is providing child care for a child who is a Priority 3 under the Priority of Access Guidelines, the service may require that child to leave the child care service in order for the service to provide a place for a higher priority child, but only if:

- the person who is liable to pay child care fees in respect of the child was notified when the child first occupied the child care place that the service followed this policy **and**
- the service gives that person at least 14 days notice of the requirement for the child to leave the child care service.

When filling vacancies, OSHC services must give school children priority over children who have not yet started school. When an OSHC service has no vacant places and is providing care for a child who has not yet started school, the service may require that child to leave the service so that the service can provide a place for a school child.

Employer sponsored child care

When a child care service is funded by an employer to provide child care solely or primarily for the children of the employer's employees, the service may give priority to those children.

When a child care service has an agreement with an employer that the employer pays for a certain number of places for their employees' children, the service may give priority to those children for the agreed number of places.

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC** **NMS**

It is a condition of continued approval that centre-based LDC, IHC, FDC and OSHC services undertake that they provide child care places according to the Priority of Access Guidelines. The Priority of Access Guidelines are set out in the Child Care Benefit (Eligibility of Child Care Services for Approval and Continued Approval) Determination 2000.

For more information about Priority of Access, contact your DEEWR state or territory office.

See back cover ▶

In all approved child care, a child can only be required to leave a service if the family was informed at the time of enrolment of this possibility and the family is given at least 14 days notice.

6.4 24-hour Care



In cases when 24-hour care is required, services that have the capacity may want to offer short-term, 24-hour care. Access to 24-hour care is controlled because of concern over the care of the child and the high cost to the community.

A child is considered to be in 24-hour care if he or she does not return to the care and supervision of their parent or guardian for any time during a 24-hour period and is cared for by an approved child care service other than an OCC service. This includes children attending school or other approved child care when the school hours plus the care provided before and after school comprise a period of 24 hours or more if the carer is the school's contact.

A 24-hour period may commence at any time during the day or night.

Sometimes families may require short-term 24-hour FDC. Reasons for this may include:

- work-related demands on parents (such as live-in conferences or training courses)
- short-term emergencies (when the circumstances meet the same criteria as those for 'exceptional circumstances' and a family needs to claim for increased hours and/or Special Child Care Benefit).

See 11.3 ▶

Availability of 24-hour care

Services are approved to provide up to fourteen 24-hour periods per child per year if needed. The year commences on 1 July. Your service should check with the Family Assistance Office (FAO) before offering 24-hour care to ensure that the periods being claimed for do not exceed the 14-period limit.

The 14 periods may be used as needed, either consecutively or intermittently, throughout the year.

If a family or child needs more than fourteen 24-hour periods in a year, your service must seek approval from the FAO before care is provided.

Recording 24-hour care

Your service should record details of each child receiving 24-hour care using an *Approval of 24-hour care child care for up to 14 periods in a financial year (08-230 (0708))* form. These records (including a nil return) should be completed and kept by the service, to be provided to the FAO when needed.

See 8.4 ▶

Extension of 24-hour care

If care for individual children beyond fourteen 24-hour periods in any one year is required, you must seek approval from the FAO using the following criteria:

- 24-hour care is required because of work-related needs; however, the child must return to the care and supervision of their parent or guardian for the major part of the week
- the 24-hour care requirement is not work-related but is because of a short-term emergency

- no child should be placed in 24-hour care for longer than 28 days per year unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Always consider the child's needs and maintenance of parental responsibilities.

When the need for care is long-term, so that the child is not regularly under the care and supervision of their parent or guardian, it may be more appropriate for the child to be in foster care. The matter should be discussed with the family and with state or territory authorities before care ceases.

The FAO may seek advice from the relevant authority on whether continuation of 24-hour care is in the best interests of the children and families involved.

Recording extensions of 24-hour care

Requests for the extension of care beyond fourteen 24-hour periods must be made using the *Application for Child Care Benefit for 24-hour care beyond 14 periods in a financial year (08-229 (0708))* form, and approved by the FAO.

Make and keep a copy of the *Application for Child Care Benefit for 24-hour care beyond 14 periods in a financial year* form for your records before submitting it to the FAO.

School children boarding away from home

Child Care Benefit and operational support payments are not payable for children who are in boarding school. These children are the responsibility of education authorities.

Child Care Benefit subsidies for 24-hour care

Child Care Benefit will be paid for authorised 24-hour care.

Jobs, Education and Training Child Care fee assistance (JETCCFA) and 24-hour care

JETCCFA can be paid for part or all of a period of 24-hour care up to the limit of each child's weekly JETCCFA hours as specified on the weekly statement.

See 11.6 ►

Child Care Benefit and JETCCFA are not payable for unauthorised 24-hour care.

6.5 What are my service's responsibilities to parents?

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC** **NMS**

Provide safe, secure and stimulating care for children

Parents have high expectations of child care for their children. Parents have the right to expect that their children will be safe and appropriately supervised while in child care. They expect that programs will foster the physical, emotional, intellectual and social aspects of their child's development.

Confidentiality

Parents have the right to confidentiality from service staff.

Access to service staff

Parents can expect reasonable access to service staff.

Parental involvement

Respectful, open and extensive communication is central to providing effective care. For community-based organisations, parents' involvement in management of the service is a requirement of their constitution or rules of association. As part of their participation in Australian Government child care quality assurance, operators are also required to include parents in the service's planning, programs and operations.

Services are expected to be responsive to parental feedback and provide opportunities for parents to share their ideas and concerns about the service.

See section 7 ▶

Information needs of parents

Parents need specific information to help them make informed decisions about the philosophy and practices of the child care service and whether it offers the care and education that they want for their child. They need to have confidence that their child is in 'good hands'.

Assistance is available to parents and employers on child care options via the Child Care Access Hotline and the National Childcare Accreditation Council.

See quick contacts ▶

Services should provide information to parents on:

- priority of access and waiting list policies
- hours of operation
- the fees charged by the service, including levies and charges
- CCB and how to apply for it
- JETCCFA and how it is calculated
- how to make a complaint and how complaints are resolved
- the service's policies, for example, on sunscreens or food colourings.

6.6 What are my service's responsibilities to children?

FDC IHC OSHC LDC OCC NMS

Children have the right to receive quality care. They should have consistent and continuous nurturing.

Children have the right to be treated with courtesy and kindness. They can expect to be treated respectfully and equitably. Children have the right to protection from physical, emotional, verbal and sexual abuse, and neglect.

As part of their participation in quality assurance, services are required to provide children with safe and stimulating care that fosters their physical, emotional, intellectual and social development. Child care staff and parents are encouraged to actively exchange information with each other about the children and to work together for the benefit of each child.

See section 7 ▶

6.7 What are my service's responsibilities to carers?

FDC IHC OSHC LDC OCC NMS

DEEWR encourages best practice in the management of carers.

Consult with carers about children placed with them

Carers must be involved in decisions affecting the placement of children with them—for example, the number and ages of children to be placed, hours of care, and their capacity to care for children with additional needs.

Keep carers informed

Carers should be provided with accurate and up-to-date information, especially on issues affecting their working environment, such as taxation, insurance, and service policies and priorities.

Provide education, support and training for carers

Your service should ensure that education, support and training are available to carers. Education and training available could include problem-solving and conflict resolution, first aid, health and safety, hygiene, nutrition, assertiveness, child management and development, business practices, and community resources.

When training is organised during the normal working day, services should consider making other arrangements for the care of the children, such as playgroups run by field workers.

Australian Government funds cannot be used to make up for any loss of income by carers undertaking training.

Access to service staff

Carers should have reasonable access to service staff.

Encourage interaction with other carers

Services should actively encourage interaction between carers, for example, by organising playgroups, newsletters, discussion groups and social activities.

Confidentiality

Carers who provide information to their service have the right to confidentiality.

Timely payment to carers

Services develop their own payment arrangements. These must ensure timely payment to carers.

Parents' responsibilities to carers

You should advise parents of the service's and carers' requirements. This advice should cover matters including:

- delivery and collection of children
- timely fee payment
- absences or variations to care times.

6.8 Handling complaints

FDC IHC OSHC LDC OCC NMS

It is a requirement for services participating in quality assurance to develop and implement effective complaints-handling and problem-solving models and guidelines. The guidelines should include the rights and responsibilities of parents and the roles and responsibilities of the staff of the service.

This information should be available to both parents and service staff.

Suggested model for handling complaints

A problem-solving and complaints-handling model similar to the one described on page 70 is recommended. It should be available to both parents and staff of the service.

Before an official written complaint is lodged, the parties involved in the dispute are encouraged to discuss the issue and attempt to settle the matter themselves.

When the complaint is about a quality issue, and has not been satisfactorily resolved after following the suggested model, the complaint should be directed to the National Childcare Accreditation Council. For

other non-resolved complaints, contact DEEWR or the FAO.

See back cover ▶

Solving problems and handling complaints

Internal
resolution

When the parties cannot resolve the dispute, it is referred to the service director or the service owner (when appropriate) who may be asked to help resolve the matter.

Problem-
solving tribunal

I When the service director or the service owner is unable to resolve the matter, a panel consisting of a parent, a staff member, the service director and/or the owner (or an authorised representative of the owner) investigates the complaint and attempts to solve the problem.

Independent
tribunal

When the problem-solving panel is unable to resolve the matter, a completely independent body assesses the complaint. This tier is optional.

6.9 Links with other services

FDC | **IHC** | **OSHC** | **LDC** | **OCC** | **NMS**

DEEWR encourages child care services to build links with the community through networking and engaging in joint initiatives with other community services and local businesses. Child care services play a key role in supporting vibrant neighbourhoods and creating environments that assist families directly and support parents in their parenting roles.

Child care professionals are encouraged to take advantage of networking opportunities with other

community services to share information about professional and family support services. This helps services to become more effective in supporting staff and families using the service.

Providing **parents** with fair, sustainable and inclusive access to quality and flexible child care services is vital to helping families realise their full potential and participate in work, study and community life. At the same time, child care services that have regular contact with families often assist parents to find out about the range of family support available and advise them on other sources of help.

6.10 Child Care Access Hotline



The Child Care Access Hotline provides a national information and advisory service for parents considering their child care options.

All approved child care services are required to report vacancy and usage data to the hotline. It is a requirement of your ongoing approval under the family assistance law to provide this information.

All services have until 8pm local time on the Friday of each reporting week to report and update their vacancy and usage data. Vacancy data must reflect the number of available places you anticipate having each day of the **following week**. (OSHC services are only required to report once a school term for the entire term, and vacation care services may report two weeks ahead for a two-week period). The information you provide should be based on the number of vacant CCB-approved places you identify each day in line with your service's business practices.

Usage information must be reported before 8pm on a Friday. Usage data should reflect the number of CCB-approved places used each day during the previous week (FDC and IHC may report fortnightly).

If you do not report your vacancy and usage data, or do not report your vacancy and usage data on time, a sanction or penalty may be imposed on your service.

See section 5 ▶

Child care services with internet access should report their vacancy and usage data via one of three online methods:

- an online web facility located at <https://cca.facsia.gov.au>
- email ccah@redbourne.com.au
- direct extraction from software, if this function is provided by your software provider. (If you would like to use this method please contact your software provider.)

Child care services without internet access can arrange for the Child Care Access Hotline to phone them each week to collect their vacancy and usage information. To arrange reporting via this method, phone the Child Care Access Hotline on **1800 795 433**.

For more instructions about reporting this information, visit

- deewr.gov.au/childcareavailabilityandusedatedetails

If you are unable to access this document from the website and would like a copy, phone the Child Care Access Hotline on **1800 795 433**.

Family day care schemes are required to provide weekly the total number of available places for each day of the following week. Vacancies should be reported for children aged 0–2 and for school aged children, by indicating 'yes' or 'no' as to whether some of the vacancies are for these age groups.

All vacancy information must be reported separately against the postcodes in which carers operate.

The number of used places for each day can be reported fortnightly in arrears, in line with carer timesheets, before 8pm on Friday at the end of your reporting fortnight.

For more information about mandatory reporting requirements, email

ccah@redbourne.com.au

or phone the Child Care Access Hotline on 1800 795 433.

In home care services are required to report weekly, by indicating 'yes' or 'no', as to whether they have additional capacity for the week commencing on the Monday following the reporting date.

The number of used places for each day can be reported fortnightly in arrears, in line with carer timesheets, before 8pm on Friday at the end of your reporting fortnight.

For more information about mandatory reporting requirements, email

ccah@redbourne.com.au

or phone the Child Care Access Hotline on 1800 795 433.

OSHC services are required to submit their vacancy information by 8pm local time of the second Friday in each school term. Once this information is submitted, services are only required to provide vacancy information during the term when the number of vacancies they have changes. The vacancy information provided will be applied to every remaining week of the school term and the first two weeks of the following term.

This information should be provided separately for before school care, after school care and vacation care, for all weeks of the year in which your service operates. For example, before school care and after school care services should report for all periods during the school term, while vacation care services should report only for school holiday periods in which they operate.

OSHC services are no longer required to submit usage information.

Vacation care services may report vacancy information two weeks prior to a school holiday period commencing, and can report the total number of available places for a two-week period. The number of used places for each day can be reported weekly in arrears, before 8pm on Friday at the end of your reporting week.

For more information about mandatory reporting requirements, email

Ⓐ ccah@redbourne.com.au

or phone the Child Care Access Hotline on 1800 795 433.

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC** **NMS**

Long day care services are required to provide weekly the total number of available places for each day of the following week. Vacancies should be reported for children aged 0–2 and for school aged children, by indicating 'yes' or 'no' as to whether some of the vacancies are for these age groups.

The number of used places for each day can be reported weekly in arrears, before 8pm on Friday at the end of your reporting week.

For more information about mandatory reporting requirements, email

Ⓐ ccah@redbourne.com.au

or phone the Child Care Access Hotline on 1800 795 433.

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC** **NMS**

Occasional care services are required to provide weekly the total number of available places for each day of the following week. Vacancies should be reported for children aged 0–2, by indicating 'yes' or 'no' as to whether some of the vacancies are for this age group.

The number of used places for each day can be reported weekly in arrears, before 8pm on Friday at the end of your reporting week.

For more information about mandatory reporting requirements, email

Ⓐ ccah@redbourne.com.au

or phone the Child Care Access Hotline on 1800 795 433.



Quality child Care

This section describes the child care quality assurance and accreditation processes required of services to be eligible for approval for Child Care Benefit purposes. It also outlines the processes for participation in quality assurance systems, how to ask for a review of an accreditation decision, and how to appeal against a decision to withdraw Child Care Benefit approval.

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7.1 Child care quality assurance

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC** **NMS**

The broad objective of child care quality assurance (QA) is to ensure that children in care have stimulating, positive experiences and interactions that will foster all aspects of their development, and to promote quality care for all children in Australian Government-funded child care services.

The aim of QA is to provide a framework for reviewing, measuring and improving the quality of the work being done by approved child care providers. Quality assurance focuses on quality outcomes for children. It encompasses processes of self-study and improvement against principles of good quality care.

The QA framework:

- improves the accountability of child care services to the public
- better equips services to cater for children's individual needs
- most importantly, improves outcomes for children.

State and territory government regulations

Quality assurance is designed to build on and complement state and territory government licensing regulations (where they exist), which generally provide minimum standards for operation for services. The regulations cover a range of factors including space, equipment, number of staff and their qualifications, and number and ages of children. Not all states and territories have comprehensive regulations in place.

Quality assurance framework

Child care QA has an administrative framework that includes three core partners—the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC), and the Accreditation Decisions Review Committee (ADRC). The framework partners have individual but interconnected responsibilities for the day-to-day management, monitoring and implementation of QA for services that deliver, and families who use child care in Australia.

DEEWR manages the administration of the QA framework. It funds and has contracts with the NCAC and the ADRC. The Inclusion and Professional

Support Program is funded by the Australian Government to assist child care services to achieve and maintain QA standards. DEEWR also has legislative responsibilities for managing services' non-compliance with QA standards.



Registration with the NCAC and participation in quality assurance is mandatory for long day care, family day care and outside school hours care services to be eligible for approval for Child Care Benefit purposes. Registration and payment of registration fees to the NCAC are part of the conditions of approval of a service.

National Childcare Accreditation Council



The NCAC is a body appointed by the Minister for Education to implement and administer QA for long day care (LDC), family day care (FDC) and outside school hours care (OSHC) services across Australia.

◎ ncac.gov.au

Accreditation Decisions Review Committee

The ADRC is an independent body appointed by the Minister for Education to review accreditation decisions made by the NCAC. When a child care service appeals against a decision, the ADRC makes recommendations to the NCAC about whether the decision should be upheld or amended.

◎ adrc.org.au



Quality Improvement and Accreditation System

The Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS) encourages continuous improvement in the quality of care provided to children in LDC services.

The system involves services undertaking a process of self-study and improvement against 33 principles of good quality care. These principles are incorporated into seven quality areas:

- 1 Staff relationships with children and peers
- 2 Partnerships with families
- 3 Programming and evaluation
- 4 Children's experiences and learning
- 5 Protective care and safety
- 6 Health, nutrition and wellbeing
- 7 Managing to support quality.

Family Day Care Quality Assurance

Family Day Care Quality Assurance (FDCQA) encourages continuous improvement in the quality of care provided to children in FDC services.

It involves schemes undertaking a process of self-study and improvement against 30 principles of good quality care. These principles are incorporated into six quality areas:

- 1 Interactions
- 2 Physical environment
- 3 Children's experiences, learning and development
- 4 Health, hygiene, nutrition, safety and wellbeing
- 5 Carers and coordination unit staff
- 6 Management and administration.

Outside School Hours Care Quality Assurance

Outside School Hours Care Quality Assurance (OSHCQA) encourages continuous improvement in the quality of care provided to children in outside school hours care OSHC services.

It involves services undertaking a process of self-study and improvement against 30 principles of good quality care.

These principles are incorporated into eight quality areas:

- 1 Respect for children
- 2 Staff interactions and relationships with children
- 3 Partnerships with families and community links
- 4 Programming and evaluation
- 5 Play and development
- 6 Health, nutrition and wellbeing
- 7 Protective care and safety
- 8 Managing to support quality.

7.2 How child care services participate in the QIAS, FDCQA and OSHQA systems

To be eligible for approval for Child Care Benefit (CCB) purposes, LDC, FDC and OSHC services must register with the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) and satisfactorily participate in QA.

There are five steps in QIAS, FDCQA and OSHCQA:

- 1 Registration
- 2 Self-study and continuous improvement
- 3 Validation
- 4 Moderation
- 5 Accreditation decision.

After completing these five steps, a service starts the cycle again at step two by preparing and submitting a self-study report at a pre-determined date—currently two and a half years after submitting its previous

self-study report. There are processes for review of an accreditation decision, and for appeal against a decision to withdraw approval for CCB purposes.

See 7.3 ▶

Five-step process to participate in QIAS, FDCQA and OSHCQA

Registration 1

| Action | QIAS | FDCQA | OSHCQA |
|---|--|--|--|
| Register with NCAC Services must be registered with the NCAC and participate in QIAS/FDCQA/OSHCQA for continued approval for CCB purposes | Initial registration fee Annual registration fee NCAC provides Certificate of Registration | Initial registration fee Annual registration fee NCAC provides Certificate of Registration | Initial registration fee Annual registration fee NCAC provides Certificate of Registration |
| New services must be registered with the NCAC before seeking approval for CCB purposes | | | |
| NCAC provides publications to assist with the implementation of quality assurance | QIAS Quality Practices Guide QIAS Handbook QIAS Self-study Report | FDCQA Quality Practices Guide FDCQA Handbook FDCQA Self-study Report | OSHCQA Quality Practices Guide OSHCQA Handbook OSHCQA Self-study Report |
| Change of ownership/major change | Fee payable to NCAC | | |

Self-study and continuous improvement 2

| Action | QIAS | FDCQA | OSHCQA |
|--|---|---|--|
| The service evaluates the quality of practice for each of the principles within the quality areas | <p>Consult with management, staff, carers, families and, when appropriate, children at the service</p> <p>Refer to QIAS Source Book for indicators against each of the 33 principles</p> <p>Develop strategies for continuous self-study</p> <p>Develop a continuous improvement plan</p> <p>Collect evidence to support service's quality practices</p> | <p>Consult with management, staff, carers, families and, when appropriate, children at the scheme</p> <p>Refer to FDCQA Quality Practices Guide for indicators against each of the 30 principles</p> <p>Develop strategies for continuous self-study</p> <p>Develop a continuous improvement plan</p> <p>Collect evidence to support scheme's quality practices</p> | <p>Consult with management, staff, carers, families and, when appropriate, children at the service</p> <p>Refer to OSHCQA Quality Practices Guide for indicators against each of the 30 principles</p> <p>Develop strategies for continuous self-study</p> <p>Develop a continuous improvement plan</p> <p>Collect evidence to support service's quality practices</p> |
| Submit self-study report | <p>The service's ratings for each principle, comments to support each quality area, and its continuous improvement plan are summarised in the service's self-study report, which is submitted to the NCAC at specified times:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 18 months from initial registration for new services > 2.5 years once accredited | | |

Validation 3

| Action | QIAS | FDCQA | OSHCQA |
|---|--|--|--|
| NCAC sends out validation surveys to the service The validator is selected by NCAC to visit the service | The validation surveys are to be completed by management, carers/child care workers, staff and families prior to the visit The service has the right to ask for an alternate validator if there is conflict of interest Services will be advised in writing of a six-week timeframe in which the validation visit will occur | | |
| Validation visit | Validator visits the service to observe practice and to review evidence such as continuous improvement plans and evidence collected of quality practice | Validator visits the service coordination unit and a selection of carers to observe practice and to review evidence of quality practices, such as continuous improvement plans and evidence collected of quality practices | Validator visits the service to observe practice and to review evidence, such as continuous improvement plans and evidence collected of quality practice |
| Length of validation visit | Length of visit will depend on type of service and size | Length of visit will depend on type of service and size | Length of visit will depend on type of service and size |
| Validation report | The validator completes a validation report based on observations and evidence against the quality areas, relevant principles and indicators. Service completes a validation evaluation form and returns it to the NCAC within seven days of the visit | | |

The validator is selected and trained by the NCAC.

For information about validator selection and training, visit the NCAC website at

 ncac.gov.au

or phone 1300 136 554.

Moderation 4

| Action | QIAS | FDCQA | OSHCQA |
|--|---|-------|--------|
| Moderation | <p>Moderators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">> review the information and seek to identify patterns of quality care within the service> assess the quality of the service's practice, guided by information in the self-study report, the validation surveys, the validation report and, where available, the validation evaluation form> rate each principle> write a continuous improvement guide for the service, focusing on quality improvement and any trends within the quality areas | | |
| Compile composite quality profile | <p>NCAC compiles a composite quality profile from the information in the self-study report, validation report, validation surveys, and the moderation ratings. The profile shows a composite of these views of performance across the quality areas using four standards—Unsatisfactory, Satisfactory, Good quality and High quality</p> | | |

Accreditation decision 5

| Action | QIAS | FDCQA | OSHCQA |
|--|--|--|--|
| NCAC makes the accreditation decision | To be accredited, a service must achieve a rating of Satisfactory or higher in all the quality areas on the composite quality profile | | |
| Certificate of Accreditation | <p>Required to prominently display the Certificate of Accreditation</p> <p>Required to prominently display a Composite quality Profile Certificate</p> | <p>Required to prominently display the Certificate of Accreditation</p> <p>Composite quality Profile Certificate provided for display at the discretion of the service</p> | <p>Required to prominently display the Certificate of Accreditation</p> <p>Composite quality Profile Certificate provided for display at the discretion of the service</p> |
| Additional information | <p>An accredited service is required to continue its self-study and continuous improvement cycle until the next self-study report is due for submission</p> <p>Services that do not meet the standards for accreditation are required to submit another self-study report six months from the date of the NCAC accreditation decision</p> <p>Approximately one week after posting an accreditation decision to a service, accreditation details of that service will be updated on the NCAC website at</p> <p>◎ www.ncac.gov.au</p> | | |

Assistance with the accreditation process

DEEWR funds agencies in each state and territory to assist services to participate in QIAS, FDCQA, and OSHCQA. If you would like assistance, the NCAC can advise you of the name and contact details of the agency in your state or territory.

For assistance with the accreditation process, phone the NCAC on (02) 8260 1900 (or 1300 136 554 from outside the Sydney area), or visit the NCAC website at

◎ ncac.gov.au

Spot checks

All child care services that have been through the child care QA process and are accredited are subject to unannounced QA spot checks. QA spot checks ensure that services continue to meet standards and that quality improvements are maintained day-to-day. QA spot checks also help parents to feel confident that their children are receiving high quality care.

For more information about QA spot check policies and procedures, visit the NCAC website at

◎ ncac.gov.au/about_ncac/spot_checks.asp

7.3 Process for review of an accreditation decision

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC** **NMS**

If after Step 5, a service does not agree with the NCAC accreditation decision, it can apply to the Accreditation Decisions Review Committee (ADRC) for a review. The committee, which is appointed by the Minister for Education, acts independently from, and makes recommendations to, the NCAC. The ADRC cannot compel the NCAC to amend a decision.

Three-step process to review an accreditation decision

- 1 The service applies in writing to the ADRC to ask for a review of the accreditation decision it has received.
- 2 The ADRC considers written information from the service outlining its request for review and all the information the NCAC considered when making its initial accreditation decision. The ADRC forwards its recommendation to the NCAC and to the service.
- 3 The NCAC considers the recommendation of the ADRC and informs the service in writing of the final decision.

Applications for reviews should be sent by mail to:

○ The Chair
Accreditation Decisions Review Committee
PO Box 32
Joondalup DC
Joondalup WA 6919
Phone: **1300 734 347** Fax: **08 9305 895**

*For more information about the ADRC or to ask for a review of an accreditation decision, phone the ADRC on **1300 734 347** or visit the ADRC website at*

○ adrc.gov.au

7.4 Quality assurance non-compliance and ongoing Child Care Benefit approval



The Secretary of DEEWR may impose conditions and/or sanctions on a service that has failed to meet its QA obligations. The sanctions may include suspending or cancelling a service's approval for CCB purposes. Services that have their approval suspended or cancelled can no longer receive advances or make fee reductions. They will also lose their approval for operational subsidy.

The NCAC reports to DEEWR any services that fail to comply with, or make satisfactory progress through, the QA process.

7.5 Changes to Child Care Quality Assurance – the Quality Reform Agenda

The Australian Government has committed to improving quality in early childhood education and care through the establishment of a rigorous National Quality Standards Framework. This will include the development and implementation of strong quality standards for early childhood education and child care, and a quality rating system to drive continuous improvement and provide parents with robust and relevant information about the quality of care and learning.

The Australian Government is currently working with the state and territory governments through the Council of Australian Governments to enhance the wider regulatory framework to provide a better focus on quality for all early childhood services.

This includes working with jurisdictions to develop and implement the stronger quality standards for all early childhood settings and to ensure that the quality of education and care is being maintained and continuously improved.

There will be an extensive consultation process throughout the development of these initiatives. The child care and preschool sectors, families and experts will be consulted throughout the process.

For more information about the changes and how you may be involved in consultations, go to the Child Care Services Handbook at

◎ deewr.gov.au/childcarehandbook

or the Office of Early Childhood Education and Child Care website at

◎ oececc.gov.au

Part 2 – Payments to families

This part contains the practical information approved child care services refer to most often in their day-to-day work.

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8

Overview

This section sets out eligibility criteria for Child Care Benefit (CCB) and the Child Care Tax Rebate (CCTR). It maps the pathways for reduced fee and lump sum families and points to more detailed sections about steps in the pathways. The forms you need to use are also included in this section.

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8

Overview

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC**

Australian Government payments made to families to assist with the cost of care include Child Care Benefit (CCB), Special Child Care Benefit (SCCB), Grandparent Child Care Benefit (GCCB), Jobs, Education and Training Child Care fee assistance (JETCCFA) and the Child Care Tax Rebate (CCTR).

High quality child care plays an important role in improving children's educational and developmental outcomes. Child care also enables parents to participate in the workforce and the broader community.

Through CCB, more families are able to afford child care. This contributes to a higher level of utilisation of child care services. Families using approved child care can choose to receive CCB through fee reductions or as a lump sum payment.

CCB payments must be claimed as fee reductions if a family wants:

- more than 50 hours CCB in a week **or**
- more than 24 hours CCB in a week because of exceptional circumstances **or**
- SCCB as a result of hardship **or**

- GCCB **or**
- JETCCFA **or**
- a 24-hour period of care.

For families choosing to receive CCB as a fee reduction, the level of fee reduction is based on their estimated, adjusted, taxable income for the year in which the care was received. Their actual entitlement is calculated once actual incomes are known, after the Australian Taxation Office processes their tax returns. The difference between entitlement and fee reductions received is paid or recovered from families by the Family Assistance Office (FAO).

Families using approved care and who are eligible for CBB may access the CCTR.

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC**

Approved child care services are reimbursed for providing CCB fee reductions through monthly advance payments with quarterly acquittals.

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC**

Approved outside school hours care services are funded for the fee reductions through advances for

each term or vacation, with the advance being calculated from occupied places data submitted in the previous year.

See 10.1 ▶

Registered care

Families receiving care through registered carers can access CCB from the FAO by presenting child care fee receipts together with a *Claim for Child Care Benefit for registered care* (FA018) form within 12 months from when the care was provided.

Families using registered care cannot access the CCTR.

For more information about claiming CCB, phone the FAO on 13 61 50.

See quick contacts ▶

8.1 Overview for families

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC**

Claiming and payment process for CCB—for fee reduction families

All families must meet eligibility criteria.

See 8.3 ▶

1 Family makes claim for CCB, including an estimate of their income.

- 2 The FAO issues the family with a CCB assessment notice, and includes their assessment on the weekly statement sent to the service.
- 3 Children attend child care and fee reductions are given by their child care service using information from the weekly statement.
- 4 At the end of each statement period the child care service provides their *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) to the FAO. The usage details the CCB fee reductions passed on to families during the statement period.
- 5 At the end of the financial year the FAO conducts a reconciliation of CCB for each family.

Claiming and payment process for CCB—reconciliation for fee reduction families

Fee reductions provided to families by approved child care services are subject to a reconciliation process conducted by the FAO after the end of the financial year. The purpose of the reconciliation is to ensure that families receive the correct amount of CCB. The reconciliation process involves:

- using income details including taxable income data from the Australian Taxation Office to re-determine the family's CCB percentage for the year, based on the family's adjusted taxable income for the year
- calculating CCB entitlement, using the CCB percentage information on eligible hours from *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) forms

- comparing the amount of entitlement with the fee reductions provided throughout the year, to determine if a family has been underpaid or overpaid
- issuing a credit or recovery notice to families, as necessary.

Reconciliation processing starts from 1 July each year, subject to income and usage information being available.

Claiming and payment process for CCB—for lump sum families

- Children attend child care and families inform child care services that they will be claiming CCB as a lump sum.
- Families pay full child care fees throughout the year.
- Child care service gets a Customer Reference Number for each parent or guardian claiming CCB from the FAO by completing a *Notification of full fee paying customers* (FA022) form and sending it to their FAO child care payment team.
- Child care services provide the FAO with statements showing the hours of care used for which families may claim.
- Families apply to the FAO for the CCB as a lump sum payment by completing a *Claim for an annual lump sum payment of Child Care Benefit* (FA011 or FA052) form after the end of the financial year. The claim must be made by the end of the second

financial year following the year for which CCB is being claimed. The parent/guardian under whose name usage details were reported must claim CCB as a lump sum in order for the claim to be effective.

- The FAO works out each family's entitlement based on actual income and child care usage.
- The FAO pays the family their lump sum amount into a nominated bank account.

Payment process for the CCTR—for CCB fee reduction families

- Family successfully claims and receives CCB by fee reduction.
- Family meets the work, training, study test for the purposes of the CCTR during the financial year.
- Usage provided by services and FAO calculates CCTR which is paid quarterly into a nominated bank account.
- Payment for the last quarter is held until the CCB reconciliation occurs and the family submits their tax return.

Payment process for the CCTR—for CCB lump sum families

- Family uses and pays for approved child care throughout the year.
- Family meet the work, training, study test for the purposes of the CCTR during the financial year.
- Family submits their tax return.
- Family applies to the FAO for CCB as a lump sum payment after the end of the financial year.

- 5 FAO reconciles CCB for the family.
- 6 FAO works out each family's CCB entitlement and subsequently their CCTR entitlement.
- 7 FAO pays the family their CCB lump sum amount into a nominated bank account.
- 8 FAO pays the family their CCTR entitlement into a nominated bank account.

8.2 Overview for services



Claiming and payment process for CCB—for lump sum families

- 1 Services are paid an advance by the FAO.
- 2 Services reduce fees for families.
- 3 Services provide statements of every child's eligible CCB hours and corresponding fee reductions at the end of the reporting period.
- 4 FAO compares fee reductions provided for the statement period with amounts paid for that period. The difference can either be arrears (monies owed to the service) or an **over-advance** (monies owed to the FAO).
- 5 The adjustment amount is added to or subtracted from the next advance.

Claiming and payment process for CCB—for lump sum families

- 1 Services confirm with eligible families who are not listed on the weekly statement that they intend to claim CCB as a lump sum.
- 2 Services obtain a Customer Reference Number for the families and children by completing a *Notification of full fee paying customers* (FA022) form and sending it to their FAO child care payment team.
- 3 Services provide child care usage details for every child during the year.
- 4 Families claim CCB.
- 5 FAO works out families' entitlement based on actual income and child care usage.
- 6 FAO pays the families.

Payment process for Child Care Tax Rebate

- 1 Services provide child care for families.
- 2 Services provide statements of child care usage, eligible CCB hours, fees charged and corresponding fee reductions, if applicable, at the end of the reporting period or at the end of the year for full fee paying families.
- 3 At reconciliation, FAO works out the families' CCB entitlement based on actual income and child care usage. The FAO then works out the families' CCTR entitlement.
- 4 FAO pays families any outstanding CCTR or raises a debt (for those families who may have received too much as quarterly payments).

8.3 Who is eligible?

FDC

IHC

OSHC

LDC

OCC

Child Care Benefit

To be eligible for CCB for approved child care the claimant (for example, parent or guardian) **must**:

- meet Australian residency requirements **and**
- have a Family Tax Benefit (FTB) child or regular care child (or a child deemed to be an FTB child or regular care child) attending an Australian Government-approved child care service **and**
- be liable (or their partner must be liable) to pay for this child care **and**
- have the child care provided in Australia **and**
- ensure the child complies with immunisation requirements.

Foster families who meet the eligibility criteria are also able to claim CCB.

Families are not eligible for CCB for care provided as part of the compulsory education program in the state or territory in which the care is provided.

Australian residency

To be eligible to receive CCB, one or both parents must be Australian residents as defined under the *Social Security Act 1991*, or be eligible non-residents.

For information about the residency requirements for CCB, phone the FAO on 13 6150.

See quick contacts ▶

Immunisation

Children who are younger than seven must meet the government's immunisation requirements or have an approved exemption from the requirements for the family to be eligible for CCB. Families can ask the FAO for information about the requirements and exemptions.

The FAO regularly monitors whether children meet the immunisation requirements. If they do not, the FAO sends their family a reminder. If the family ignores the reminder, the child's CCB will eventually be cancelled.

In this case, the FAO will send the family a CCB cancellation notice for the child, or a revised CCB assessment if the family has another child in care who either meets the requirements or who does not need to meet them. Cancellation is advised to services on their next weekly statement. CCB is payable up to the start of the week following the date of issue listed on the cancellation notice.

See 9.4 ▶

Child Care Tax Rebate

To be eligible for the Child Care Tax Rebate (CCTR) families **must**:

- have used approved care **and**
- have been assessed as eligible to receive CCB* **and**
- have met the work, training, study test—for the purposes of the CCTR.

Foster, shared care, kinship and grandparent families who meet the eligibility criteria are also able to receive CCTR.

* Those families assessed as eligible for CCB, but entitled to a zero rate due to income, may still be eligible for the CCTR.

Grandparent Child Care Benefit

Grandparent Child Care Benefit (GCCB) is available to grandparents who:

- meet the existing CCB eligibility requirements **and**
- are receiving an income support payment from Centrelink or the Department of Veterans' Affairs **and**
- are the sole or major provider of the ongoing daily care for the grandchild and have the responsibility for the day-to-day decisions about the grandchild's care, welfare and development.

Grandparent Child Care Benefit covers the full cost of the total fee charged for CCB eligible hours up to 50 hours for each child in approved care each week.

This benefit payment is only available to grandparents who claim CCB as reduced fees and cannot be claimed as a lump sum. Grandparents claiming GCCB need to apply directly to the FAO.

Grandparents must notify the FAO before the grandchild/ren leave their care or of any other change in their circumstances. The payment of GCCB will cease from the date grandparents no longer meet the GCCB eligibility requirements.

Services should be aware that claims for GCCB can only be approved by the FAO if grandparents continue to meet the GCCB eligibility requirements.

Recording GCCB

Once a grandparent has been assessed by the FAO as eligible to receive GCCB, services are required to record periods of GCCB on the *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) form. When completing this form,

the code 'GCB' should be used in column H to identify periods where GCCB is claimed. Columns F and G do not require completion as the grandparent is eligible for total fee charged for CCB eligible hours (column J).

Jobs, Education and Training Child Care fee assistance

Jobs, Education and Training Child Care fee assistance (JETCCFA) is available to parents receiving the following Centrelink payments:

- Parenting Payment
- Newstart Allowance
- Youth Allowance (for job seekers, not full-time students)
- Widow B Pension
- Widow Allowance
- Partner Allowance
- Carer Payment
- Special Benefit (who would otherwise be eligible for Parenting Payment or Newstart Allowance but who do not meet residency requirements)
- Community Development Employment Projects Participant Supplement (only when the parent had immediate previous entitlement to a JETCCFA eligible income support payment but it is no longer payable due to the supplement income)
- means-tested ABSTUDY recipients.

JETCCFA provides extra help with the cost of approved child care for eligible parents undertaking activities such as job search, work, study or

rehabilitation as part of an activity agreement, to help parents enter or re-enter the workforce.

JETCCFA can help meet the cost of care in approved services by paying most of the 'gap fee'—that is, the difference between the full fee and CCB, for sessions of care used by parents to participate in JETCCFA-approved activities. All parents receiving JETCCFA will be liable to pay a small contribution to the cost of the care they use.

8.4 Summary of forms



CCB and JETCCFA forms used by services

Phone **1300 367 676** to order the following forms:

FA020

Statement of child care usage

See 15.4 ▶

FA025

Child care attendance record

See 12.4 ▶

FA026

Child Care Benefit statement for payment summary

See 15.5 ▶

FA028

Approved service provider disk lodgement label

See 15.2 ▶

The following forms are also available on the Centrelink website

centrelink.gov.au

**Exceptional circumstances—
Claim for increased eligible hours and/or
Special Child Care Benefit**

This form is used to claim for increased eligible hours and/or Special Child Care Benefit. It includes sections for basic information, family details, and a declaration of income and assets.

FA023

Exceptional circumstances—Claim for increased eligible hours and/or Special Child Care Benefit

This form is used to claim for increased eligible hours and/or Special Child Care Benefit. It includes sections for basic information, family details, and a declaration of income and assets.

See 13.6 ▶

**Child Care Benefit
advice of family details**

This form is used to advise the Department of the changes in your family circumstances that may affect your Child Care Benefit entitlement. It includes sections for basic information, family details, and a declaration of income and assets.

FA044

Child Care Benefit Advice of family details

This form is used to advise the Department of the changes in your family circumstances that may affect your Child Care Benefit entitlement. It includes sections for basic information, family details, and a declaration of income and assets.

See 9.7 ▶

These CCB forms only are available from the Centrelink website

○ centrelink.gov.au

Notification of full fee paying customers

This form is used to advise the Department of the changes in your family circumstances that may affect your Child Care Benefit entitlement. It includes sections for basic information, family details, and a declaration of income and assets.

FA022

Notification of full fee paying customers

This form is used to advise the Department of the changes in your family circumstances that may affect your Child Care Benefit entitlement. It includes sections for basic information, family details, and a declaration of income and assets.

See 10.2 ▶

Application for Child Care Benefit additional advance

This form is used to apply for an additional advance of Child Care Benefit. It includes sections for basic information, family details, and a declaration of income and assets.

FA027

Application for Child Care Benefit additional advance

This form is used to apply for an additional advance of Child Care Benefit. It includes sections for basic information, family details, and a declaration of income and assets.

See 15.1 ▶

Application for Child Care Benefit additional advance

This form is used to apply for an additional advance of Child Care Benefit. It includes sections for basic information, family details, and a declaration of income and assets.

FA024

Child at risk—Application for increased eligible hours and/or Special Child Care Benefit

This form is used to apply for an additional advance of Child Care Benefit. It includes sections for basic information, family details, and a declaration of income and assets.

See 13.3 ▶

These forms are available on the DEEWR website

○ deewr.gov.au/childcarehandbook

Approved for 24 hour child care for up to 14 periods in a financial year

This form is used to apply for an additional advance of Child Care Benefit. It includes sections for basic information, family details, and a declaration of income and assets.

08-230 (0708)

Approval for 24-hour child care for up to 14 periods in a financial year

This form is used to apply for an additional advance of Child Care Benefit. It includes sections for basic information, family details, and a declaration of income and assets.

See 6.4 ▶

08-229 (0708)

Application for Child Care Benefit for 24-hour care beyond 14 periods per financial year

See 6.4 ▶

08-289 (0908)

Approving Special Child Care Benefit- Will my service exceed the 18% limit?

See 13.10 ▶

Forms used by families

Phone the FAO on 13 61 50 to ask for these forms and the information booklet, which are referred to in this handbook. Families may ask your service for help to fill in the forms.

These forms are also available on the Centrelink website

◎ centrelink.gov.au

FA002

Claim for Child Care Benefit for the 2008–09 financial year

FA052

Claim for Child Care Benefit an annual lump sum payment of Child Care Benefit for the 2006–07 financial year

FA018

Claim for Child Care Benefit for registered care

FA011

Claim for Child Care Benefit - an annual lump sum payment of Child Care Benefit for the 2007–08 financial year

Ci011.0807

Information booklet about your claim for Family Assistance

SS351.0710

Review of a Centrelink decision



Child Care Benefit and Jobs, Education and Training Child Care fee assistance assessment

9

This section explains how family entitlements to Child Care Benefit (CCB) and Jobs, Education and Training Child Care fee assistance (JETCCFA) are assessed. Assessment produces the details that services need to process CCB and JETCCFA.

The Family Assistance Office (FAO) is responsible for determining a family's assessment. Because many families seek advice from services, this background can be useful to you when a family starts using your service and when working out their entitlements.

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Child Care Benefit and Jobs, Education and Training Child Care fee assistance assessment

9.1 Why is family income assessed for Child Care Benefit?

FDC IHC OSHC LDC OCC

All families claiming CCB for approved child care must have their income assessed by the FAO because CCB is a payment based on family income. Families on the lowest incomes receive the highest rate of assistance. The CCB rate is gradually reduced as assessed family income increases, to the point where families receive no CCB.

9.2 What does the Child Care Benefit income assessment include?

FDC IHC OSHC LDC OCC

The FAO adds the following amounts in its assessment of family income each year for CCB purposes:

- taxable income for that year
- adjusted fringe benefits total
- tax-free pensions or benefits such as a Disability Support Pension under the *Social Security Act 1991* or an Invalidity Service Pension under Part III of the *Veterans' Entitlement Act 1986*
- net rental property losses **and**
- non-taxable foreign income.

The FAO then subtracts any child support (maintenance) payments that the family makes from the total amount.

Implications of fringe benefits on a family's CCB percentage

The value to an employee (or the non-grossed up amount) of fringe benefits is added back into family income for the purpose of assessing a family's CCB percentage and entitlement.

Fringe benefits that attract Fringe Benefits Tax will be assessed as income for CCB purposes. These include employer-provided cars, school fees, private health insurance, low interest loans, housing assistance, financial investments and expense benefits.

9.3

9.3 What to do when a family starts care at your service

FDC IHC OSHC LDC OCC

Ask the family whether they have contacted the FAO about claiming CCB. Families can make claims online and can find out about CCB eligibility through the FAO website. Families can also phone the FAO or visit one of their offices. The FAO can advise the family of their eligibility and their payment choices.

See quick contacts ▶

Payment choice is a matter for each family to decide, not child care services. If the FAO determines a person to be conditionally eligible for CCB by fee reduction, it sends notices to services with information relevant to the calculation of that person's fees. It is a condition for continued approval that services calculate and reduce fees for those people in accordance with those notices. Failure to comply with this condition is a criminal offence and may result in the imposition of sanctions on a service.

When a parent has a shared care arrangement for a child, and both parents are liable for fees for periods that child was in their care, both parents should claim CCB. Services should record actual child care usage for the child against the parent who incurred the liability for the period. If services do not report CCB correctly it may mean that parents are not getting their correct CCB entitlement, and may find it difficult to claim the Child Care Tax Rebate.

Fee reduction families

Families already receiving Family Tax Benefit (FTB) can usually complete the application for CCB over the phone. Families not receiving FTB may be eligible for CCB. In cases like this, families should phone the FAO as soon as possible. The FAO will send them an application form. Families claiming CCB should apply prior to or within 28 days of their children starting care at your service. If the family is eligible throughout these 28 days, the service must reduce fees for this period.

Your service can order CCB application forms from the FAO. These forms can be used by families who do not receive FTB.

The application form asks families for an estimate of family income for the current financial year. If the family is receiving FTB, the FAO will already have this information, although the family can revise this estimate at any time.

The FAO uses a family's income estimate to determine their CCB percentage(s). The FAO will send the CCB assessment to the family and your service. The family will receive a CCB assessment notice, and your service will receive the assessment in the weekly statement from the FAO following finalisation of the family's claim. If the family uses more than one child care service, the FAO will issue the family's assessment to each nominated child care service.

If the family has chosen to claim CCB as a fee reduction, and you have not received their assessment before the child commences care, your service may choose to offer reduced fees while waiting for the assessment to be advised in your weekly statement.

You may choose to use the family's assessment notice while waiting for your weekly statement, but you should ensure that your service name is listed on the notice and that the notice was issued in the past week.

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) provides services with CCB 'ready reckoner' to assist with calculating fee reductions.

DEEWR encourages services to reduce fees while awaiting assessment, but the decision is at the discretion of the service.

If the family's assessment information issued in your weekly statement shows that the CCB percentage differs from what was anticipated, the service may need to either repay the balance of fees to the parent or recover the balance of fees from the parent. If the FAO advises that the family is not eligible, the service will not be reimbursed for the fee reductions by the FAO.

If your service does not receive the family's assessment in the weekly statement received after the date the family applied for CCB, you should ask the parent to contact the FAO to find out the reasons for the processing delay. For example, delays can occur if the parent does not provide the information requested by the FAO, which is needed to complete the assessment.

When a family fails to provide the information requested by the FAO within 14 days, the FAO may reject their application for CCB. The family will receive

advice of the rejection, and parents will then need to re-apply and provide the required information if they want to receive CCB as a fee reduction.

Lump sum families

If the family chooses not to claim CCB as a fee reduction (perhaps because they plan to claim a lump sum), your service should apply for a Customer Reference Number (CRN) for the parent or guardian who will be claiming CCB, and extra CRNs for any other children in the family who will attend care at your service. This should be done when the child enrolls, but must be done before the first *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) form for that child is lodged with the FAO.

You can apply for CRNs by completing and lodging a *Notification of full fee paying customers* (FA022) form with your FAO child care payment team. Your service can order this form from the FAO.

See 8.4 ▶

You need Customer Reference Numbers to lodge the information necessary for families to claim their Child Care Benefit entitlement as a lump sum after the end of the financial year.

Families claiming CCB as a lump sum cannot be offered CCB fee reductions.

You should also include the children in your quarterly *Child Care Benefit statement for payment summary* (FA026) by completing a separate *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) form for each child.

After the end of the financial year, the family can fill in a claim form to get CCB as a lump sum. The FAO will determine the amount they will receive by taking into account the child care usage for the family and the family's adjusted taxable income for the financial year.

Services that receive funding under the Community Support 'stream' of the Child Care Services Support Program may need to provide other usage information for all families, including those that do not claim CCB.

For more information about the Child Care Services Support Program

See section 3 ▶

Information the family should give the service

When you receive a family's assessment in your weekly statement, you must ask the parent or guardian:

- a 'Do any of the children attending this service **usually** attend school?' **and**
- b 'Do you have a child attending this service who has already attended another approved child care service in the current financial year?' (not relevant to occasional care services) **and**
- c 'Do you have a child attending this service who is also attending another approved child care service?' **and**
- d 'Does the child have a sibling listed on the family's assessment notice who is attending another

approved long day care service, family day care service, in home care service, or specialised outside school hours care service?'

If the parent or guardian answers 'yes' to any of these questions, it may affect their child's CCB percentage or entitlement to eligible hours and allowable absence days at your service.

You will need to explain to the family about the multiple-child percentage, schooling percentage and the annual CCB entitlements that apply across all approved child care services.

You will also need to explain to the family that they must keep you informed about their CCB usage at other child care services to avoid an overpayment.

See 11.2 ▶

9.4 Weekly statement

FDC IHC OSHC LDC OCC

Your service receives CCB assessments for all families with children attending your service who chose to receive CCB as a fee reduction. Your service may also receive JETCCFA assessments for some families with children attending your service who chose to receive CCB as a fee reduction. These assessments are in your service's weekly statement, which are issued automatically by the FAO.

The weekly statement also includes details of assessments for families who have started or stopped using your service, and of families whose

assessment details have changed. Changed assessment details are identified by a '#' next to the changed item.

| CHILD CARE BENEFIT STATEMENT | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|---------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|--------------|-------------------|----------------|---------------|---------|
| Statement Number: <2006/02> | | | | | | | | | |
| Week Ending <xx xxxx xxxx> | | | | | | | | | |
| <Provider Name> | | | | | | | | | |
| <Provider CRN> | | | | | | | | | |
| Customer CNR | Customer Name | | Starts On | Status* | Child's CNR | Child's CNR | Eligible Hours | Child in Care | CCB% |
| 012 345 678J | AUBERGINE | Bridget | 23.07.06 | Current | 123 456 789K | AUBERGINE, Norris | # 50:00 | 001 | 89.60 |
| | | | | # Current | 234 567 890L | AUBERGINE, Bruce | # 50:00 | # 002 | # 96.71 |
| 234 567 890B | BLACK | Aubergine | 18.07.06 | # Current | 345 678 901C | BLACK, Bob | 50:00 | 001 | #3.00 |
| 456 789 012D | BROWN | Bob | 18.07.06 | Current | 567 890 123E | AUGUST, Robert | # 50:00 | 001 | 100.00 |
| | | | 25.07.06 | # Current | 567 890 123E | AUGUST, Robert | # 20:00 | | # JFA |
| # 123 456 789A | BURTON | Barry | | Full Fee | 234 567 890C | BURTON, Barry | | | |
| 789 012 345G | ORANGE | Katherine | 19.07.06 | # Cancelled | 890 123 456H | ORANGE, Novella | | | |
| | | | | # Cancelled | 901 234 567I | ORANGE, Nellie | | | |
| 456 789 012N | PRICE | Green | 20.07.06 | Current | 567 890 123O | GREEN, Campbell | # 24:00 | 001 | 40.44 |
| 678 901 234P | PURPLE | Michelle | 19.07.06 | Current | 789 012 345Q | PRICE, Nickel | # 50:00 | 001 | 30.32 |
| | | | 30.07.06 | # Cancelled | 789 012 345Q | PRICE, Nickel | # 0:00 | | # JFA |

What does the weekly statement tell services?

- Who the weekly statement is about**—the names of the children linked to your service will be listed for each parent or guardian in a family who is claiming CCB (and JETCCFA where applicable) under the 'Child's Name' heading.

The statement will also list the names of children linked to your service whose parents are full fee paying customers (potential CCB lump sum claimants).

- 2 The family's Customer Reference Numbers (CRNs)**—there will be a CRN for each child listed and one for the parent or guardian in a family who is claiming CCB. You need to record the appropriate numbers on a child's *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) and other forms.
- 3 The CCB percentage(s)**—the CCB percentage (CCB%) rates are listed beside each child under the 'CCB percentage' heading on the weekly statement.

See 11.2

Families have the choice to round down their CCB% to the nearest whole number. As some families will not make this choice, the CCB% advised on your weekly statement may be a whole number or a number to two decimal places. You should apply the CCB% exactly as it appears on the weekly statement.

For grandparents assessed as eligible for Grandparent Child Care Benefit, the code 'GCB' will appear in the CCB% column.

For parents assessed as eligible for JETCCFA, the code 'JFA' will appear in the CCB% column in the weekly statement.

Separate lines will appear on the weekly statement to advise of changes to a family's CCB, JFA and/or Grandparent Child Care Benefit assessments. A line will only show if there has been a change to the assessment. For example, if the child's JFA assessment has changed but not their CCB assessment, only a JFA line will show on the statement for the child and therefore the previous CCB assessment continues to apply.

To receive JETCCFA, a family must also be currently assessed as eligible for the maximum CCB%. If the family's CCB% is not on the weekly statement with the JETCCFA assessment, check your service's records/software to see what the family's CCB% currently is. If you have not been applying the maximum CCB% to the family's fees, check that you are using the most recent CCB assessment information from the FAO.

You should tell the parent that they cannot receive JETCCFA unless their CCB% is at the maximum rate, and to phone the FAO on **13 6150** to have their CCB assessment revised.

- 4 The date on which the assessment starts**—the date on which the assessment starts (the start date) appears under the 'Starts On' heading. There are some situations when the start date is not the date from which the relevant CCB% applies.

See 9.6 and 15.4

The rules that apply to the start date for JETCCFA differ from those that apply to the start date for CCB.

See 9.6 ▶

- 5 The maximum number of CCB hours or JETCCFA hours for which each child is eligible**—the maximum number of CCB hours or JETCCFA hours for which each child is eligible

appears under the 'Eligible Hours' heading, and is necessary for determining each child's fee reductions. The number of JETCCFA eligible hours may differ for each child, unlike CCB where the same number of eligible hours applies to all the children in the family.

See 11.2 and 11.7 ▶

6 The FAO has linked the family to your service.

What services do with the information on the weekly statement



- Start a *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) or a record in your software program for each new child listed on the weekly statement who will attend care at your service.

See 8.4 ▶

- Use the appropriate CCB%, the child's eligible CCB hours for the week, and whether the child is a school child (information obtained by asking the parent) to calculate each child's fee reduction.
- When applicable, use the child's JETCCFA hours for the week to calculate the child's JETCCFA fee reduction.
- Keep the weekly statement for 36 months after the calendar year that care is provided in.

What to do when a weekly statement is received

- Read the weekly statement to see which children it covers.
- Determine whether the CCB assessment

information is for:

- A new claim**—an assessment about a child:
 - who is going to commence care **or**
 - who has commenced care at your service for the first time **or**
 - whose family has been approved to receive CCB as a fee reduction for the first time during the current financial year **or**
 - for whom CCB was previously cancelled—though the family continued to receive CCB for other children in care at your service **or**
 - whose family has been approved after a previous cancellation, is to be treated as a new claim.
- A reassessment**—an assessment about a child whose family is already receiving CCB as a fee reduction, and who is in ongoing care at your service, is to be treated as a reassessment.
- A new claim and a reassessment**—an assessment about two children from the same family when one child has just commenced care, and another child is in ongoing care, is to be treated as a new claim for the child who has just commenced care and as a reassessment for the child who is in ongoing care or
- A cancellation**—an assessment about a child for whom entitlement to CCB has been cancelled.

New claims

Your service must apply the family's CCB fee reductions from the later date of either:

- the date the child commenced care **or**

- the Monday of the week containing the day—that is, 28 calendar days before the start date (not the date of issue)—listed in the weekly statement.

Both a new claim and a reassessment

An assessment for two children from the same family when one child has just commenced care and another child is in ongoing care, is to be treated as a **new claim** for the child who has just commenced care and as a reassessment for the child who is in ongoing care.

See 'New claims' above for when to apply the family's CCB% for the child or children who are going to commence care or have commenced care at your service for the first time.

For information about when to apply the family's CCB% for the child or children who are in ongoing care at your service.

See 9.6 ▶

Cancellation

When the FAO issues an assessment cancelling a child's or a family's CCB, you should stop reducing the child's or family's fees from the beginning of the week following the end date of the statement. You do not need to change fee reductions already provided.

'Unlinking' families who are no longer using child care from a child care service

The FAO removes the link between a service and a child's record when no usage details have been provided to the FAO for more than 12 months.

Child care services will be advised on their weekly statement of any child that is unlinked from their service. If you believe an 'unlinked' child is still using your service, contact the FAO immediately.

See quick contacts ▶

Reasons for cancellation of Child Care Benefit

A family will have their CCB cancelled if they do not satisfy Australian residency requirements when this information is requested by the FAO. A family will have their CCB cancelled for a child if the child does not satisfy the immunisation requirements within a specified time of being told they need to do so.

See 8.3 ▶

A family will have their CCB cancelled if the child is no longer in their care or they are no longer liable to pay for the child's fees.

A family's CCB will also be cancelled if they fail to reply to a request for information notice from the FAO about:

- the name(s) and address(es) of approved child care services their children attend **or**
- residency **or**
- their nominated bank account details.

JETCCFA assessments

JETCCFA assessment start and end dates appear under the 'Starts On' heading of your weekly statement. The start date will be a Monday and may be in the past. For both new claims and reassessments, apply the JETCCFA fee reductions from the later of either:

- the start date **or**
- the date the child commenced care.

The weekly statement will notify that a customer's JETCCFA is being cancelled by displaying zero hours in the 'Eligible Hours' column.

The cancellation date of a JETCCFA assessment shown under the 'Starts On' heading will be a Monday. JETCCFA will stop from this day.

Note: under no circumstances should a service back date prior to the start date.

9.5 Resolving assessment issues

FDC IHC OSHC LDC occ

Child Care Benefit assessment issues

Decisions made by officers of the FAO or the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations about CCB are subject to review and appeal by families.

Families can ask for a review of an assessment or a decision by completing a *Review of a Centrelink decision* (SS351.0710) form, or by writing to, phoning or visiting a FAO office.

See quick contacts ▶

The quickest and easiest way to have an assessment or a decision reviewed is for the parent or guardian to talk with the FAO officer who made the decision. If a parent wants to talk to the officer personally, they should phone the FAO on **13 61 50** to arrange for the officer to phone back at a convenient time. The officer will tell the parent the reasons for the decision, explain

any issues, and help to clear up any problems. Parents can also tell officers about any new information that may be helpful. If the officer thinks the first decision is incorrect, they can change it straight away.

If the officer does not change the assessment or decision, the parent can have it reviewed by an Authorised Review Officer (ARO). If the review is successful, the assessment or decision is backdated to the date of the original assessment or decision.

If the family disagrees with the assessment or decision made by the ARO, the ARO will inform the family of further avenues of appeal to the Social Security Appeals Tribunal and the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

If a family's appeal is successful, the family will be paid a revised entitlement. A successful appeal will also result in a new assessment being issued by the FAO to the child care services involved, so they can apply the outcome of the appeal to future entitlements.

Decisions made by services about claims for CCB are not subject to appeal. These include:

- approving or not approving Special Child Care Benefit (SCCB)
- the period of SCCB (up to 13 weeks of a financial year)
- the amount of SCCB approved
- approving more than 24 or more than 50 hours CCB a week for a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect
- approving up to 14 periods of 24-hour care in a financial year (not applicable to occasional care services).

JETCCFA assessment issues

Decisions made by officers of the FAO about JETCCFA are subject to review and appeal by families.

If a parent disagrees with a decision made about their eligibility for JETCCFA, they can ask for a review of an assessment or a decision by completing a *Request for a review of a decision* (FA034) form, or by writing to, phoning or visiting a FAO office. The request for a review must be made within 28 days of the date of the decision.

The FAO will then review the decision and inform the parent in writing of the outcome of the review.

9.6 Reassessments



Child Care Benefit reassessments

Families can update their income estimate and family details at any time during the year by contacting the FAO. When the FAO issues an assessment in a weekly statement about a child who is in ongoing care, you should start using the information in the weekly statement **no earlier than**:

- the Monday of the week following the start date specified in the weekly statement, if the change results in a lower fee reduction (for example, the CCB% is **lower than** the existing percentage, or a decrease in eligible hours, or a child loses eligibility for CCB) **or**

- the Monday of the week **that includes the start date** specified in the weekly statement, if the change results in a higher fee reduction (for example, the CCB% is **higher than** the existing percentage, or there is an increase in eligible hours, or a child becomes eligible for CCB).

JETCCFA reassessments

Parents can change their activity agreements with Centrelink or employment service providers at any time during the year. Sometimes this will result in their JETCCFA being reassessed.

When the FAO issues an assessment in a weekly statement about a child who is in ongoing care, you should start using the JETCCFA information in the weekly statement from the start date specified in the statement. This date will be a Monday.

Children who no longer use your child care service

If you receive information in a weekly statement about families who no longer use your child care service, you can fax a list of those families to your FAO child care payment team.

See back cover ▶

9.7 Notifying changes in circumstances

FDC IHC OSHC LDC OCC

All families receiving CCB by fee reduction must notify the FAO either before, or as soon as possible after, any of the following changes in their circumstances occur:

- change of child care services—if a family changes services after the assessment notice has been issued, they should advise the FAO as soon as possible **or**
- changes to eligibility for more than 24 hours or more than 50 hours of CCB **or**
- changes to parents' partnering arrangements, by starting or ending a marriage or marriage-like relationship **or**
- a death of the person who claims CCB or their partner **or**
- a child attending care becomes a school child **or**
- a child enters or leaves their care **or**
- changes in family income, unless:
 - the previous and current family income are both below the lower-income thresholds **or**
 - the previous and current family income are both above the income cut-offs for one or more children in approved child care.

For information about the current lower-income thresholds and income cut-offs for one or more children in care

See inside back cover ▶

When the amount of fee reductions provided to a family for a financial year differs from their Child Care Benefit entitlement, the Family Assistance Office will repay to the family, or recover from the family, the difference after reconciliation.

The CCB% listed in the FAO weekly statement is based on the family's estimate of their adjusted taxable income for the financial year. Families who choose to receive fee reductions should check their income estimates regularly against their family income and contact the FAO if it looks like their income will be different to their estimate. For families required to submit a tax return, their actual entitlement is calculated by the FAO after the tax return(s) are processed by the Australian Taxation Office.

See 9.2 ▶

By notifying the FAO either before, or as soon as possible after an event, a revised assessment can be issued that reflects the family's current circumstances. Families can notify the FAO online of some circumstance change or can notify the FAO by phone or by visiting one of their offices. If your service becomes aware of a family being affected by these changes, you should remind the family of the requirement.

You can also help parents to provide information to the FAO by using the *Child Care Benefit advice of*

family details (FA044) form. This form can be used to advise changes to family details, including 'linking' a family's record to your service. The form should be signed by the parent and faxed by you to your FAO child care payment team.

See quick contacts ▶

Additional notifiable changes in circumstance for families receiving JETCCFA

Parents must tell the FAO if:

- they change address
- a parent or a child leaves Australia permanently
- their child care fees change
- they stop doing or change their approved activities
- they change the times any of their children use child care
- they need an extension of JETCCFA.

For privacy reasons the *Child Care Benefit advice of family details* (FA044) form should not be used to advise of changes in family income.



10

Processing Child Care Benefit

This section includes the rules about charging families fees and about processing Child Care Benefit (CCB).

It covers families switching from paying the whole fee to claiming CCB, and switching between lump sum and fee reduction.

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10.1 Fee reduction families

FDC | IHC | OSHC | LDC | OCC

Child Care Benefit to be given at the time fees are charged

For families claiming CCB as a fee reduction, service operators must ensure that CCB is given at the time fees are charged. Services must reduce fees by the amount of the CCB entitlement for each eligible family with a current assessment. Services must not charge full fees in advance and reimburse CCB at a later date. The exception to this is when the first assessment is not received until after the care has been used.

Jobs, Education and Training Child Care fee assistance (JETCCFA) can only be claimed by families as reduced fees. The above rules about when CCB must be given to families claiming it as a fee reduction also apply to JETCCFA.

10.2 Lump sum families

FDC | IHC | OSHC | LDC | OCC

Your service should fill in a *Notification of full fee paying customers* (FA022) form for the family and fax it to your Family Assistance Office (FAO) child care payment team on **1800 700 533**. You should charge full fees to the family. You should also include the children in your *Child Care Benefit statement for payment summary* (FA026) by completing a separate *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) for each child.

If a family initially says that they do not intend to claim CCB at all, but later decides that they do, in fact, want to receive CCB as a lump sum, then you will need to follow these steps:

- apply for a Customer Reference Number (CRN) for the parent or guardian and for the child attending child care **and**
- complete a supplementary statement for that child's usage if you have already lodged a primary statement for the relevant statement period(s) that the child was in care at your service.

10.3 Changes to payment choice

FDC IHC OSHC LDC OCC

Families can claim CCB as a lump sum by lodging a *Claim for an annual lump sum payment of Child Care Benefit* (FA011 or FA052) with the FAO within two years after the end of the financial year in which the care was provided. The forms are available from your local FAO office.

A family cannot claim CCB as a fee reduction through their child care service during the year and then claim CCB as a lump sum entitlement for the same period(s) of child care at the end of the year from the FAO. However, at any time during the year, families who have chosen to receive CCB as a lump sum can decide that they want to receive their future entitlement of CCB as reduced fees.

Circumstances when families must receive CCB as reduced fees are listed at the beginning of **Section 8**.

See Section 8 ▶

The amount of CCB as a lump sum depends on a family's actual adjusted taxable income assessment and the child care usage information (provided by all child care services used by the family) for the preceding financial year. Entitlements cannot be assessed until the child care service has lodged its child care usage information for the entire year and families have submitted their tax returns to the Australian Taxation Office. A family cannot receive their lump sum payment if they **do not** have a CRN.

Changing payment choice from a lump sum to fee reduction

Families who want to change their payment choice from a lump sum to fee reduction may do so by contacting the FAO. If the family is already receiving Family Tax Benefit, arrangements can normally be completed online or over the phone. If the family is not receiving Family Tax Benefit, they will be sent a *Claim for Child Care Benefit to reduce your child care fees* (FA002) form. These families should contact the FAO as soon as possible.

Any change to payment choices must start on a Monday because Child Care Benefit is a weekly entitlement based on a Monday to Sunday cycle.

Assessments for families who change their payment choice from lump sum to fee reduction should be treated as new claims with appropriate backdating.

See 9.4 ▶

Changing payment choice from fee reduction to lump sum payment

Your service should get a signed and dated statement from families who decide to stop receiving CCB as a fee reduction and want to claim CCB as a lump sum for the rest of the financial year. The statement should include a date agreed between your service and the parent(s) as to when the change should take effect.

To reflect the family's payment choice on the *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) form, write a zero in columns D, E and F (and G if you operate a family day care service) for the weeks after that agreed date for the rest of the statement period. On future *Statement of child care usage* forms simply complete columns A, B (and C if you operate a family day care service) and J.

See 15.4 ►

10.4 Child Care payments made by a third party

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC**

If your service receives child care payments from a third party, the parent may not be eligible for CCB. Details of common third party arrangements and their impact on CCB are as follows.

Employer contributions and salary sacrificing arrangements

The *Family Assistance Act 1999* requires that for parents to be eligible for CCB, 'the individual, or the individual's partner, has incurred a liability to pay for the session of care (whether or not the liability has been discharged)'. In a salary sacrificing arrangement, the liability to pay for the care may lie with the parent's employer or the parent. Neither the FAO nor child care services can make a determination of liability. Parents should only apply for CCB if they are satisfied they are liable for the cost of child care. If a parent asks your service about who has the liability for the cost of the child care in their particular circumstances, you should advise them to discuss the matter with their employer.

Parents should seek their own, independent financial advice as to whether they should salary sacrifice their child care fees. The impact of any salary sacrifice arrangement on their eligibility for Child Care Benefit should be considered.

Adult Migrant English Program

The Australian Government Department of Immigration and Citizenship provides free child care for non-school children if their parents are required to attend classes while participating in the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP). The cost of AMEP-related child care is the responsibility of AMEP service providers. The participant is not eligible for CCB or JETCCFA because the AMEP is paying for the child care.

However, AMEP participants may be entitled to CCB and JETCCFA when they use care for other purposes or for their school children.

Role of the service

If the AMEP participant chooses to use care for non-AMEP related reasons, they need to apply to the FAO for an assessment of their CCB eligibility. Services should only apply CCB and lodge usage data for the sessions of care that are used for non-AMEP related reasons. All AMEP-related care should be billed directly to the AMEP service provider.

10.5 Rules about fees

FDC

IHC

OSHC

LDC

OCC

The amount of a CCB fee reduction or the combined amount of a CCB and JETCCFA fee reduction provided on a *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) form for the number of eligible hours in a week cannot exceed the total amount of the fee charged for those eligible hours.

Child Care Benefit cannot exceed the fee charged.

Fees and charging practices

Child care services can determine their own fees and charging practices. The family assistance legislation does not regulate the fee charging practices/structure of approved services. Decisions relating to fees are commercial decisions of the services. However,

services' business operations, including fee structure, should comply with any relevant legislation—for example, trade practices legislation or disability discrimination legislation. Services may need to seek independent legal advice to determine whether their fee structures comply with other relevant legislation.

Your service should include any compulsory levy or charge in the fee reported on *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) forms. This is important if the fee might otherwise be less than the maximum level of CCB. However, a child care service cannot include deposits, bonds or penalty charges in the fees.

Families should be informed of the fees and charging policies/practices of the service when enrolling their children.

Goods and Services Tax

Child care provided at your service is Goods and Services Tax (GST) free. **Do not** add GST to the fees your service charges.

Families paying fees by cash

When families pay by cash, services should round the 'gap fee' to the nearest five cents. When rounding to the nearest five cents, one and two cents are rounded down, three and four cents are rounded up, six and seven cents are rounded down and eight and nine cents are rounded up.

The 'gap fee' is the amount remaining after a family's CCB fee reduction has been deducted, or the combined amount of a family's CCB **and** JETCCFA fee reduction has been deducted from the fee charged.

11

Calculating Child Care Benefit fee reductions

This section is technical. It presents the basic formula and variants for different service types for the calculation of Child Care Benefit (CCB) fee reductions. It describes the range of issues to be taken into account. These issues include the 24-hour and 50-hour weekly limits.

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Calculating Child Care Benefit fee reductions



11.1 The basic formula



| | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|---|---|--|
| the standard hourly rate See inside back cover ▶ | ✖ | the eligible hours of care used at your service for this child in the week | ✖ | the CCB percentage (CCB%) for the number of children in the family that attend an approved long day care service, family day care service, in home care service or specialised outside school hours care service, or any combination of these services in the same week | ✖ | the part-time percentage (if applicable for the service) 85% if the child is a school child |
|--|---|--|---|---|---|--|

Note: The standard hourly rate is updated every year.

then

the CCB fee reduction is the lesser of the amounts given by the above formula and the fee charged for the child's eligible CCB hours.



| | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|------------------------------------|
| the standard hourly rate See inside back cover ▶ | ✖ | the eligible hours of care at your service for this child | ✖ | the CCB% for the number of children in the family that attend an occasional care service in the same week | ✖ | 85% if the child is a school child |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|------------------------------------|

Note: The standard hourly rate is updated every year.

then

the CCB fee reduction is the lesser of the amounts given by the above formula and the fee charged for the child's eligible CCB hours.



Care in standard hours¹

If a child's eligible hours in standard hours are less than 37.5, calculate:

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|--------|---|--|---|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| the standard hourly rate See inside back cover ▶ | ✖ | 1.3333 | ✖ | the number of eligible hours in standard hours at your service | ✖ | the CCB% for the number of children in the family that attend a long day care service, family day care service, in home care service, or specialised outside school hours care service, or any combination of these services in the same week | ✖ | 85% if the child is a school child. |
|---|---|--------|---|--|---|---|---|-------------------------------------|

If a child's eligible hours in standard hours are between 37.5 and 50 hours inclusive, calculate:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| the ceiling amount See inside back cover ▶ | ✖ | the CCB% for the number of children in the family that attend a long day care service, family day care service, in home care service, or specialised outside school hours care service, or any combination of these services in the same week | ✖ | 85% if the child is a school child. |
|---|---|---|---|-------------------------------------|

¹ Standard hours must:

- be 10 continuous hours a day, Monday to Friday **and**
- not commence before 7.00am and not finish after 6.30pm on any particular day, unless the Family Assistance Office gives specific approval to a service to establish its standard hours outside those times **and**
- be appropriate to the normal attendance needs of most of the children being provided with care **and**
- apply to all children in the service's care.

Care in non-standard hours ²

For a child's eligible hours in non-standard hours, calculate:

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|--------|---|--|---|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| the standard hourly rate See inside back cover ▶ | × | 1.3333 | × | the eligible hours of care in non-standard hours at your service | × | the CCB% for the number of children in the family that attend a long day care service, family day care service, in home care service, or specialised outside school hours care service, or any combination of these services in the same week | × | 85% if the child is a school child. |
|---|---|--------|---|--|---|---|---|-------------------------------------|

Note: The standard hourly rate is updated every year.

Add the amount for care in standard hours to the amount for care in non-standard hours.

CCB fee reduction

The fee reduction for a child is the lesser of:

- the total amount for care in standard and non-standard hours **and**
- the fee charged for the child's eligible CCB hours.

² Non-standard hours

(Care provided outside standard hours) includes:

- early morning or late evening care
- weekend care
- public holiday care (when the child attends care on a public holiday).

11.2 Factors in the calculation of Child Care Benefit

FDC IHC OSHC LDC occ

- **Standard hourly rates**—which are listed on the inside back cover.
- **See inside back cover ▶**
- **CCB%**—which depends on a family's adjusted taxable income and the number of children in care. The CCB% range is listed on the inside back cover. This section explains how to apply the CCB%. The CCB% can be a whole number or to two decimal places.

See inside back cover ▶

- **Schooling percentage**—this is 85 per cent if the child is a school child and 100 per cent if the child is not a school child.
- **Eligible hours of care**—which are usually limited to 24 or 50 hours for each child per week. Some families are eligible for more than 50 hours for each child per week.

CCB percentage

A fee reduction family's CCB% listed on their assessment is based on the family's income and the number of children in approved care. The percentage is calculated by the Family Assistance Office (FAO) in accordance with the family assistance legislation. You use this percentage in the calculation of the family's CCB fee reduction. The percentage may be a whole number or to two decimal places. Families have the choice to round down their CCB% to the nearest

whole number. You should apply the CCB% as it appears on the weekly statement. Families' CCB will still be reconciled to two decimal places.

You can only give CCB to children who have their names listed on the weekly statement.

If a family has one child in care, there will be one child listed on the weekly statement together with one percentage. This percentage is used to calculate the family's CCB if the child is attending care in your service.

If a family has told the FAO they have more than one child who may be in care (in any Australian Government-approved service), there will be more than one percentage on the weekly statement. If, for example, the family has three children in care, then the percentage for one child, the percentage for two children, and the percentage for three children will all be listed on the weekly statement.

CCB percentages listed on the weekly statement for a family against two or more children are referred to as **multiple-child percentages**. If your service is not an occasional care service, you use the percentage for the number of children who are using your service or other Australian Government-approved long day care services, family day care services, in home care services, and specialised outside school hours care services. You must use the multiple rate even if children attend for only part of the week. Do not count children who only attend occasional care services.

If a grandparent has been assessed as eligible for **Grandparent Child Care Benefit** (GCCB), then the CCB% will be replaced with the code GCB against those children for whom the grandparents are claiming CCB.

Checking the multiple-child percentage

It is your service's responsibility to check that the correct multiple-child percentage is applied.

- If two or more children from a family only attend child care at your service, apply the multiple-child percentage from the family's assessment listed against the same number of children that attend your service in a week.



If a family has children attending another approved service in addition to yours (other than an occasional care service) in the same week, apply the family's percentage (listed on the weekly statement) that is relevant to the number of children accessing the care. Your service does not need to have written evidence to verify attendance at the other service/s. You should advise parents that they are responsible for telling you whenever attendance changes.



If you are an approved occasional care service you should apply the percentage listed on the weekly statement for the number of children in the family that attend an approved occasional care service in the same week.



The part-time percentage applies only to non-school children in care at approved long day care services. The value of the part-time percentage depends on

the number of hours charged across all approved long day care services for a child.

| Hours | Part-time % |
|---|-------------|
| Less than 34 hours in a week | 110 |
| 34 or more hours but less than 35 hours in a week | 108 |
| 35 or more hours but less than 36 hours in a week | 106 |
| 36 or more hours but less than 37 hours in a week | 104 |
| 37 or more hours but less than 38 hours in a week | 102 |
| 38 or more hours in a week | 100 |

Families claiming CCB as a lump sum will have their eligibility for the part-time percentage determined by the FAO after the end of the financial year. Your service does not need to determine whether lump sum families are eligible for the part-time percentage.

Fee reduction families with a non-school child in care, who are eligible for more than 24 hours CCB per child and are charged for less than 38 hours care at two or more long day care services in a week, should tell both services the total number of hours used.

If this number is less than 38, apply the appropriate part-time percentage in the calculation of the family's fee reduction(s).

If a family's hours change they should tell **both** services.

FDC IHC OSHC LDC OCC

Schooling percentage

The schooling percentage is 85 per cent of CCB entitlement for a school child and 100 per cent for a non-school child. The school-child status is not reported on the weekly statement—before calculating any fee reductions, you should ask the parent or guardian if their child normally attends school. A school child is a child who:

- attends primary or secondary school **or**
- is on a break from school (for example, during school holidays) and will be returning to primary or secondary school after that break.

A **school child** for CCB purposes includes children who attend the following classes at primary school:

- kindergarten in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory
- preparatory in Victoria and Tasmania
- preparatory or year one in Queensland
- pre-primary in Western Australia
- reception in South Australia
- transition in the Northern Territory.

A **non-school child** is a child who is not yet a school child.

Families are required to notify the FAO when their child starts school.

In addition to this, the FAO will deem a child to be a school child for CCB purposes, from the date of their sixth birthday.

Exception provisions apply to children aged six or more who are unable to attend school where the child:

- has a disability and is exempt from attending school, **or**
- is six years of age but is to start school at a particular date in the future (generally to coincide with the beginning of a new school term).

The FAO applies the schooling percentage when calculating fee reductions based on information provided by the family and the age of the child. You do not need to report this information.

Eligible hours of care

CCB will only be paid when the child attends care for some part of a session, for which a fee is charged, unless the child is absent on an allowable or approved absence day. CCB is paid for the number of hours in those sessions of care.

See Section 12 ▶

Limits on eligible hours

Eligible hours may be limited by:

- the service's hours of operation (excluding family day care and in home care), see 'Hours of operation of the service (1)', on this page
- whether the weekly limit of hours for the child is 24, 50 or a specified number greater than 50
- the maximum length of before and after school sessions of care
- the number of eligible hours a family advises it will use at your service (when applicable), see 'Number of eligible hours a family advises (2)', on the next page
- the 12-hour limit on a session of care.

The eligible hours of care are limited by the service's hours of operation, since Child Care Benefit will only be paid for periods when the service is open (except for public holidays and local emergencies).

FDC IHC OSHC LDC OCC

Hours of operation of the service (1)

The service's hours of operation for CCB purposes are the least of:

- the weekly hours advised in a service's promotional material
- the weekly hours of operation on public display at the service

- the weekly hours that sufficient staff (which meet state or territory requirements) are rostered on for duty, present at the service, and children can attend
- the licensed hours of operation.

When the hours set out above are not consistent, CCB will be paid for the shortest span of hours of any of the above circumstances.

See 5.4 ▶

Maintaining minimum hours of operation is a condition of ongoing approval for Child Care Benefit purposes.

FDC IHC OSHC LDC OCC

Number of eligible hours a family advises (2)

Families receiving CCB as a fee reduction for a child at more than one approved service must nominate the number of CCB hours per child they want to receive from each service.

11.3 Whether the weekly limit of hours is 24 or 50

FDC

IHC

OSHC

LDC

OCC

There is a limit on CCB of 24 hours per child per week, except when both parents (or the sole parent) are working, training, study or looking for work, or have an exemption from the limit. The FAO administers a 'work test' to determine if a family meets these requirements to be eligible for up to 50 hours CCB per child per week.

Fee reduction families complete the 50-hour limit work test when they apply for CCB and, subsequently, if their circumstances change during the year. Lump sum families complete the 50-hour limit work test when they claim CCB after the end of the financial year.

Parents who do not meet the eligibility criteria of the 50-hour limit work test, but who need more than 24 hours of care for their child or children because the family is in exceptional circumstances, must complete an *Exceptional circumstances—Claim for increased eligible hours and/or Special Child Care Benefit* (FAO023) form at your service. The completed form and relevant documentation must be sent to the FAO for approval.

See 13.6 ▶

Services who consider a child needs more than 24 hours of care because the child is at risk of abuse or neglect may want to encourage families to use more care by offering them up to 50 hours of CCB. You can approve these extra hours by completing a *Child at risk—Application for increased hours and/or Special Child Care Benefit* (FA024) form.

See 13.3 ▶

How the 24-hour limit works

The 24-hour limit is not a family limit. Each child in a family is able to access up to 24 hours of CCB per week. The limit applies across all approved child care services. This means that families using more than one approved service to meet their child care needs are limited to a total of 24 hours of CCB per child, per week, when care is not work-related.

If a family uses more than one service for a child, they need to tell you how many of the 24 hours they will use at your service each week. This will become the child's eligible Child Care Benefit limit for your service.

Exemptions from the 24-hour limit

Families will be eligible for more than 24 hours of CCB when:

- the family receives Carer Allowance for a child with a disability, paid by the FAO **or**
- both parents (or a sole parent) in the family have a disability **or**
- the child is or was at risk of neglect or abuse **or**
- the child's family is or was in exceptional circumstances.

Families who meet the work test

If a family meets the work test or has an exemption, CCB can be claimed for up to 50 hours for each child, each week. There are requirements for families who want more than 50 hours CCB.

See 11.4 ▶

Parents who meet the work test in a week are not restricted to claiming Child Care Benefit only for the hours during which they are working, training or studying. Families who meet the work test for a week are eligible for up to 50 hours of Child Care Benefit per child for that week.

Families who do not meet the work test

Families who do not meet the 50-hour limit work test or do not have an exemption can still use more than 24 hours of care. These hours are subject to Priority of Access Guidelines. However, your service cannot provide more than 24 hours of CCB fee reductions for these families or list more than 24 eligible CCB hours per week on the quarterly *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) form.

See 6.3 ▶

How many hours can families claim?

Eligibility requirements for up to 24 hours

Families can get up to 24 hours of CCB per child per week for approved care regardless of the reason for child care.

Eligibility requirements for up to 50 hours (meeting the work test)

Families can get up to 50 hours of CCB per child per week when both parents, or the sole parent, undertake any of the following activities, or a combination of activities, for at least 15 hours per week, or at least 30 hours per fortnight:

- **working**—including paid full-time, part-time or casual work; self-employment; paid leave; unpaid sick leave; paid or unpaid maternity leave; and setting up a business
- **voluntary work**—to improve work skills or employment prospects
- **looking for work**
- **studying or training**—including undertaking a course to increase job prospects; attending a school, university or college and being on a break between semesters.

Other circumstances which satisfy the work test include:

- having a disability
- caring for an adult or child who has a disability
- a parent who is overseas or in prison

- grandparents, or their partner, with primary care of a grandchild
- undertaking voluntary work which **does not** improve work skills or employment prospects for at least 15 hours in the week, or at least 30 hours in the fortnight (this activity cannot be combined with other activities to reach the minimum hours required).

For more information about the work test, contact the Family Assistance Office.

See back cover

Documentation to support a claim of more than 24 hours of CCB

All families claiming CCB by fee reduction have their eligibility for more than 24 hours of CCB determined when they lodge their application with the FAO.

Fee reduction families have the limit of their eligible hours listed on the weekly statement. For these families with children who only attend your child care service, this is the maximum number of hours of CCB that can be claimed for each child at your service.

Families claiming CCB as a fee reduction, who are charged for more hours than they can claim CCB for in a week across all approved child care services, must nominate the number of CCB hours per child they want to claim from your service.

Your service does not have to check this advice with the other services or retain a copy of the advice.

Child at risk of neglect or abuse (and the 24-hour limit)

If you reasonably consider a child to be at risk of neglect or abuse and you consider that the risk would be reduced if CCB were available for more than 24 hours, you can decide how many hours are needed and CCB will be payable for these hours.

Since there is a similar exemption to the 50-hour limit, the only limit on the number of hours you can approve is that you cannot approve a 24-hour period of care.

You will need to complete and retain a *Child at risk—Application for increased eligible hours and/or Special Child Care Benefit* (FA024) form. On the form you must write an outline of the child's circumstances and why you consider the child is at risk of neglect or abuse. You are not required to ask parents to support the claim or provide documentation.

The form is valid for a maximum of 13 weeks at your service.

If near the end of 13 weeks of additional hours you consider the child is still at serious risk of abuse or neglect, you can apply to the FAO for an extension of the exemption from the 24-hour limit. Complete another *Child at risk—Application for increased eligible hours and/or Special Child Care Benefit* form and send it to the FAO for approval.

See 13.3 ▶

You are not required to ask parents to support the claim or provide documentation with your application to the FAO.

Sometimes there will be a letter from a doctor or a social worker indicating that the child is at risk and supporting the need for more than 24 hours of Child Care Benefit.

However, you do not need a letter or supporting documentation if you believe that the child is at risk, and more than 24 hours of Child Care Benefit is needed to reduce this risk.

Exceptional circumstances

The 'exceptional circumstances' provision relates to **short-term** family crises that result in the need for more than 24 hours of care. It is designed to ensure that families in **short-term** exceptional circumstances, who are not otherwise eligible for more than 24 hours of CCB, have access to CCB for up to 50 hours per child per week.

The exceptional circumstances provision cannot be used to meet ongoing problems, although it may be possible to use it when the problem first arises.

You should note that this 'exceptional circumstances' provision has no relationship to the Special Child Care Benefit (SCCB) provisions. The exceptional circumstances provision is for situations that generate the need for more hours of care, but may not cause

short-term financial hardship.

On the other hand, many crises that do cause short-term financial hardship and so may justify SCCB, do not result in a need for more hours of care.

See Section 13 ▶

It is not possible to list all the circumstances in which a family would meet the criteria for exceptional circumstances. **Each application is considered on its merits.**

Exceptional circumstances could include situations such as:

- hospitalisation
- short-term physical incapacity
- short-term episodes of psychological or psychiatric illness
- serious illness of a member of the person's family
- intensive medical treatment
- short-term carer responsibilities for other family members
- voluntary work associated with an emergency or disaster (such as bushfires, storms or floods)
- attendance at a funeral or bereavement service requiring long-distance travel
- resolution of a family member's estate that involves long-distance travel
- attendance at court as a party to proceedings, a juror or a witness.

Parents may only be eligible for an exemption from the 50-hour limit where there are exceptional circumstances and neither parent (or the sole parent), due to these exceptional circumstances, is available to care for a child for more than 50 hours per week.

Procedure and period that can be approved

Parents who do not meet the eligibility criteria outlined in the 50-hour limit work test or have an exemption from the work test, but who need more than 24 hours of care for their child or children because the family is in exceptional circumstances, need to complete an *Exceptional circumstances—Claim for increased eligible hours and/or Special Child Care Benefit* (FA023) form. This form asks the parent to specify the exceptional circumstances, and also to supply documentation as evidence to support their claim.

See 13.6 ▶

Parents must give your service the completed form and the relevant documentation so you can send it to your FAO child care payment team in your state or territory.

Approval will only be given for the period of time considered necessary. If hospitalisation or illness is only expected to last three weeks, then that is the period the approval will cover.

The initial approval can be for a maximum period of 13 weeks. If the exceptional circumstances continue beyond this period, the family may re-apply for additional periods. The FAO will then determine whether the exceptional circumstances continue to be 'temporary' and whether they still justify an exemption from the 24-hour limit.

Documentation for exceptional circumstances

The documentation required by the FAO differs, depending on the type of exceptional circumstances. The FAO must be satisfied that documentation provided supports access to CCB for more than 24 hours. The supporting documentation can include a medical certificate, court documentation, or a signed statement from a social worker, counsellor, or other third party. Documentation that is supplied must include contact details for the person so that the information can be verified. The minimum documentation required would be a statutory declaration stating the type of the exceptional circumstances.

The FAO asks for additional information, if required.

In particularly urgent cases the FAO can accept and approve a phone request from the service. However, if this approach is used, the approval will be for only sufficient time to allow the documentation to be provided and processed—for example, two weeks.

When the form and documentation are provided, a further determination can be made. If the decision is then not to approve the application, the initial approval holds until the completion of the initial approval period—for example, two weeks.

Lump sum families

All families who want to claim more than 24 hours of CCB per child in a week, due to exceptional circumstances, must receive CCB as a fee reduction through your service for the week concerned. The exceptional circumstances provision for more than 24 hours of CCB does not apply to parents claiming CCB as a lump sum. Families who were intending to claim CCB as a lump sum at the end of the year, can apply for CCB as a fee reduction by contacting the FAO.

[See back cover ▶](#)

Service exemptions from the 24-hour limit

The aim of service exemptions from the 24-hour limit is to maintain access to child care for families, particularly in rural and remote areas.

Services can be exempt where they meet all of the following criteria:

- they are located in a town in a rural or remote area, or in a township on the fringe of an urban area **and**
- they are the sole provider in the town or township of this type of care (that is, the only long day care service in the town, the only family day care service, or the only vacation care service) **and**
- they are able to demonstrate that not granting an exemption would result in a significant deterioration in viability likely to lead to the closure of the service.

Every child attending an exempt service has a weekly limit of at least 50 eligible hours at the service.

If you think your service may meet these criteria you should contact your state or territory office of the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations to find out more information and to ask for the application form.

[See quick contacts ▶](#)

11.4 Whether the weekly limit of hours is 50 or more than 50

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **occ**

Child Care Benefit (CCB) is limited to 50 hours per child per week for work-related child care. However, additional hours can be claimed if the child actually uses care for more than 50 hours in a week (as distinct from attending sessions of care that total more than 50 hours) and if:

- both parents have work-related commitments for more than 50 hours in a week so that neither is available to care for the child for a period exceeding 50 hours in a week **or**
- the sole parent has work-related commitments for more than 50 hours in a week **or**
- both parents work evening or night shifts and their working hours, plus hours required for sleep during the day, total more than 50 hours a week, and the timing of the work and sleep means that there are periods in the week totalling more than

- 50 hours for which neither parent is available to care for the child **or**
- the sole parent works evening or night shifts and their working hours, plus hours required for sleep during the day, total more than 50 hours a week **or**
- one parent has work-related commitments for more than 50 hours a week and the other works evening or night shifts, and the timing of the work and sleep means that there are periods in the week totalling more than 50 hours for which neither parent is available to care for the child **or**
- one parent has work-related commitments for more than 50 hours or works evening or night shifts, and the other parent has a disability **or**
- the child is at risk **or**
- the family is experiencing exceptional circumstances.

See 11.3 ▶

The number of eligible hours written on a *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) form cannot exceed the number of eligible hours stated on a family's assessment notice; nor can it exceed the actual number of hours and minutes used that week, rounded up to the next hour (as distinct from the number of hours in the sessions of care used that week). If the number of hours used does not exceed 50, then the usual rules apply—the number of hours in the sessions of care used, up to 50 hours.

If the family is entitled to more than 50 eligible hours per week, this will be indicated on the weekly statement.

CCB is paid for the actual hours of care used over 50 for each child. For example, when a service is open for 60 hours per week and charges a 12-hour sessional fee:

- if a family is charged 60 hours, but the child has only been in care for 55 hours, then the family is only entitled to 55 hours of CCB. The service should enter 55 hours under 'Eligible CCB hours' on the *Statement of child care usage* for this child
- if a family is charged 60 hours, but the child has only been in care for 45 hours, then the family can be paid for 50 hours of CCB
- if a family is charged for 45 hours of care, and has used 45 hours of care, then the family can be paid for 45 hours of CCB.

All families who want to receive more than 50 hours CCB per child per week must receive CCB as a fee reduction for the weeks concerned. This provision is not available to parents claiming CCB as a lump sum after the end of the year.

Work-related commitments for more than 50 hours

Work-related commitments include:

- paid work**, including self-employment
- attending a course for education or training** to improve work skills and/or employment prospects—in determining whether work-related commitments exceed 50 hours, only the time spent actually attending the site of study or training is included (for example, on campus or at

a school doing practice teaching as part of their training course); time spent studying at home is not included

- **actively looking for work**—in determining whether work-related commitments exceed 50 hours, only the time spent actively looking for work (for example, attending interviews or applying for jobs) is included; it is likely that parents who are actively looking for work would only be able to claim more than 50 hours CCB in exceptional circumstances, such as when they have extensive travel to attend a job interview
- **actively setting up a business** that has not yet started operating.

For each of these situations, work-related commitments include travel time between the child care service and the work commitment.

Shift work

If the work-related commitments of both parents do not exceed 50 hours, but they work evening or night shifts, they can claim CCB for more than 50 hours if:

- their working and travelling hours mean neither parent is available to provide care to the child **and**
- the hours required for sleep (up to a maximum of 10 hours per day per family) total more than 50 hours a week, and the timing of work and sleep means that there are periods in the week totalling more than 50 hours for which neither parent is available to care for the child.

Families with one parent with a disability

When one parent in a two-parent family has work-related commitments for more than 50 hours per week and the other has a disability, the family may be considered to have work-related commitments for the number of hours the first parent works (including travel time between the child care service and the work-related commitment).

A person with a disability is:

- a recipient of a Disability Support Pension under the *Social Security Act 1991*, or an Invalidity Service Pension under **Part III of the Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986** **or**
- a person participating in an independent living program that is conducted by the CRS Australia (that is, the Australian Government provider of vocational rehabilitation) **or**
- a person diagnosed by a registered medical practitioner or a clinical psychologist as:
 - impaired to a degree that significantly incapacitates them **or**
 - having a psychological or emotional condition that significantly incapacitates them, whether or not they receive Australian Government assistance in relation to the incapacity.

Procedure for claiming more than 50 hours CCB for work-related commitments

Families who want to claim CCB for more than 50 hours in a week must claim CCB as a fee reduction for the weeks concerned.

When a family requires more than 50 hours care for work-related or disability reasons, they should be referred to the FAO for assessment of the additional hours.

Families who are eligible for more than 50 hours of CCB in a week who were intending to claim CCB as a lump sum should phone the FAO as soon as possible to claim fee reductions.

See quick contacts ▶

Child at risk of neglect or abuse (and the 50-hour limit)

When you reasonably consider a child to be at risk of neglect or abuse and you consider that the risk would be reduced if CCB were available for more than 50 hours, you can decide how many hours are needed and CCB will be paid for these hours.

Sometimes there will be a letter from a doctor or a social worker indicating that the child is at risk, and supporting the need for more than 50 hours of CCB. However, you do not need a letter or supporting documentation if you believe that the child is at risk, and more than 50 hours of CCB is needed to reduce this risk.

To approve additional hours, you need to complete and keep a *Child at risk—Application for increased eligible hours and/or Special Child Care Benefit* (FA024) form. On the form you must write an outline of the child's circumstances and why you consider the child is at risk of neglect or abuse. You are not required to ask parents to support the claim or provide documentation.

See 13.3 ▶

If near the end of 13 weeks of additional hours you consider the child is still at serious risk of abuse or neglect you can apply to the FAO for an extension of the exemption from the 50-hour limit. Complete another *Child at risk—Application for increased eligible hours and/or Special Child Care Benefit* form and send it to the FAO for approval.

You are not required to ask parents to support the claim or provide documentation with your application to the FAO.

The Child at risk—Application for increased eligible hours and/or Special Child Care Benefit (FA024) form is valid for a maximum of 13 weeks at your service.

Exceptional circumstances

Parents may be considered by an authorised FAO staff member for an exemption from the 50-hour limit of CCB when there are exceptional circumstances and neither parent (or the sole parent), due to circumstances outside their control, is available to care for the child for a period of more than 50 hours in a week.

See 11.3 ▶

It is intended to ensure that families who face exceptional circumstances, who are not otherwise eligible for more than 50 hours of CCB, have access to the CCB they need. Before a family is eligible for more than 50 hours of CCB, they must satisfy the work test for more than 24 hours of CCB, or have an exemption from the work test or the 24-hour limit. It may be that the exceptional circumstances provide this exemption.

You should note that this 'exceptional circumstances' provision has no relationship to the Special Child Care Benefit (SCCB) provisions. The exceptional circumstances provision is for situations that generate the need for more hours of care, but may not cause short-term financial hardship. On the other hand, many crises that do cause short-term financial hardship and so may justify SCCB, do not result in a need for more hours of care.

See Section 13 ▶

Procedure and period that can be approved

Families can apply for an exemption from the 50-hour limit in exceptional circumstances. The family must complete an *Exceptional circumstances—Claim for increased eligible hours and/or Special Child Care Benefit* (FA023) form and give the form, together with supporting documentation, to your service.

See 13.6 ▶

- Your service is required to submit the form and supporting documentation to your FAO child care payment team, to seek approval on behalf of the family for exemption from the 50-hour limit for the period specified.

- If the claim is approved, the FAO will send your service a copy of the approval. You must keep the approval at the service for at least 36 months from the end of that calendar year.
- Services should encourage a family to apply for an exemption as soon as they become aware that the family is experiencing exceptional circumstances.

The initial approval can be for a maximum period of 13 weeks. If the exceptional circumstances continue beyond this period, the family may re-apply for additional periods. The FAO will then determine whether the exceptional circumstances continue to be 'temporary' and whether it still justifies an exemption from the 50-hour limit.

Approval will only be given for the period of time considered necessary. If hospitalisation or illness is only expected to last three weeks, then that is the period the approval will cover.

When is the evidence required?

It is not essential that the evidence be obtained before your service provides CCB for more than 50 hours. However, if your service provides CCB fee reductions for more than 50 hours to a family before receiving FAO approval, and the FAO does not approve the family for more than 50 hours, the CCB fee reductions in excess of 50 hours will not be reimbursed by the FAO.

Services that charge for more than 50 hours per week

When services charge fees for more than 50 hours per week, families who are not eligible for more than 50 hours of CCB will have to pay the full fee for the hours of care provided that exceed 50 hours.

- a period of 24-hour care for family day care and in home care services **or**
- Grandparent Child Care Benefit **or**
- Jobs, Education and Training Child Care fee assistance.

11.5 How services apply the weekly limit of hours



For families who choose to receive CCB as a fee reduction, the FAO will include their assessment on the weekly statement, showing the number of hours of CCB for which each child in the family is eligible.

Fee reduction families need to notify the FAO if their eligibility for more than 24 hours or more than 50 hours of CCB changes, for any week during which their child is in care. Families can notify the FAO by phone or by visiting one of their offices.

See quick contacts ▶

Services will not need to consider the weekly limit of hours for lump sum families. However, CCB payments must be made as fee reductions if a family wants to claim for:

- more than 50 hours of CCB in a week **or**
- more than 24 hours of CCB in a week because of exceptional circumstances **or**
- Special Child Care Benefit as a result of hardship **or**

How to calculate a CCB fee reduction when a child is limited to 24 eligible CCB hours per week and the child's family is liable to pay for more than 24 hours.

The CCB fee reduction cannot exceed the fee charged for the 24 eligible hours.

- 1 Calculate the **fee** for the 24 eligible hours as follows:

Is the number of non-standard hours at least 24?

YES

The **fee** is:

| | | |
|----|----------|-----------------------------|
| 24 | \times | rate for non-standard hours |
|----|----------|-----------------------------|

NO

Calculate the **fee** in two parts (A and B below), then add the two parts together:

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------|-----------------------------|-----|--|----------|----------------------|
| A number of non-standard hours | \times | rate for non-standard hours | $+$ | B remaining eligible hours (24 minus the number of non-standard hours) | \times | standard hourly rate |
|--------------------------------|----------|-----------------------------|-----|--|----------|----------------------|

- 2 Calculate the **maximum potential CCB fee reduction** as follows:

| | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|----------|---------|----------|-------------------|----------|------|----------|------------------------------------|
| standard hourly rate | \times | loading | \times | 24 eligible hours | \times | CCB% | \times | 85% if the child is a school child |
|----------------------|----------|---------|----------|-------------------|----------|------|----------|------------------------------------|

- 3 The CCB fee reduction is the lesser of the amounts given by steps 1 and 2

Note: The standard hourly rate is updated each year.

See inside back cover ▶



How to calculate a CCB fee reduction when a child is limited to 50 eligible CCB hours per week (or a specified number more than 50) and the child's family is liable to pay for more hours than they are eligible for

Calculate the CCB fee reduction as follows:

- 1 Calculate the **fee** for the eligible hours:

Is the number of non-standard hours at least equal to the number of eligible hours?

YES

NO

The **fee** is:

| | | |
|--------------------------|----------|-----------------------------|
| number of eligible hours | × | rate for non-standard hours |
|--------------------------|----------|-----------------------------|

Calculate the **fee** in two parts (A and B below), then add the two parts together:

| | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------|--------------------------------------|----------|--|----------|----------------------|
| A number of non-standard hours | × | B rate for non-standard hours | + | remaining eligible hours (the number of eligible hours minus the number of non-standard hours) | × | standard hourly rate |
|---------------------------------------|----------|--------------------------------------|----------|--|----------|----------------------|

- 2 Calculate **maximum potential CCB** in two parts (A and B below) as follows:

A Calculate the maximum potential CCB for the non-standard hours up to a child's limit of eligible hours.

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------|---------|----------|--|----------|------|----------|------------------------------------|
| A Non-standard hourly rate | × | loading | × | non-standard hours up to a child's limit of eligible hours | × | CCB% | × | 85% if the child is a school child |
|-----------------------------------|----------|---------|----------|--|----------|------|----------|------------------------------------|

B Calculate the maximum potential CCB for the remaining hours up to a child's limit of eligible hours. Count the child's remaining eligible hours as standard hours. These standard hours are counted as if they are the only standard hours of care provided.

| | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|---|---------|---|---|---|------|---|-------------------------------------|
| B Standard hourly rate | × | loading | × | remaining eligible hours (child's limit of eligible hours minus non-standard hours) | × | CCB% | × | 85% if the child is a school child. |
|------------------------|---|---------|---|---|---|------|---|-------------------------------------|

The maximum potential CCB = A + B

3 The child's fee reduction is then the lesser of the amounts from steps 1 and 2.

Shared care and the weekly limit of hours



When shared care arrangements apply to a child, both parents can claim CCB up to their own weekly limit of hours and you will need to lodge separate *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) forms for each parent detailing the weeks they are charged for. This may result in the child getting CCB for more than 24 hours a week even if each parent is limited to 24 hours a week of CCB, or for more than 50 hours even if each parent is limited to 50 hours a week of CCB.

Eligible hours for before school and after school care



In services that offer before or after school hours care for school children, CCB will only be paid for these children for the before and after school hours care sessions.

CCB is not normally paid for school children for the whole day because they are at school. However, if a school child attends care during the time they would normally be at school, on school holidays, or on other days when the school is closed, then CCB is paid for the session attended, which could be the whole day.

If a child attends care on a school day or for part of a normal school week, because that is the limit of the **schooling program** offered, then CCB is paid for care provided in the time outside of the schooling program.

CCB is also payable for a child who attends a registered home schooling program and needs care outside of the time required for the completion of the program.

A child must attend some part of a session (or be on an allowable or approved absence) for the family to claim CCB for that session.

See Section 12 ▶

Hourly and sessional charging for children attending preschool and school



When a child is collected from school **or** preschool or taken there by the family day care carer **or** the in home care carer, CCB can be paid as follows:

- when the carer is taking the child from the child's or carer's home to school, CCB can be paid from the time the carer leaves their home to drop the child off
- when the carer is picking the child up from school or preschool to return to the child's home or a family day care carer's home, CCB can only be paid from the time the after school session of care commences which is immediately after school finishes. This means that CCB cannot be paid from the time carer leaves their home to pick the child up from school unless the child has attended some part of the additional session (or been on an allowable or approved absence) before the after school session of care commences.

For preschool children, CCB is also paid for absences due to attendance at preschool.

See Section 12 ▶

For school children, CCB is not paid for the period while a child is attending school. There is an exception to this when a child is being cared for as part of an approved period of 24-hour care. CCB is paid if a child:

- has been approved for a period of 24-hour care **and**
- attends school* for part of the 24-hour care period **and**
- the child's family is charged a fee for care during this period **and**
- no-one other than the service is available to care for the child if the child has to leave school.

**'Attending school' does not include children at boarding school. They are the responsibility of the boarding school.*

Eligible hours in extended hours long day care services



An 'extended hours' long day care (LDC) service is a LDC service that is open for more than 12 hours a day. In an extended hours LDC service, CCB is paid separately for weekday care, evening care and weekend care. Therefore, the service must charge separate fees for weekday care, evening care and weekend care.

A session of care cannot be longer than 12 hours per day.

The hours of CCB paid for evening and weekend sessions are counted towards the 24-hour and 50-hour limits.

The hours of care are also limited to the number of hours of care a child may attend a service under state or territory government legislation or regulations.

11.6 24-hour Care

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC**

Child Care Benefit (CCB) and Jobs, Education and Training Child Care fee assistance (JETCCFA) can be paid for periods of 24-hour care that are authorised in accordance with **6.4**.

See 6.4 ▶

If a service provides 24-hour care to a child beyond the authorised limit, CCB (and JETCCFA, when applicable) is not paid for any part of the unauthorised care.

Sanctions may be imposed on a service that provides unauthorised periods of 24-hour care.

CCB and JETCCFA will not be paid for children who are at boarding school. They are the responsibility of the boarding school.

If a child is attending school* the portion of the 24-hour fee that applies to school time must not be higher than the fee normally charged for that child during school time.

**'Attending school' does not include children at boarding school. They are the responsibility of the boarding school.*

24-hour care and the 24, 50 and more than 50 eligible hour limits

If a child is approved for a period of 24-hour care in a given week, there is no limit on the child's eligible CCB hours for that week.

24-hour care and JETCCFA

If a family is eligible for JETCCFA, JETCCFA can be paid to cover some or all of a period of 24-hour care up to the limit of their JETCCFA hours listed on the weekly statement.

Unlike CCB, during periods of 24-hour care, JETCCFA hour limits remain. If a family eligible for JETCCFA requires more assistance to attend a work-related commitment (such as a live-in conference or a training course), they should contact the FAO to have their JETCCFA hours reassessed.

11.7 Calculating fee reductions for Jobs, Education and Training Child Care fee assistance recipients



Formula for JETCCFA

- the total fee for JFA* hours **minus**
- the family's CCB fee reduction for the child's JFA hours claimed in a week (add the family's CCB fee reductions for both the JFA in standard and non-standard hours) **minus**
- the total JFA hours claimed (in standard and non-standard hours), **multiplied** by the parental contribution per hour.

**The three-letter abbreviation for JETCCFA used on the Statement of child care usage (FA020) is JFA.*

Key terms in the JETCCFA formula

For JFA hours (sometimes referred to as JETCCFA hours), JETCCFA will only be paid when the child attends care for some part of a session for which a fee is charged, unless the child is absent on an allowable or approved absence day. It is paid for the number of hours in those sessions of care.

Limits on JETCCFA hours

JETCCFA hours are limited by:

- the family's weekly limit of CCB hours. This means that JETCCFA fee reduction will not apply to any hours used by the parent over their CCB eligible hour limit
- the service's hours of operation (excluding family day care and in home care)
- the family's weekly limit of JETCCFA hours for the child—JETCCFA hours are included in the weekly limit of CCB hours
- the maximum length of before and after school sessions of care
- the number of JETCCFA hours a family advises it will use at your service (when applicable)
- the 12-hour limit on a session of care.

The JETCCFA hours of care are limited by the service's hours of operation, since JETCCFA will only be paid for periods when the service is open (except for public holidays and local emergencies).

Hours of operation of the service

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **occ**

The service's hours of operation for JETCCFA purposes (they are the same as those that apply to CCB eligible hours) are the least of:

- the weekly hours advised in a service's promotional material
- the weekly hours of operation on public display at the service
- the weekly hours that sufficient staff (which meet state or territory requirements) are rostered on for duty and are present at the service, and children can attend
- the licensed hours of operation.

When the hours set out above are not consistent, JETCCFA is paid for the **shortest** span of hours in any of the above circumstances.

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **occ**

Child Care Benefit fee reduction for the child's JETCCFA hours claimed

Calculate CCB as though the JETCCFA hours claimed were the same as the number of hours of CCB being claimed.

Total JFA hours claimed

When a parent uses care in standard and non-standard hours in a week, make sure to use the total of the hours.

JETCCFA parental contribution per hour

The JETCCFA parental contribution per hour:

- is a flat rate per child
- applies to the JETCCFA hours of each child of a family using care
- does not have to be collected by a child care service prior to making a claim for JETCCFA.

[See back cover ▶](#)

Which hours in the week count as JETCCFA hours?

Services should always calculate JETCCFA fee reductions and record JETCCFA hours on *Statements of child care usage* (FA020) forms as though the first hours of care used in a week supported JETCCFA approved activities. Services are not required to know when care is used by a parent to undertake their JETCCFA approved activities, such as study/training, work or looking for work.



12

Absences from child care

This section sets out rules about absences that qualify for Child Care Benefit (CCB) and Jobs, Education and Training Child Care fee assistance (JETCCFA). These rules cover a wide range of situations experienced by families. The section describes the information and documents that services and families need to provide to each other and the documentation that services must retain.

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FDC IHC OSHC LDC OCC

Child Care Benefit is paid in certain circumstances when a family is charged for care that their child does not attend. The absence rules that apply to the payment of CCB also apply to the payment of JETCCFA. The circumstances are categorised into two groups—**allowable** absence days and **approved** absence days.

FDC IHC OSHC LDC OCC

CCB claims for absences from approved occasional care services are treated differently.

See 12.2 ▶

12.1 Allowable absence days

FDC IHC OSHC LDC OCC

Child Care Benefit is paid for up to 30 allowable absence days for each child per financial year across all approved long day care (LDC) services, family day care (FDC) services, in home care (IHC) services and specialised outside school hours care (OSHC) services.

- Each child receives a new set of 30 allowable absence days at the beginning of the financial year.
- Allowable absence days can be taken for any reason (provided the day being claimed as an absence is a day on which care would have otherwise been provided).
- Allowable absence days cannot be claimed before a child has commenced care or after a child has left care.

For more information

See 5.9 ▶

- Allowable absence days are referred to as 'permitted absence days' in the family assistance law.

It is your service's responsibility not to allow more than 30 allowable absence days per financial year at your service for each child.

If a child is absent from a session of before or after school care, or both, on the same day, it is counted as one allowable absence day.

If a child is absent and the family is not charged, possibly because their place is temporarily 'resold', then the absence is not counted as an allowable absence for the child and CCB is not payable.

Families who receive CCB as a fee reduction at more than one approved child care service must inform your service when they have used up their 30 allowable absence days for each child.

What do I do when families have used allowable absence days with another child care service?

If a parent says their child has used 30 allowable absence days at another child care service, you cannot use CCB to reduce the fees charged for the child for any more allowable absence days in that financial year. Nor should you record any more allowable absence days for the child on their *Statement of child care usage (FA020)* forms in that financial year.

If a parent tells you they have used some, but not all, of the 30 allowable absence days at another service then you can use CCB to reduce the family's fees, if the child has an allowable absence day, by the amount that the child would normally receive on the day. You may do this until the family tells you that they have claimed 30 allowable absence days during the financial year.

Informing families about allowable absences

You need to tell families the number of allowable absence days each of their children has taken from care at your service. When a child takes an allowable

absence day, your service must provide the child's family with a written statement of the number of allowable absence days taken by the child at your service for the billing period and as a cumulative total for the financial year to date.

You may write or print the information on receipts or statements issued by your service, or provide them on a separate statement.

A child who has not yet received care or who has ceased receiving care

Allowable absences cannot be used to enable CCB to be paid for fees charged to reserve a place for a child who has not yet commenced physically attending care. For a day to be claimed as an allowable absence day it cannot be a day after which the service has stopped providing care for the child, other than on a temporary basis.

The last day on which the child physically attended care at the service is the day on which the service stopped providing care, regardless of whether there was booking for care after the child's last day of attendance or when the parent has failed to give the necessary notice that the child is leaving care.

Allowable absences are therefore not available for any days after the child stopped attending the service even if a fee is charged for these days.

However, if a child is booked in to start at your service on a particular date, and does not start **because of an approved absence** reason, the family may claim CCB.

See 12.2 ▶

Similarly, if the family has advised that their child will leave your service on a particular day, but that child does not attend their last sessions of **care for an approved absence reason**, the family may claim CCB for the days the child was expected to attend.

Services that charge fees after a child ceases to be in care

Some services continue to charge fees for sessions on days after a child has left the service because the family did not give the agreed period of notice. This is a business decision for the individual service. However, it is not possible under the family assistance law for an allowable absence to occur on such a day. CCB is not payable for these days and services can neither record nor report them as absences.

Shared care for children

When a child is considered a dependent child of two families, such as when separated parents share the care of a child, the Family Assistance Office will issue each family with a CCB assessment. In these situations each family will be provided with 30 allowable absence days per child per financial year.

If both families use your service, their child will be listed on the weekly statement with a different assessment for each family. You should apply CCB fee reductions according to each family's assessment, and check with the families to determine which of them is responsible for paying the child care fees.

12.2 Approved absence days

FDC | **IHC** | **OSHC** | **LDC** | **OCC**

Child Care Benefit is also payable for absences taken for the following reasons:

- illness (with a medical certificate)
- non-immunisation
- rostered days off
- rotating shift work
- temporary closure of a school or pupil-free days
- public holidays
- periods of local emergency
- shared care arrangements due to a court order, consent order or parenting order
- attendance at preschool.

Absence days taken for the above reasons are called 'approved absence days'. There is no limit on the number of approved absence days a child's family may claim, providing they are taken for the specified reasons.

Reasons for approved absences

Illness

CCB is payable for absence days when a child, parent, sibling or another individual with whom the child lives is ill. A medical certificate is required to support the claim for CCB. However, a parent on workers' compensation, or a parent or child with a medical certificate specifying that they have a

long-term illness, would not need a separate medical certificate for each absence day. These absences do not count towards the 30 allowable absence days. Absences due to sickness that are not supported by a medical certificate **do** count towards the 30 allowable absence days.

Non-immunisation

CCB is payable for absence days when a child is excluded from care due to an outbreak of an infectious disease against which the child has not been immunised. The child may be kept away from care either by the parent or due to the service's policy.

A medical certificate or written statement from the parent or the service explaining the child's absence is required to support the claim for CCB.

These absences do **not** count towards the 30 allowable absence days.

Rotating shifts* or rostered days off

CCB is payable for absence days when a parent is not at work because they are working a rotating shift or are obliged to take a rostered day off from full or part-time employment, provided that:

- care is available for the child if required **and**
- the service holds a written statement from the claimant's employer confirming that the claimant works rotating shifts or has rostered days off.

These absences do **not** count towards the 30 allowable absence days.

* **What is a rotating shift?** A rotating shift is a shift that requires a worker to work, in rotation, different periods of the day over a period of time. For example, a worker could be required to work a morning shift at regular hours of one week. At the end of that period they could transfer to afternoon shift for a period, followed then by a transfer to evening shift. The rotation of these shifts would follow a regular pattern.

Another type of rotating shift would be a shift system that rotates to cover the seven days of the week, rather than a specified number of days each week. So during one week, the worker may work Monday to Friday, while in the next week the working week may be Tuesday to Saturday, and so on. This may happen in combination with the first example of a rotating shift.

A rotating shift does **not cover** situations when a parent works:

- one week on, one week off
- alternating weeks of two and three days (that is, two days one week, then three days the next week, and so on)
- periods which include casual or 'on call' types of employment.

Absences when the school is closed or not accepting students

If a child is absent from care because the school that the child or the child's sibling attends is closed for the day (except school holidays), then the absence is an approved absence. If a child cannot attend their normal care session because they are at a school camp, the absence should be counted towards the 30 allowable absence days' limit.

Public holidays

For the purposes of CCB, a public holiday means a public holiday in the area where the service or individual carer is operating. If a service operated by, say, a religious or ethnic group, or an individual carer, wants CCB to be available on other days when the service is closed (for example, a religious holiday), this is acceptable and it does not require approval. However, these days are instead of, not in addition to, public holidays. The total number of days on which CCB can be paid when the service is closed or the individual carer does not operate, is the number of public holidays in that area.

CCB will be paid for a child's absence on a public holiday when:

- fees are charged in respect of the absent child for the day, **and**
- the child would normally have attended the service or been in care with an individual carer on that day if it was not a public holiday, **and**
- care was provided on the last normal day of care for the child before the public holiday and the next normal day of care for the child after the public holiday **or**

- the child was absent on an allowable or approved absence day on their last normal day of care before or after the public holiday.

These absences do **not** count towards the 30 allowable absence days.

Period of local emergency

CCB is payable for child care fees paid when a child does not attend a service, or a service is closed, because of a period of local emergency. CCB is paid for that part of the period for which the child would normally be in care at the service.

A local emergency is an event that affects a widespread area and has a severe impact on the lives of a significant number of the inhabitants of the area (for example, major damage to homes and businesses, or personal injury to local residents), or an event that disrupts the normal operation of a substantial number of child care services in the area (for example, state health authorities order closure of all child care services because of a disease outbreak).

If you consider that your service, or a child who normally attends your service, has been affected by a local emergency, you should contact your Family Assistance Office child care payment team to find out whether a period of local emergency has been declared.

See back cover ▶

These absences do **not** count towards the 30 allowable absence days.

A period of local emergency is a period determined by the relevant state or territory office of the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

Court order, consent order or parenting order

CCB is payable for child care fees paid when the child is absent due to a court order, consent order or parenting order (if agreed to by the parents) that may, for example, require that the child has an access visit with the child's other parent. The service must retain a copy of the court order, consent order or parenting order to support the claim for CCB.

These absences do **not** count towards the 30 allowable absence days.

Attendance at preschool

CCB is payable for absences due to attendance at a 'specialised' preschool (not a preschool session at another approved service) when:

- the service is available to attend to the child, should the service be contacted while the child is at preschool **and**
- the child is in care at the service immediately before or after attending preschool **and**
- the service charges the family a fee for the time the child is at preschool **and**

- the child would be in care at the service, if he or she were not attending preschool.

Attendance at a specialised preschool is intended to cover attendance at an educational program that:

- is part-time **and**
- is not provided by another approved child care service **and**
- receives some funding from the Australian Government or from a state or territory government **and**
- is staffed by a professional teacher **and**
- is attended by children before their first year of primary school.

In Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania, attendance at a 'kindergarten' is included, for CCB purposes, as attendance at 'preschool'.

These absences do **not** count towards the 30 allowable absence days.

FDC | IHC | OSHC | LDC | OCC

An absence from an occasional care service can be claimed when the session of care from which a child was absent had been booked and paid for by the parent. This is considered to be a 'permitted circumstance' or approved absence for CCB purposes.

12.3 Payment of Child Care Benefit for allowable or approved absence days

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC**

Child Care Benefit will be paid for absence days if:

- in the case of allowable absences, 30 allowable absences have not been used **and**
- in the case of approved absences, supporting documentation is provided (when required).

Child Care Benefit is paid at the family's CCB entitlement for each eligible hour of care for absences taken as allowable or approved absence days. The CCB entitlement rules such as the 24-hour and 50-hour limits still apply.

Once the child has reached 30 allowable absence days, CCB is not paid for any more absences, unless the absences are taken for an approved absence day reason. A family may still take absences that exceed 30 allowable absence days and are not for an approved absence day reason, but CCB will not be paid.

If an approved absence day is taken, you must record the type of absence on the attendance record.

Child Care Benefit can only be paid for an allowable or an approved absence day if the child would normally have been in care on that day. The hours of

CCB paid for an allowable or approved absence day are the usual number of hours a child's family would have been eligible for on that day, up to the 24-hour and 50-hour limits.

12.4 Child Care attendance record

The *Child care attendance record* (FA025) form is an individual child record for each day. The form enables child care services and parents to meet the recording and accountability requirements for attendance and absence days.

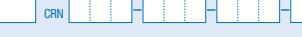
See 8.4 ▶

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC**

The purpose of the attendance part of the form is to have a record of the dates and times each child has attended your service. The use of the suggested *Child care attendance record* (FA025) form is optional.

- 1 Statement period**—write the start and end dates of the statement period.
- 2 Name and reference number**—write the name and your service's reference number.
- 3 Week ending**—write the date that the week ends. This date will always be on a Sunday.
- 4 In time—initial**—record the time the child starts care at your service. It is best practice for the child's parent to sign or initial the time recorded, subject to any requirements of state or territory law.

Child care Attendance Record

|  Australian Government Family Assistance Office | | | | | | | | | | | | Child care attendance record | | | 1 Statement period from / / to / / | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|--|---------|---------|-----------|---------|----------|---|--------|-------------------------------------|----------|---------|---|---|---|--|--|
| Provider details • Please print or use a stamp Reference number  | | | Child Care Benefit can only be claimed for up to 30 allowable absences per financial year. For an absence not to count towards the 30 allowable absences, supporting documentation may be required for it to be an approved absence. Only allowable absences need to be included in the cumulative total. Please refer to your Child Care Service Handbook for more information regarding allowable absences. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| * Allowable absence reason code - AA * Approved reason codes: WR - Work related I - Illness with a medical certificate NI - Non-immunised SC - School closure E - Period of local emergency PH - Public holiday CO - Court order PS - Attendance at pre-school. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 8 Absences from previous attendance record  | | | | |
| Care details | 3 | | Monday | | Tuesday | | Wednesday | | Thursday | | Friday | | Saturday | | Sunday | | Allowable absences Number for week Cumulative Total | | |
| | Week ending | | Time | Initial | Time | Initial | Time | Initial | Time | Initial | Time | Initial | Time | Initial | Time | Initial | | | |
|  |  |  4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | |  5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | |  6 | | | | | | | |  7 | | | | | | | | | |
|  |  |  8 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | |  9 | | | | | | | |  10 | | | | | | | | | |
| | |  11 | | | | | | | |  12 | | | | | |  13 | | | |
| Child details | | Full name  | | CRN  | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| FA025.0707 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

5 **Out time—initial**—record the time the child finishes care at your service. It is best practice for the child's parent to sign or initial the time recorded, subject to any requirements of state or territory law.

6 **If absent—hours charged**—write the number of hours the family was charged for the absence day.

7 **If absent—reason code**—if the child's family is charged for care on a day that the child does not attend, write the 'reason code' for the child's absence. The reason codes are listed on the form.

8 **Absences from previous Child care attendance record (not required for occasional care)**—write the number of allowable absences taken at your service for the financial year up to the end of the previous statement period (see the previous *Child care attendance record* form). If this is the first statement period for the financial year, ignore this box.

9 **Allowable absences—number for week (not required for occasional care)**—count the number of allowable absences taken in the week. Do not include any approved absences in your count of allowable absences. Write the number in the column.

10 **Allowable absences—cumulative total (not required for occasional care)**—write the cumulative total of allowable absences taken at your service for the financial year to date.

11 **Child details and Customer Reference Number (CRN)**—write the child's full name and CRN.

12 **Total allowable absences for the financial year to date—(back of the form) (not required for occasional care)**—at the end of each quarter, write the total number of allowable absences for the financial year to date. Write this total number of allowable absences on the next *Child care attendance record* form in the 'Absences from previous attendance record' section if the current statement period is not the April to June statement period, or term 2 (for before or after school care services), or break 1 (for vacation care services).

12.5 Recording absence days



Recording absence days is also discussed in 4.8 in this handbook.

See 4.8 ▶

To ensure that CCB is not paid for absence days, other than those considered to be allowable or approved, all services must keep a record of all absence days for each child.

As is the case for in and out times for care provided, it is best practice to ask parents to sign or initial attendance records where absences are noted (subject to requirements of state or territory law). This achieves maximum transparency for families and child care service staff, ensures parents take responsibility for the attendance and absences that are recorded, and can help to keep compliance visits, involving the inspection or records under the Act, as brief as possible.

12.6 Supporting documentation for approved absence days



Approved absence days, when documentation **is required** to be retained by the service, are for:

- illness
- non-immunisation
- rotating shifts or rostered days off
- court orders, consent orders or parenting orders.

Approved absence days, where the service **is not required** to retain documentation, are for:

- absences when the school is closed or not accepting students
- public holidays
- period of local emergency
- attendance at preschool.



For approved absence purposes, occasional care services must keep records of absences from sessions or days of care that were booked and paid for.

As with all accountability documents relating to claiming Child Care Benefit, the service must retain medical certificates and written statements for 36 months from the end of the calendar year in which the absences occurred.

See 12.2 ▶

13

Special Child Care Benefit

This section covers the rules for accessing special funds—that is, Special Child Care Benefit (SCCB)—for children at risk or families experiencing hardship.

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FDC IHC OSHC LDC OCC

Child Care Benefit (CCB) is designed to assist families with the cost of child care. Special Child Care Benefit (SCCB) is an extra 'pool' of funds provided for:

- a 'child at risk' of serious abuse or neglect
- **exceptional** cases where a family's income does not truly reflect their capacity to pay the normally charged fee ('hardship').

SCCB can only be paid to families receiving CCB as a fee reduction at your service. Families who were intending to claim CCB as a lump sum at the end of the financial year, who consider that they are in financial hardship, should apply for CCB by fee reduction immediately. They should phone the Family Assistance Office (FAO) or visit a FAO office.

See quick contacts

If the application for CCB by fee reduction is successful the family should then apply for SCCB.

See 13.6 ▶

Services can approve SCCB subject to certain limits.

See 13.9 ▶

When services cannot approve SCCB, an application is made to the FAO for approval.

Services should ensure that all families being approved for SCCB meet the relevant criteria.

If you are unable to decide if it is appropriate to provide SCCB, contact the FAO.

For SCCB to be paid to your service, the family must be eligible to claim CCB by fee reduction. The only exception to this rule is in cases when a child is at risk.

13.1 Circumstances where SCCB cannot be offered

FDC IHC OSHC LDC OCC

You cannot approve SCCB:

- to cover the period when a family is not eligible for CCB because it failed to lodge an application form **or**
- when a family has used all of its 30 allowable absence days and CCB is not payable for any more allowable absences **or**

13.3

- to cover periods when a family has ceased care without giving the agreed period of notice **or**
- to cover bad debts resulting from non-payment of fees by families **or**
- to give additional assistance to a parent whose ongoing income is very low.

SCCB is for exceptional circumstances only, and is not to be used on a continuing basis to support a family's over-commitment, as it is not intended to support families with ongoing financial problems.

13.2 Criteria for SCCB for a child at risk

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC**

When a child is at risk of serious abuse or neglect, that child's situation can sometimes be improved by attending child care or by increasing attendance at child care. In these cases, where the cost of child care is a barrier, this barrier should be removed.

For this reason, SCCB is available for children at risk of serious abuse or neglect, if you think that:

- use of child care or more child care would decrease the risk for the child **and**
- SCCB would increase the probability that the child will attend child care or will attend for extra days.

SCCB would not be appropriate for a child who is already attending child care full-time, if the cost of care is not an issue for the parents.

SCCB can be provided when a state or territory welfare authority seeks a placement at your service for a child at risk who remains in the care of the parent.

13.3 Documenting SCCB for a child at risk

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC**

Documentation requirements are also discussed in 5.5 in this handbook.

[See 5.5 ▶](#)

Children of families claiming CCB as reduced fees

The director/operator of a service must complete a *Child at risk—Application for increased eligible hours and/or Special Child Care Benefit* (FA024) form. You should complete this form when the child is approved for SCCB.

The FA024 form can be used for two purposes:

- when you approve SCCB
- when you apply to the FAO to approve it.

Children of families not receiving CCB as reduced fees

- 1 Complete a *Child at risk—Application for increased eligible hours and/or Special Child Care Benefit* (FA024) form.

2 Staple a letter to the back of the form. In the letter state the following:

'No-one is receiving CCB by fee reduction at this service for (name of the child/ren on the attached form). This service is making itself eligible for CCB by fee reduction so that SCCB can be used to reduce the fees, because I believe the child/ren is/are at serious risk of abuse or neglect.'

The operator of the service, or an authorised signatory, must sign the letter.

Send the stapled form and letter to your FAO child care payment team.

See back cover ▶

3 Complete the child's *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) form for the period specified on the child at risk form in the same way that you would if the child was not at risk of serious abuse or neglect—that is, complete columns A, B and J for the number of eligible CCB hours the child would have normally attended and the fee charged for those hours.

Services should note that completing the *Child at risk—Application for increased eligible hours and/or Special Child Care Benefit* (FA024) form does not satisfy any state or territory mandatory reporting requirements.

How to complete the *Child at risk—Application for increased eligible hours and/or Special Child Care Benefit* form

- 1 Customer details**—write the name and home address of the person liable to pay the child's fees if the child were not at risk.
- 2 Child details**—write the child's name and Customer Reference Number (CRN).
- 3 Child at risk—Due to child at risk, what does the family need?**—tick the applicable boxes. The family may need both SCCB and an increased number of eligible hours per week, or only one of these. If the family requires increased eligible hours, write the total number of hours required per week.
- 4 For what period do the child at risk circumstances apply?**—this section refers to the period for which the extra assistance is needed. It may be the period that you approve at the bottom of this form or, if you cannot approve it, the period you want the FAO to approve. Write the dates for full weeks of care. Use a Monday as the first date and a Sunday as the second date.
- 5 Provide a summary of the child at risk details**—write an outline of the child's circumstances and why you consider that the child is at risk. If there is a letter about the child's circumstances from an independent professional, you should attach this to the form. A statement or statutory declaration from a parent is not needed.
- 6 Name of approved service provider**—write the name of your service (or use a stamp).

13.4 Backdating SCCB for a child at risk

FDC IHC OSHC LDC OCC

- 7 **Reference number**—write your service's reference number.
- 8 **Service provider approval for Special Child Care Benefit or additional hours**—complete this section only if the claim will not exceed either the child's 13-week approval period or your service's 18 per cent SCCB limit.

See 13.9 and 13.10 ▶

- If the claim will not exceed any of the above limits, your service may approve SCCB. Complete relevant parts of the section. Where the certification asks you to write dates, write the dates for full weeks of care. Write the date of a Monday as the first date and the date of a Sunday as the second date.
- If the claim will exceed any of the above limits leave this section blank and send the form to the FAO for approval. The FAO will advise you of their decision.

- 9 **Signature of approved service provider**—whether you are using this form as an approval or as an application, the director or operator of your service must sign and date the form in the relevant section.
- 10 **Contact for enquiries**—write the contact number of a person the FAO can speak to about the information provided on this form.

When Special Child Care Benefit (SCCB) was **not** approved for the family of a child at risk in an earlier statement period, your service may not backdate approval for SCCB. Special Child Care Benefit is given to encourage the parents to put the child in care and, hence, to reduce the likelihood of risk for the child.

If you provided SCCB to a family of a child at risk in an earlier statement period and you did not have approval for providing SCCB at the time (either because you didn't complete the certification section of the *Child at risk—Application for increased eligible hours and/or Special Child Care Benefit* (FA024) form, or did not get approval from the FAO), you may backdate the approval on the form or seek FAO approval for the period concerned at a later stage. You will have to submit a later supplementary *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) form and a supplementary *Child Care Benefit statement for payment summary* (FA026) form to get the additional advance.

Retain documents relating to approved child at risk claims.

Keep documents relating to approved child at risk claims at your service for 36 months after the end of the calendar year in which the care was provided. These documents are highly sensitive and must be stored securely.

Examples of events that do not meet the criteria for SCCB are:

- foreseeable expenditure such as routine home repairs and maintenance **or**
- discretionary expenditure such as additions to the house **or**
- increases in child care fees **or**
- ongoing low income.

13.5 Criteria for SCCB for hardship

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **occ**

SCCB may apply to a family faced with an event that reduces its ability to pay the fees normally charged. The purpose of SCCB for hardship is to give the family time to recover from, or adjust to, the new circumstances. It would not normally be approved for more than 13 weeks. Although services can approve up to a maximum of 13 weeks for SCCB for hardship, it should only be approved for the period required.

Examples of events that may reduce a family's ability to pay fees normally charged include:

- loss of employment or the failure of a business **or**
- a natural disaster, or destruction of the family's home by fire, necessitating relocation of the family, or the need to place a child in care, or an increase in the need for child care **or**
- significant additional expenses or reduction in income arising, for example, from a death or serious illness in the family.

If a family receiving Child Care Benefit by fee reduction suffers a decrease in income, the parent(s) should revise their estimate of annual income with the Family Assistance Office as soon as possible.

13.6 Documenting SCCB for hardship

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **occ**

Ask the family to complete the *Exceptional circumstances—Claim for increased eligible hours and/or Special Child Care Benefit (FA023)* form. The family must also give you some documentation to support their application.

How to complete the *Exceptional circumstances—Claim for increased eligible hours and/or Special Child Care Benefit* form

- 1 Customer details**—the family should write their name, home address and Customer Reference Number (CRN). The family's CRN is listed on your CCB statement.
- 2 Child details**—write the name of the child and the child's CRN. If approval is needed for more than two children, please attach a separate sheet.
- 3 Exceptional circumstances—what assistance do you require?**—tick the applicable box. The family may need both SCCB and an increased number of eligible hours per week, or only one of these. If the family requires increased eligible hours, write the total number of hours required per week.
- 4 Have you previously received Special Child Care Benefit?**—this question refers to care provided during the current financial year. Tick either 'yes' or 'no'. If 'yes', write the start and finish dates for the previous period the child was granted SCCB at an approved child care service, and the name (or names) of the service where the care was provided.
Do **not** answer question 4 if the application is for increased hours only.
- 5 Have you previously had your eligible Child Care Benefit hours increased due to exceptional circumstances?**—this question refers to care provided during the current financial year. Tick either 'yes' or 'no'. If 'yes', write the start and finish dates for the period the child was given increased eligible hours due to exceptional circumstances at all approved child care services, and the name of the service(s) where the care was provided.
Do **not** answer question 5 if the application is for SCCB only.
- 6 Please provide a summary of your family's circumstances**—the family should provide a description of their circumstances and why they need assistance.
The family must supply documentation to support their claim. This may include a medical certificate, court documentation, or a signed statement from a social worker or another third party.
Documentation must include contact details for the person so the information can be verified. The minimum documentation required would be a signed statutory declaration stating the nature of the crisis.
If the family is unable to get supporting evidence from a third party at the time of completing their form, they should still lodge their application, ensuring that they fully complete all sections of the form and provide the supporting evidence as soon as possible.
- 7 How long do you expect these circumstances to last?**—the parent must write the dates for full weeks of care. Write the date of a Monday as the first date and of a Sunday as the second date.
- 8 Statement**—the family should read the statement, sign and date the form, and then give it to you.
- 9 Name of approved service provider**—write the name of your service.

10 Reference number—write your service's reference number.

11 Service provider approval for Special Child Care Benefit—do **not** complete this section if the claim is for SCCB and your service's power to approve SCCB for hardship has been suspended.

See 13.12 ►

12 Contact for enquiries—write the contact number of a person the FAO can speak to about the information provided on this form.

Complete section 12 only if the claim will not exceed:

- the child's 13-week approval period **or**

See 13.9 ►

- your service's 18 per cent SCCB limit.

See 13.10 ►

If the claim does **not exceed** any of the above limits, your service may approve SCCB. Complete relevant parts of the section. Where the certification asks you to write dates, write the dates for full weeks of care. Write the date of a Monday as the first date and the date of a Sunday as the second date. The director or operator of the service must sign and date this section.

If the claim **exceeds** any of the above limits, leave this section blank, but sign and date the form. Send the form to the FAO for approval. The FAO will advise you of their decision.

| | |
|--|---|
| 1 Your name Details of the person liable to pay the child care fees. 1 Mr <input type="checkbox"/> Mrs <input type="checkbox"/> Miss <input type="checkbox"/> Ms <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Family name First given name Second given name Other names you have been known by Your date of birth / / Your sex Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Your Customer Reference Number (if known) _____ | 5 What assistance do you require? 3 Special Child Care Benefit <input type="checkbox"/> Go to 7 Increased eligible <input type="checkbox"/> Go to next question Child Care Benefit hours |
| 6 Total number of hours required per week for each child in care? Child 1 _____ Child 2 _____ <i>If there are more than 2 children in care, attach a separate sheet with details.</i> | 7 Have you previously received Special Child Care Benefit? 4 No <input type="checkbox"/> Go to 10 Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Go to next question |
| 8 For what period did you receive Special Child Care Benefit? From / / To / / | 9 At which child care service? _____ |
| 10 Have you previously had your eligible Child Care Benefit hours increased due to exceptional circumstances? 5 No <input type="checkbox"/> Go to 13 Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Go to next question | 11 For what period did you have Child Care Benefit hours increased? From / / To / / |
| 12 At which child care service? _____ | 13 Please provide a summary of your family's circumstances 6 _____ |
| <i>If there are more than 2 children in care, attach a separate sheet with details.</i> | |
| FAC023.0712 | |
| 2 of 3 | |
| Attach supporting documents. | |

13.7 Supporting documentation

FDC IHC OSHC LDC OCC

Supporting documentation is also discussed in 5.5 in this handbook.

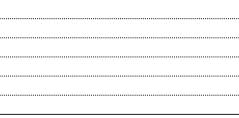
See 5.5 ▶

Services must retain documentation supporting the decision to grant SCCB for 36 months from the end of the calendar year in which care was provided. They must produce the documentation to authorised officers exercising monitoring powers under the family assistance law. This documentation must include:

- independent documentation such as a letter from an employer (for loss of job or reduction in income), or from an independent professional such as a medical practitioner, social worker, accountant or a minister of religion **or**
- a statutory declaration from the parent outlining their special circumstances that meet the SCCB criteria.

See 13.6 ▶

You do not need to get the statutory declaration or the independent documentation **before** you approve SCCB. However, if you approve SCCB fee reductions and are then unable to get the documentation, the SCCB may have to be paid back.

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>14 How long do you expect these circumstances to last? 7</p> <p>Note: Time limits apply to approvals of exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>From <input type="text"/> To <input type="text"/></p> <p>15 Statement 8</p> <p>I declare that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the information I have provided on this form is complete and correct. • giving false or misleading information is a serious offence. • the Family Assistance Office can make relevant enquiries to ensure I receive the correct entitlement. • the Family Assistance Office can release information necessary to administer my Child Care Benefit to my child care services and the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. <p>Your signature </p> <p>Date <input type="text"/></p> <p>Please give this form to your service provider to complete the details following.</p> <p>16 Provider's details 9</p> <p>Name of Approved Service Provider (print or use a stamp) </p> <p>Approved Service Provider's address </p> <p>Postcode <input type="text"/></p> <p>10 Service ID number </p> <p>FA2023.0712</p> | <p>17 Service Provider approval for Special Child Care Benefit 11</p> <p>I certify that for the period from <input type="text"/> to <input type="text"/> the (name of service) </p> <p>has approved fee reductions for (name of customer) </p> <p>of the following amount \$ <input type="text"/> per hour amounting to \$ <input type="text"/> per week</p> <p>for sessions of care provided to child(ren)</p> <p>Child 1 Full name </p> <p>Child 2 Full name </p> <p>If there are more than 2 children in care, attach a separate sheet with details.</p> <p>because the family is in hardship.</p> <p>Signature of Approved Service Provider </p> <p>Date <input type="text"/></p> <p>18 Contact details for enquiries 12</p> <p>Name </p> <p>Contact phone number <input type="text"/></p> <p>3 of 3</p> |
|---|--|

13.8 Amount of SCCB payable

FDC IHC OSHC LDC OCC

You can provide SCCB for a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect and for a family in hardship up to the amount of the full fee charged to the family. In these cases, the family is not required to make a contribution to the cost of care as SCCB will cover the total fee charged for the week.

The amount of SCCB paid also depends on the number of eligible hours and the amount charged.

[See 13.11 ▶](#)

13.9 Limits on the period of SCCB that you can approve

FDC IHC OSHC LDC OCC

There are limits on the period of SCCB your service can approve for each child. The limits depend on the reason for seeking SCCB.

Applications for SCCB under the 'child at risk' or 'hardship' criteria

Your service can approve SCCB for 'child at risk' and 'hardship' reasons for each child for up to 13 weeks in a financial year. Services cannot approve SCCB for more than a total of 13 weeks—only the FAO can approve SCCB for additional periods.

- If you are determining the number of weeks SCCB your service can approve for a **child at risk of abuse or neglect**, you do not need to consider the weeks of SCCB already approved by other services in the current financial year. However, you do need to consider the number of weeks of SCCB your service has approved. To work out the number of weeks your service can approve, subtract from 13 the number of weeks you have already approved in the current financial year.
- To work out the number of weeks SCCB your service can approve for a **child of a family in hardship**, subtract from 13 the number of weeks SCCB already approved by your service or other child care services in the current financial year. The family will provide this number on their *Exceptional circumstances—Claim for increased eligible hours and/or Special Child Care Benefit* (FA023) form. You should use this number to determine the number of weeks of SCCB your service can approve for hardship reasons.

The maximum period for which your service can approve Special Child Care Benefit for a single event that meets the child at risk or hardship criteria is 13 continuous weeks (even if this extends into the following financial year).

13.10

13.10 18 per cent limit

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC**

The total amount of SCCB that you can approve in one statement period is limited to 18 per cent of your CCB expenditure in the last acquitted statement period.

For vacation care, this amount will need to be adjusted if the term breaks are of different lengths. For example, if the acquitted term break was for three weeks and the next term break will be for two weeks, then the SCCB limit is two-thirds of 18 per cent of the CCB expenditure in the acquitted term break.

If you intend to approve an application for SCCB you must consider whether the approval, together with any other approvals that you have given during the quarter, will exceed the 18 per cent limit. If this application will take you over the 18 per cent limit, you can approve the application but you cannot approve any more cases of SCCB in the statement period.

The 18 per cent limit includes the total amount for all SCCB that you have approved in the statement period, even if some of the approvals cover a period that extends into the next statement period. You should not include the cost of any approval made by the FAO.

When you approve an application, write on the form the period approved (which will often extend into the next statement period), and the total cost of SCCB for that child for that period, based on the attendance pattern you expect for the child. Do not change the form if the child later changes their attendance pattern or leaves the service.

If you are confident that your service will not exceed the 18 per cent limit you are not required to complete the form.

Any SCCB provided above these limits without approval from the FAO will not be reimbursed.

If you find you need to spend more than 18 per cent on SCCB, you must phone your FAO child care payment team to seek written approval for a higher limit before doing so. If you do not get this approval, more applications for SCCB should be sent to the FAO for approval using either the *Exceptional circumstances—Claim for increased eligible hours and/or Special Child Care Benefit* (FA023) form or the *Child at risk—Application for increased eligible hours and/or Special Child Care Benefit* (FA024) form.

Factors that could justify a higher SCCB expenditure percentage include:

- a major employer has closed in the local area **or**
- a natural disaster reduces the capacity of many families to pay their fees **or**
- a history of approval by the FAO to exceed the 18 per cent limit.

The above list is not exhaustive, and all circumstances will be considered case-by-case.

The 18 per cent relates to the amount approved, not the amount spent. The 18 per cent limit is worked out by calculating 18 per cent of the amount acquitted, which is listed on your Approved service provider payment advice issued by the Family Assistance Office.

Completing the *Approving Special Child Care Benefit—Will my service exceed the 18% limit?* form (08-289)

Service approval limit

- 1 Statement period ending**—Write the end date of the statement period and the year.
- 2 Name of service**—Write the name of your service.
- 3 Special Child Care Benefit approval limit**—your service's SCCB approval limit is 18 per cent of your service's CCB entitlement for the statement period before last, unless the FAO has approved a higher percentage. You can calculate the 18 per cent approval limit amount from the amount-acquitted section of your *Approved service provider payment advice notice* for the instalment period before last. Write the amount in the box.

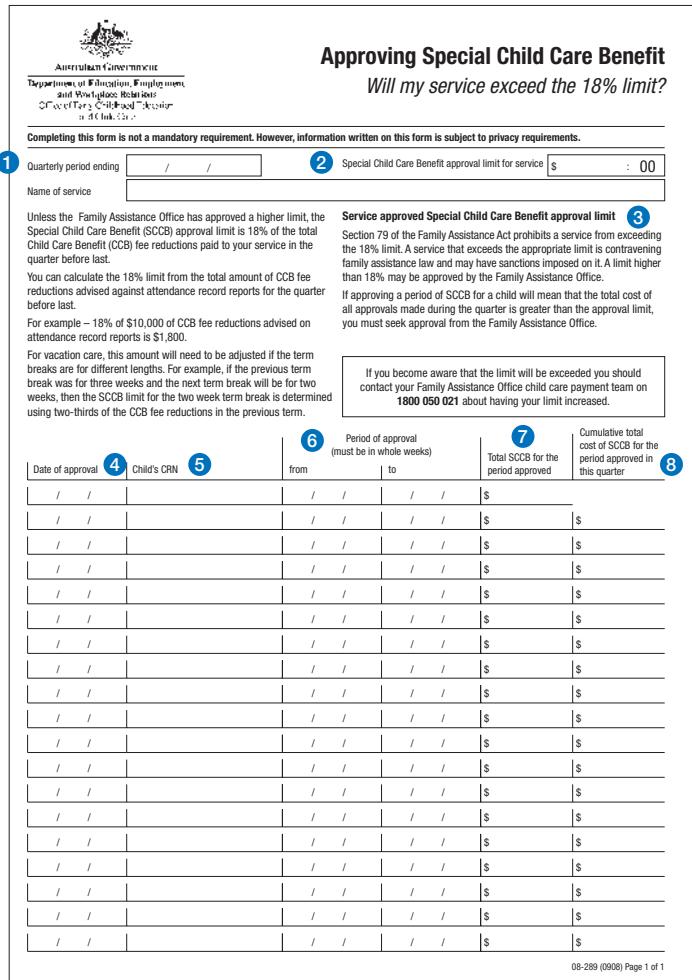
The cost of any Special Child Care Benefit provided above your service's limit without approval from the Family Assistance Office will have to be paid back by your service.

Service-approved SCCB approval limit

If approving a period of SCCB for a child will mean that the total cost of all approvals made during the statement period is greater than the approval limit, your service can approve that period of SCCB. However, your service cannot make any more approvals during the statement period. Any more SCCB needed will have to be approved by the FAO.

You need to get these approvals before you reduce the fees.

- 4 Date of approval**—write the start date of the approval period. The date should be a Monday.
- 5 Child's CRN**—write the child's Customer Reference Number (CRN), if known. The child's CRN appears on the family's assessment notice. If you don't know the child's CRN, complete a Notification of Full Fee Paying Customers (FA022) form for the child and send it to your FAO child care payment team.
- 6 Period of approval**—write the start and end dates of the weeks for which SCCB is approved. The start date should be a Monday and the end date should be a Sunday.
- 7 Total SCCB for the period approved**—calculate the total amount of SCCB for all the weeks that you have approved. This amount should be the sum of each total fee charged for CCB hours per week for the number of weeks involved.
- 8 Cumulative total cost of SCCB for the period approved in this statement period**—add the cost of all periods of SCCB approved by your service in the current statement period.



13.11 24-hour and 50-hour limits



SCCB and the 24-hour limit

A decision to approve SCCB for a family that is limited to 24 hours of CCB per child does not remove the 24-hour limit. Removal of the 24-hour limit depends on the family's circumstances. For example, if a family becomes eligible for SCCB for financial reasons, such as the working parent becoming unemployed, this does not indicate a need for additional hours of child care. In this case, SCCB cannot be paid for more than 24 hours.

When a family that is limited to 24 hours of CCB per child becomes eligible for SCCB because the family has financial problems caused by a crisis, such as the death of the working parent, there may be a need for additional hours of child care. In this case the family:

- would be eligible for more than 24 hours because of the exceptional circumstances **and**
- would therefore be eligible for SCCB for more than 24 hours.

Any requests for additional hours due to temporary financial hardship will need to be approved by the Family Assistance Office.

When a family receives SCCB because a child is at risk of neglect or abuse you can decide on the number of hours for which SCCB will be paid.

SCCB and the 50-hour limit

When a family is limited to 50 hours of CCB for a child, the family is also limited to 50 hours of SCCB. If the family qualifies for more than 50 hours of CCB, the family can also receive SCCB for the additional hours used.

13.12 Suspension of power to approve SCCB for hardship

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC**

If your service shows a pattern of decisions to approve SCCB for hardship reasons that do not meet the criteria, the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations has the power to remove your service's ability to approve SCCB for hardship reasons.

If this happens, applications for families applying for SCCB hardship will need to be sent to the FAO child care payment team for approval.

13.13 Granting SCCB for a child of a family receiving Jobs, Education and Training Child Care fee assistance

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC**

Services must not claim both SCCB **and** Jobs, Education and Training Child Care fee assistance (JETCCFA) for a child for the same week of care.

When a family is receiving JETCCFA and then your service approves a period of SCCB for the family, or when a family is receiving SCCB and a weekly statement arrives with a JETCCFA assessment, your service should claim only SCCB for the weeks when the family is eligible for SCCB and JETCCFA.

If the family is still eligible for JETCCFA when a period of SCCB finishes—that is, the weekly statement does not advise that the family's eligibility for JETCCFA has ceased—then once the period of SCCB finishes, the family reverts to receiving both CCB and JETCCFA fee reductions.

If a family's JETCCFA is cancelled at any time during a period of SCCB, and they want to claim JETCCFA for another period, they can phone the FAO on **13 6150**.

Child Care Tax Rebate

This section provides some basic information about the Child Care Tax Rebate (CCTR) and what the CCTR means administratively for child care services.

| | | |
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| 14.2 | Who is eligible? | 170 |
| 14.3 | Payment process to receive Child Care Tax Rebate..... | 171 |
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In addition to Child Care Benefit (CCB), the CCTR is a payment from the Australian Government that helps working families with the cost of child care.

The Government has recently increased the rate and frequency of the payment to better assist families with out-of-pocket expenses for approved care. From July 2008, the CCTR can be paid quarterly rather than annually and covers 50 per cent of out-of-pocket expenses up to \$7,500 for approved child care. The CCTR is still indexed each year.

Out-of-pocket expenses are total child care fees charged for approved child care less actual CCB and any JETCCFA entitlement.

14.1 Changes to the Child Care Tax Rebate for 2008–09

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **occ**

The Australian Government recently announced increasing the rate and frequency of the payment of the CCTR to families using approved child care.

From July 2008 the rebate increased from 30 to 50 per cent; with an increase in the cap from \$4354 to \$7500 (indexed) per child per year. Families can receive the CCTR as quarterly payment or as an annual lump sum payment.

Some families may receive two CCTR payments in October 2008. These will be the 30 per cent rebate for 2007–08 out-of-pocket child care expenses and the first quarterly payment for 2008–09.

14.2 Who is eligible?

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **occ**

To be eligible for the CCTR, families **must**:

- have used approved child care **and**
- been assessed as eligible for Child Care Benefit (CCB)* **and**
- have met the work, training, study test (for the purposes of the CCTR).

Foster care, shared care, kinship and grandparent families who meet the eligibility criteria are also able to receive CCTR.

* Those families assessed as eligible for CCB, but entitled to a zero rate due to income, may still be eligible for the CCTR.

14.3 Payment process to receive Child Care Tax Rebate

FDC IHC OSHC LDC OCC

Payments of CCTR for 2006–07 and 2007–08 years will still be made annually. Payment can be made once services lodge child care usage information and the family has lodged their tax return.

From July 2008, CCTR payments can be paid quarterly rather than annually. Payments from the July to September 2008 quarter will start from October 2008. The rebate will be paid after the end of each quarter, once child care attendance information has been provided to the Family Assistance Office (FAO) by the family's child care service.

At the end of the financial year, CCTR will be reconciled against the customer's actual income and adjusted for the financial year. Payment of the last quarter of CCTR will be 'held' until CCB reconciliation occurs (when tax returns have been lodged and all child care attendance information has been received). Once a family's CCB entitlement has been determined, then their CCTR entitlement is calculated. The final quarterly payment will take into account any adjustments that need to be made and any remaining entitlement will then be paid.

Families who want to receive their CCTR as a quarterly payment must claim CCB as reduced fees, even if they are assessed as eligible for CCB but their entitlement is zero due to income.

Families claiming their CCB as a lump sum payment can only receive their CCTR as a lump sum payment after the end of the income year once they have lodged their lump sum claim for CCB and the claim has been determined.

14.4 What does this mean for child care services?

FDC IHC OSHC LDC OCC

While there are no administrative changes required by services in the delivery of CCTR, families will not be able to receive the payment until reconciliation of their child care usage. As such, services will still need to submit their usage statements as is currently required. This includes accurate reporting of the 'total fee' which is extremely important in calculating a family's correct entitlement to the CCTR.

- Child care services are required to provide the 'total fee charged' amount to the FAO, as part of the normal quarterly *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) forms.
- The total fee charged needs to be provided for each child, for each week.
- Providing the total fee charged amount is mandatory, and it is required on all *Statements of child care usage* (FA020) forms.
- Providing the total fee charged amount is **in addition** to providing the total fee for CCB eligible hours.

Important note: Many families at your service will be claiming the CCTR as a quarterly payment. In order for families to receive their payments on time, it is strongly recommended that you lodge your usage statement as soon as practical.

14.5 What is the total fee?

FDC | **IHC** | **OSHC** | **LDC** | **OCC**

The ‘total fee charged’ may be different from the ‘total fee for CCB eligible hours’.

The total fee charged is the amount the child care service provider charges a family for care before any adjustments for CCB.

Therefore the total fee includes non-CCB hours (hours above the CCB eligible hour limit) and other charges—for example, for meals the service provides as part of the care for the children.

The total fee charged does not include fees charged for unapproved absence days (absence days that exceed the 30-day allowable absence limit), or one-off charges such as enrolment and registration fees.

When a discount is applied to the total fee, the ‘total fee’ recorded should be the discounted fee. For example, if a child care centre offers families a reduction on child care fees, the amount reported as the ‘total fee’ is the discounted amount.

When a service includes a surcharge or extra charge on top of the fee for service, the amount recorded as the ‘total fee’ is the fee for service only, and does not include the surcharge. For example, if a service applies a surcharge for credit card payments, the ‘total fee’ amount would be the fee for service but **not** include the credit card surcharge.

One-off charges should not be included in the total fee. If the service has a separate cost—for example, \$200 a week for child care and a \$50 registration fee at enrolment—the \$50 fee is **not** included.

Similarly, separate fees itemised on a family’s receipt from its child care service—for example penalty fees for late pick-up or fees for excursions—are **not** be included in the ‘total fee’ recorded. See also ‘Sessional or daily charging’ on page 189.

See 15.4 ▶

14.6 Child Care Tax Rebate limits



The table below shows the actual indexed amounts of maximum CCTR from financial years 2004–05 to 2008–09. The amount for 2008–09 also reflects the change from the 30 per cent rebate to a 50 per cent rebate.

| Financial year | \$ |
|----------------|------|
| 2004–05 | 4000 |
| 2005–06 | 4096 |
| 2006–07 | 4211 |
| 2007–08 | 4354 |
| 2008–09 | 7500 |

For more information about payments of CCTR for costs incurred before 1 July 2006 visit the Australian Tax Office website at

◎ ato.gov.au or phone **13 2861**.

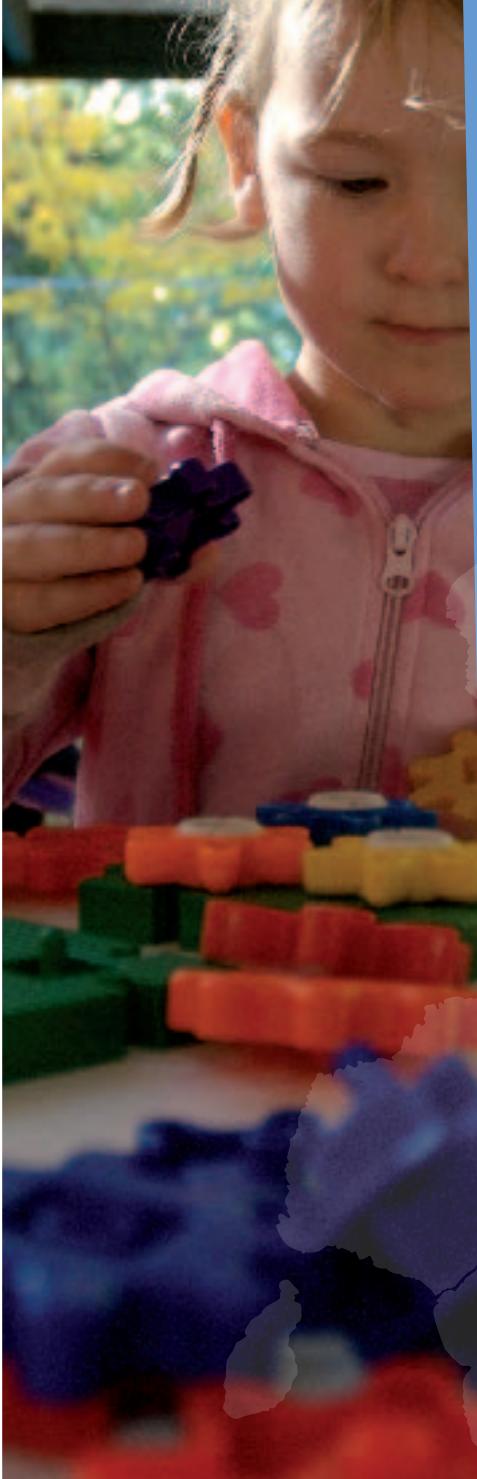
For more information about payments of CCTR for costs incurred on or after 1 July 2006 visit the FAO website at

◎ familyassist.gov.au or phone **13 6150**.

Reporting Child Care Benefit information

This section describes what services must do to get funds from the Family Assistance Office (FAO) to cover Child Care Benefit (CCB) fee reductions. It covers the system of advances, *Statement of child care usage* forms and other reporting. Services are encouraged to use computer software to prepare their reports and submit these by 'e-lodgement' or on disk/CD.

| | | |
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15.1 Advances

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC**

Advances to services are based on information submitted in the statement period before last on a *Child Care Benefit statement for payment summary* (FA026) form and attached *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) form, or equivalent information submitted on e-lodgement or disk/CD.

The CCB advance–acquit payment cycle is based on four statement periods.

These periods in the financial year 2008–09 are:

- 7 July 2008 to 5 October 2008
- 6 October 2008 to 4 January 2009
- 5 January 2009 to 5 April 2009
- 6 April 2009 to 5 July 2009

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC**

These periods in the financial year for **before and after school** care services are:

- Term 1
- Term 2
- Term 3
- Term 4

These periods in the financial year for **vacation care** services are:

- Term break 1
- Term break 2
- Term break 3
- Term break 4

Tasmania will only have three statement periods due to the three school terms.

FDC IHC OSHC LDC OCC

At the end of each statement period, you will need to submit to your FAO child care payment team a *Child Care Benefit statement for payment summary* (FA026) form and a *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) form for every child using your service. You will not receive any more CCB advances until the FAO has processed your statements. Submitting the statements within a month of the end of the statement period will assist with timely payment of your next CCB advance.

You may submit the statements by e-lodgement, on a computer disk/CD, or by using the *Child Care Benefit statement for payment summary* (FA026) form and the *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) form.

See 8.4 ▶

FDC IHC OSHC LDC OCC

Payment cycle for advances

The advance for long day care services, family day care services, in home care services and occasional care services is calculated **quarterly**, and is paid by direct deposit.

Each quarterly advance is split into three-monthly payments:

- 40 per cent of the quarterly advance is paid in the first month of the statement period
- 30 per cent of the quarterly advance is paid in the second month of the statement period
- 30 per cent of the quarterly advance is paid in the third month of the statement period.

FDC IHC OSHC LDC OCC

The advance for before and after school care services is calculated on a **term** basis.

Each advance for a term is split into three monthly payments:

- 40 per cent of the term advance is paid in the first month of the statement period
- 30 per cent of the term advance is paid in the second month of the statement period
- 30 per cent of the term advance is paid in the third month of the statement period.

FDC IHC OSHC LDC OCC

How are adjustments to advances calculated?

The total advance for a statement period for all services (except vacation care) is calculated **using fee reductions given for the statement period before last**, as this is the most recent statement period for which the FAO has detailed information. For example, the advance for period 3 is calculated on fee reductions given for period 1.

The total advance for **vacation care** services is calculated using fee reductions given for the last vacation period.

When *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) and *Child Care Benefit statement for payment summary* (FA026) forms are received, the FAO acquires the total amount of fee reduction passed on to families against the amount advanced for that statement period. This will be advised to you in a 'statement acquittal' report.

If the total fee reduction provided in a statement period is more than the advance paid to your service for the statement period, the FAO will pay your service the difference in an adjustment payment, subject to any existing over-advance for your service.

If the total fee reductions provided in a statement period is less than the advance paid to your service for the statement period, the FAO will deduct that overpayment from the advance due for the second period in the future. The new adjusted advance for that statement period will be split into the three-monthly payments.

The new adjusted advance for that statement period will be paid as a single payment for **vacation care** services.

When are advances paid?

Advances are paid to services on the first working day of the month, except January payments which will be made (when possible) in December.

Advances are paid to **vacation care** services on the first day of the month in which the vacation period starts.

Sale or closure of a service

If you intend to sell or close your service you must give your state or territory office of the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) at least 30 days notice in **writing** of your intention to do so.

See 5.4 ▶

See back cover ▶

DEEWR will notify the FAO of the change. The FAO will ensure that any advances already paid are acquitted before the sale or closure, or as soon as possible thereafter.

Failure to notify DEEWR of closure or change of operator is a criminal offence.

Additional advances

An additional advance is a second advance of funds for CCB purposes.

The FAO makes an additional advance only when you have clearly demonstrated that the first advance will not be enough to meet the fee reductions provided for families in the particular quarter. The FAO also takes into consideration any over-advances outstanding. Services should provide the following documented information when asking for an additional advance:

- usage for the first four weeks of the period (for example, printouts from software or attendance records where software is not used) **and**
- projected usage for the remainder of the period (for example, printouts from software, booking sheets where software is not used, or a calculation based on usage for the first four weeks of the period).

In addition the service must also have lodged its *Child Care Benefit statement for payment summary* (FA026) form for the previous CCB period. For example, if the additional advance being requested is for the July to September 2007 period, then the service must have lodged its April to June 2007 statement.

If the original advance made to your service is insufficient, you should contact your FAO child care payment team to discuss your needs.

See back cover ▶

You should also complete an *Application for Child Care Benefit additional advance* (FA027) form.

See 8.4 ▶

You can only use additional advances to cover fee reductions provided for families. They are not extra assistance for services in financial difficulty.

Completing the *Application for Child Care Benefit additional advance* (FA027) form

This form is on the Centrelink website at

◎ centrelink.gov.au

or you can ask for a form by phoning your FAO child care payment team.

See back cover ▶

- 1 Provider details—Name of Approved service provider**—write the name of your service (or use a stamp).
- 2 Reference number**—write your service's reference number (or use a stamp).
- 3 Expenditure**—for what statement period is the additional advance required?—tick the box for the appropriate statement period.
- 4 Why is the additional advance required?**—provide details of the reasons why fee reductions have increased in this particular statement period, compared to two periods back. Possible reasons could be that your service now has more children using care, or the closure of a major factory has substantially increased the amount of Special Child Care Benefit.
- 5 Additional advance amount requested?**—write the amount of the additional advance amount requested.
- 6 Signature**—the statement must be signed by a person who is authorised to do so. This will be either the legal operator of your service or another person who is expressly authorised by the legal operator to enter into a legal obligation on your behalf. You must advise the FAO in writing of the express authority being granted.

See back cover ▶

- 7 **Name of authorised signatory**—write the name of the authorised signatory who will sign the form.
- 8 **Date**—write the date the authorised signatory signs the form.

FM027/0707 (Page 1 of 1)



Australian Government
Family Assistance Office

Application for Child Care Benefit additional advance

For more information please refer to the Child Care Service Handbook.
The authority to collect this information is contained in family assistance law. For more information about privacy please call the Family 1800 050 021 and ask for the fact sheet called *our Right to Privacy*, or go to our website at www.familyassist.gov.au

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|----------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| provider details 1 | <p>Name of Approved Service Provider _____</p> <p>♦ Please print or use a stamp</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Reference number 2 | _____ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| expenditure 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>For what statement period is the additional advance required?</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%;">Family day care, long day care, occasional care, in-home care</td> <td style="width: 15%; text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> ▶</td> <td style="width: 15%; text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> Jan-Mar</td> <td style="width: 15%; text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> Apr-Jun</td> <td style="width: 15%; text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> Jul-Sep</td> <td style="width: 15%; text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> Oct-Dec</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Before school care, after school care</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> ▶</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> Term 1</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> Term 2</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> Term 3</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> Term 4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Vacation care</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> ▶</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> Break 1</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> Break 2</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> Break 3</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> Break 4</td> </tr> </table> | | Family day care, long day care, occasional care, in-home care | <input type="checkbox"/> ▶ | <input type="checkbox"/> Jan-Mar | <input type="checkbox"/> Apr-Jun | <input type="checkbox"/> Jul-Sep | <input type="checkbox"/> Oct-Dec | Before school care, after school care | <input type="checkbox"/> ▶ | <input type="checkbox"/> Term 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> Term 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> Term 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> Term 4 | Vacation care | <input type="checkbox"/> ▶ | <input type="checkbox"/> Break 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> Break 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> Break 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> Break 4 |
| Family day care, long day care, occasional care, in-home care | <input type="checkbox"/> ▶ | <input type="checkbox"/> Jan-Mar | <input type="checkbox"/> Apr-Jun | <input type="checkbox"/> Jul-Sep | <input type="checkbox"/> Oct-Dec | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Before school care, after school care | <input type="checkbox"/> ▶ | <input type="checkbox"/> Term 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> Term 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> Term 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> Term 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Vacation care | <input type="checkbox"/> ▶ | <input type="checkbox"/> Break 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> Break 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> Break 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> Break 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Why is the additional advance required? 4</p> <p>_____</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Additional advance amount requested? 5 \$ _____ | <p>Please note: Over-advance amounts and debts which will be outstanding at the end of the period will be taken into consideration when assessing your additional advance request.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>In order to assess your Additional Advance application the Family Assistance Office requires your:</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Child Care Benefit Statement for the period immediately preceding the current period</td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Usage details for the current period: e.g. printouts from software or attendance records where software is not used.</td> <td style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>A projection of usage for the remainder of the current period e.g. printouts from software or booking sheets where software is not used or a calculation based on the weeks to date in the current period.</td> <td style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table> | | Child Care Benefit Statement for the period immediately preceding the current period | <input type="checkbox"/> | Usage details for the current period: e.g. printouts from software or attendance records where software is not used. | <input type="checkbox"/> | A projection of usage for the remainder of the current period e.g. printouts from software or booking sheets where software is not used or a calculation based on the weeks to date in the current period. | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Child Care Benefit Statement for the period immediately preceding the current period | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Usage details for the current period: e.g. printouts from software or attendance records where software is not used. | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| A projection of usage for the remainder of the current period e.g. printouts from software or booking sheets where software is not used or a calculation based on the weeks to date in the current period. | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| statement | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>I declare that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the information I have provided on this form is complete and correct. <p>I understand that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • giving false or misleading information is a serious offence. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Signature (Authorised Signatory) 6 _____ | Fax this completed form to your payment team on 1800 700 533 Printed name 7 _____ 8 / / _____ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

15.2 Computer-based recording and submission of statements by e-lodgement disk/CD



A range of software is available to automate the process of preparing the quarterly *Child Care Benefit statement for payment summary* (FA026) and the *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) forms.

Statements that are prepared electronically can be submitted to the FAO via:

- **e-lodgement**—by uploading the statement through a secure website. Services who register for this service are issued with a user ID and password
- **disk/CD**—by mailing a disk/CD containing payment statements to the FAO. The disk/CD must be lodged with the *Approved Service Provider Disk Lodgement Label* (FA028) attached, and signed by the nominated authorised signatory. All files on the disk/CD must be listed on the FA028, or listed in an attached letter if the FA028 does not have space.

For more information about e-lodgement contact your FAO child care payment team.

See back cover ▶

Submitting statements by e-lodgement is strongly encouraged because the Australian Government is committed to conducting its financial affairs using electronic commerce. Software packages can also

help services to make general record-keeping and other administrative tasks more efficient. However, it is up to service operators to decide whether to buy and use a software package.

Whatever you decide, child care service operators are responsible for ensuring that their record-keeping practices meet the FAO's accountability requirements, as outlined in this handbook and in the family assistance legislation.

Computerised CCB records

If your service uses computer software to maintain records, you are advised to make back-up copies regularly. Where possible, the back-up should take place weekly.

If the FAO visits your service they may ask to see hard copies of computer-generated records. You will be given notice if this is required.

You do not need to store hard copies of computerised records if you have electronic back-up copies, and you are able to print them on request. Failure to provide hard copies of records requested by the FAO, however, may result in a recovery of funds.

You must retain all accountability records relating to CCB and Jobs, Education and Training Child Care fee assistance for 36 months from the end of the calendar year in which the care was given.

15.3 Statement of child Care usage

FDC IHC OSHC LDC OCC

The *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) form enables you to record information each week, which the FAO uses to calculate a family's entitlement to CCB, and Jobs, Education and Training Child Care fee assistance (JETCCFA) (if applicable). This information is also used to calculate and acquit your service's quarterly/term/break advances.

A copy of the *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) form is on page 183.

Apart from the exceptions set out below, you must complete a *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) form for every child for every statement period in which they receive child care. You must complete a separate statement for each child. You may submit them by e-lodgement, computer disk/CD, computer-generated statements, or by using the *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) form.

The exceptions when you are not required to complete a *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) form are when:

- the state or territory government is paying the total fees charged
- child care is paid for by the Adult Migrant English Program

See 10.4 ►

- child care is paid under a salary sacrifice agreement and the employer has liability to pay for the child care.

See 10.4 ►

You must submit *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) forms to the FAO at the end of each statement period, together with a *Child Care Benefit statement for payment summary* (FA026) form. You may submit them by e-lodgement, computer disk/CD, computer-generated statements, or by using the *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) form.

The form is in duplicate, so that services can keep a copy. You should send the original of each form to the FAO.

See back cover ►

Completing the *Statement of child care usage* form

There are four main sections to a *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) form:

- the first section identifies your child care service
- the second section asks for information about the child in care, and the family's entitlement to CCB and JETCCFA
- the third section is used to record details for each week the child is in care during the statement period
- the fourth section is used to record allowable absences and 24-hour care periods.

Most services now use software packages to record child care usage details and to prepare their quarterly statements. If you still use a manual recording and reporting system, the rest of this section describes how to complete a *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) form.

You can get the *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) form from the FAO.

See 8.4 ►

See back cover ►

15.4 Recording child care information on the Statement of child care usage

- 1 Provider details**—write the name and reference number of your service.
- 2 Family details**—transfer the following information from the CCB statement issued by the FAO to the ‘Family details’ section:
 - the customer’s name and Customer Reference Number (CRN)
 - the child’s full name and CRN.

Please ensure you record the Customer Reference Number (CRN) correctly in the space provided.

Tick either ‘yes’ or ‘no’ in answer to the question ‘Is this child a school child?’ If the child commenced school within the statement period, note that date next to the question ‘If this child became a school child within the period, on what date?’

Which columns must be completed?

The columns that you must complete depend on whether:

- the family receives CCB as a fee reduction
- the family has been approved for Special Child Care Benefit for a particular period
- the family has been approved for Grandparent Child Care Benefit (GCCB)
- the child attends school
- the family is eligible for JETCCFA.

You must fill out column I whenever increased eligible hours have been approved for the week.

If care details do not change from week to week, you may use ditto marks (") in all compulsory columns except column A. Any spaces without information or ditto marks will be regarded as weeks for which fee reductions are not being provided.

- 3 Column A—week ending**—in this column, write the date on which each week of care ends—this should always be a Sunday. Start dates of the statement period are discussed in **9.4**. Ensure that the week ending date falls within the start and end dates of the period.

See 9.4 ▶

You must complete the compulsory columns on a weekly basis, whether your billing period is weekly or fortnightly.

- 4 Column B—Eligible CCB hours**—information on which CCB hours are eligible is discussed in detail in **Section 11**.

See Section 11 ▶

Record the total number of eligible CCB hours used in that week in hours and minutes up to the hours notified by the FAO—for example, 8:45 or 17:30. This includes JFA (that is, JETCCFA) hours which are a subset of CCB eligible hours.

The family receives CCB as a fee reduction.

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC**

For non-school children

For school children for the weeks a child is approved.

The family has been approved for SCCB for a particular period

| Child Care Benefit and JET Child Care Fee Assistance information | A | | B | | E | | F | | H | | J | | K | | | |
|--|---------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------|------------|----------------|----------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| | Week ending A | Eligible CCB hours B | * Eligible non-standard CCB hours C | ** Par-time % claimed D | CCB % E | Standard F | Non-standard G | †Reason code H | Increased eligible hours I | Total fee charged for CCB hours J | Total fee incl. CCB (excl. JFA) K | J E T Child Care Fee Assistance L | No. of JFA standard hours M | No. of JFA non-standard hours N | Total fee for JFA hours O | JFA fee reduction P |
| • For more information | 1 | / / | : | : | % | % | \$ | \$ | | \$ | \$ | | | | \$ | \$ |

| Child Care Benefit and JET Child Care Fee Assistance information | A | | B | | C | | E | | F | | G | | H | | J | | K | |
|--|-------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|-------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------|-------------------------|---|--|
| | Week ending | Eligible CCB hours | * Eligible standard CCB hours | ** Part-time % claimed | CCB % | CCB fee reduction | | †Reason code | ‡Reason code | Increased eligible hours | Total fee charged for CCB hours | Total fee incl. JFA excl. JFA | JET Child standard hours | Care Fee standard hours | Assistance | (JFA) JFA fee reduction | | |
| | | | | | | Standard | Non-standard | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ♦ For more information | 1 | / | : | : | % | % | \$ | \$ | | \$ | \$ | | | | \$ | \$ | | |

The family pays full fees or intends to claim CCB as a lump sum

| Child Care Benefit and JET Child Care Fee Assistance information | A | | B | | CCB % E | CCB fee reduction | | | Increased eligible hours I | Total fee charged for CCB hours J | Total fee incl. CCB K | J | | K | |
|--|------------------|-------------------------|--|----------------------------|------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| | Week ending A | Eligible CCB hours B | * Eligible non-standard CCB hours C | ** Parc-tme % claimed D | | Standard F | Non-standard G | Reason code H | | | | No. of JFA standard hours L | No. of JFA non-standard hours M | Total fee for JFA hours N | JFA fee reduction O |
| • For more information | 1 | / | / | : | : | : | % | % | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ |

| Child Care Benefit and JET Child Care Fee Assistance information | A | | B | | C | | E | | F | | G | | H | | J | | K | | | | | |
|--|-------------|---|--------------------|---|-----------------------------------|---|------------------------|---|-------|-------------------|--------------|-------------|---|--------------------------|----|---------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| | Week ending | A | Eligible CCB hours | B | * Eligible non-standard CCB hours | C | ** Part-time % claimed | D | CCB % | CCB fee reduction | | Reason code | I | Increased eligible hours | J | Total fee charged for CCB hours | K | Total fee incl. CCB fee incl. (JFA) | L | M | N | O |
| | | | | | | | | | | Standard | Non-standard | | | | | | | | No. of JFA standard hours | No. of JFA non-standard hours | Total fee for JFA hours | JFA fee reduction |
| • For more information | 1 | / | / | : | : | : | % | % | \$ | \$ | | | | \$ | \$ | | | | | \$ | \$ | |

The family has been approved for GCCB

| Child Care Benefit and JET Child Care Fee Assistance information | A | | B | | * Eligible non-standard CCB hours C | ** Part-time % claimed D | CCB % E | CCB fee reduction | | †Reason code II | Increased eligible hours †Reason III | Total fee charged for CCB hours J | Total fee incl. CCB incl. JFA K | H | | J | | K | |
|--|------------------|----------------------------|---------------|-------------------|--|-----------------------------|------------|-----------------------------------|--|--------------------|--|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|---------------------------|---|--|
| | Week ending A | Eligible CCB hours B | Standard F | Non-standard G | | | | No. of JFA standard hours L | No. of JFA non- standard hours M | | | | | No. of JFA standard hours L | No. of JFA non- standard hours M | Total fee for JFA hours N | JFA fee reduction O | | |
| • For more information | 1 | / / | : | : | % | % | \$ | \$ | \$ | | | \$ | \$ | | | \$ | \$ | | |

| Child Care Benefit and JET Child Care Fee Assistance information | A | | B | | C | | G | | H | | J | | K | | |
|--|-------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|-------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| | Week ending | Eligible CCB hours | * Eligible standard CCB hours | ** Part-time % claimed | CCB % | CCB fee reduction | | †Reason code | Increased eligible hours | Total fee charged for CCB hours | Total fee incl. CCB fee (JFA) | JET Child No. of JFA standard hours | Care Fee No. of JFA non-standard hours | Assistance Total fee for JFA hours | (JFA) JFA fee reduction |
| | | | | | | Standard | Non-standard | | | | | | | | |
| ♦ For more information | 1 | / | : | : | % | % | \$ | \$ | | \$ | \$ | | | \$ | \$ |

The family receives CCB as a fee reduction

CCB eligible hours will be limited to 24 hours per child per week across all approved services for families who do not meet the work test and do not qualify for the 'exceptional circumstances' or 'child at risk' exemptions. Families that meet the work test are usually limited to 50 hours per child per week for most families. However, some families are eligible for more than 50 hours of CCB per child per week.

Column B will be limited to the number of CCB eligible hours displayed on the current weekly statement for this family.

See 11.4 ▶



Record the total number of eligible CCB hours in that week.



Record the total number of eligible CCB hours in **standard hours of care** in that week.



The family does not receive CCB as reduced fees

You are expected to lodge returns for all families, as they may lodge a lump sum claim for CCB after the end of the financial year.

See 10.2 ▶

For children of families not receiving CCB as reduced fees, write the total number of hours billed in the week for:

- care attended or sessions of care attended, in full or part **and**
- absences which would be approved absences for a fee reduction family **and**
- any other absence for which the date is listed as an allowable absence at the bottom of the *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) form **and**



- an absence from a session of care that had been booked and paid for.



Pupil-free days

To determine the hours to be written in column B for a week in which a pupil-free day occurs, add the hours charged for the pupil-free day to the hours you would normally include for the other days of the week.



5 Column C—Eligible non-standard CCB

hours—for children in families receiving CCB as reduced fees, record the total number of eligible CCB hours in non-standard hours of care in that week. This includes JFA hours which are a subset of CCB eligible hours. Record the number of eligible CCB hours in hours and minutes—for example, 10:45.

For children of families **not** receiving CCB as reduced fees, write the total number of hours in non-standard hours billed for:

- care attended, or sessions of care attended, in full or in part **and**
- absences which would be approved absences for a fee reduction family **and**
- any other absence for which the date is listed as an allowable absence at the bottom of the *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) form.

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC**

Rounding the hours claimed in excess of 50 hours

When a family is eligible for more than 50 hours, CCB will be paid for the **total actual hours used** above 50 hours. You will need to add the daily hours and minutes of actual attendance to get a weekly total. This should be rounded up to the next whole hour (up to the number of hours approved for CCB noted on the family's assessment notice and within the service's approved hours of operation).

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC**

6 Column D—Part-time % claimed—If the child is a non-school child, write the part-time percentage used in calculating the child's fee reduction. Information about the part-time percentage to apply is provided in **11.2**.

See 11.2 ▶

Leave the column blank if the child is attending.

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC**

7 Column E—CCB%—record the CCB% passed on to the family.

See 11.2 ▶

You must complete column E for **all** families receiving CCB (including Special Child Care Benefit (SCCB)) as a fee reduction, except those families claiming GCCB.

8 Column F—CCB fee reduction—standard—record the amount of CCB or SCCB the family's fee is reduced by. Because the CCB fee reduction for the number of eligible hours in a week cannot exceed the total amount of the fee charged for those eligible hours, the amount in column F cannot exceed the amount in column J.

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC**

Child Care Benefit

- If the child is a non-school child at a long day care service (LDC), the fee reduction must be calculated by multiplying the number of 'Eligible CCB hours' (column B) by the 'Part-time loading % claimed' (column D) by the 'CCB%' (column E) by the standard hourly rate.
- If the child is a non-school child attending any other approved service type other than LDC, the fee reduction must be calculated by multiplying the number of 'Eligible CCB hours' (column B) by the 'CCB%' (column E) by the standard hourly rate.

- If the child is a school child attending any approved service type, the fee reduction must be calculated by multiplying the number of 'Eligible CCB hours' (column B) by the 'CCB%' (column E) by the standard hourly rate by 85 per cent.

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC**

Record the CCB or SCCB calculation for standard hours. The method of calculating CCB fee reductions for standard hours is in **Section 11**.

See Section 11 ▶

Special Child Care Benefit

Write the total amount of SCCB (this must be equal to the actual fee charged) provided for the child for that week, instead of calculating the amount described above. You can only have CCB **or** SCCB, not both in the same week.

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC**

9 Column G—CCB fee reduction—non-standard—This column is only used by family day care and in home care services. Record the CCB or SCCB calculation for non-standard hours. The method of calculating CCB fee reductions for non-standard hours is in **Section 11**.

See Section 11 ▶

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC**

Columns F and G

Services must round the amounts in columns F and G to the nearest cent whenever families are charged a fee. If a family is charged more than once in a week, the standard hours calculations are added together and the non-standard hours' calculations are added together.

10 Column H—'Reason' code— mandatory for SCCB or GCCB—if you or the FAO have approved SCCB, or the FAO has assessed a customer as eligible for GCCB, record the reason code using:

- CRK—Child at risk **or**
- TFH—Temporary financial hardship or transition **or**
- GCB—GCCB.

11 Column I—Increased eligible hours reason—If the FAO has approved increased eligible hours, record the reason code using:

- CRK—Child at risk
- EXC—Exceptional circumstances.

12 Column J—Total fee charged for CCB hours—Add the fees charged for this child for the number of eligible hours listed in columns B and C without any adjustments for CCB fee reductions. If the parent is also receiving JETCCFA for the child, deduct the JFA fee reduction (see column O) from the total fee charged for CCB hours.

The total fee charged does **not** include fees charged for unapproved absence days (absence days that exceed the 30-day allowable absence limit) or one-off charges such as enrolment and registration fees.

Record the resulting amount in column J.

The amount recorded in column J should not include any amount paid for by a third party—for example, by an employer in a salary sacrificing arrangement, or through the Adult Migrant English Program for the program's sessions of care.

See 10.4 ▶

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC**

If, for a week, the amount in column J is less than the total amount of columns F and G, decrease the amount in column G until the total amount of columns F and G is equal to the amount in column J. If the amount in column G has been reduced to zero, and column J is still less than the amount of column F, reduce the amount of column F to the amount of column J.

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC**

Sessional or daily charging

When the full fee has been charged for hours in excess of the eligible hours, write the fee for the child that represents the sessional or daily fee that is the same as, or just above, the child's eligible CCB hours.

13 Column K—Total fee incl. CCB (excl. JFA)—

This column collects information for the Child Care Tax Rebate.

See **Section 14** for important information on the 30 per cent Child Care Tax Rebate and the new

50 per cent Child Care Tax Rebate starting on 1 July 2008.

See **Section 14** ▶

The 'total fee charged' may be different from the 'total fee for CCB eligible hours'. Providing the total fee charged amount is in addition to providing the total fee for CCB eligible hours.

The total fee charged is the amount the child care service provider charges a customer for the standard service provided for each child in care before any adjustments for CCB, plus charges for any non-CCB hours (hours above the eligible hour limit), and any other charges (for example, for meals), if these are part of the standard service provided.

The total fee charged does **not** include fees charged for unapproved absence days (absence days that exceed the 30-day allowable absence limit) or one-off charges such as enrolment and registration fees.

When a discount is applied to the total fee, the 'total fee' recorded is the discounted fee. For example, if a child care centre offers families a reduction on child care fees, the amount reported as the 'total fee' is the discounted amount.

When a service includes a surcharge or additional charge on top of the fee for service, the amount recorded as the 'total fee' is the fee for service only, not including the surcharge. For example, if a service applies a surcharge for credit card payments, the 'total fee' amount is the fee for service and does **not** include the credit card surcharge.

One-off charges should not be included in the total fee. If the service has a separate cost—for example, \$200 a week for child care and \$50 registration fee at enrolment—the \$50 fee is **not** included.

Similarly, separate fees itemised on a family's receipt from its child care service—for example penalty fees for late pick-up or fees for excursions—are **not** included in the 'total fee' recorded.

The total fee recorded in this column must **not** include JETCCFA. From the total fee charged, deduct the child's JFA fee reduction (see column O).

The amount recorded in column K should **not** include any amount paid for by a third party—for example, by an employer in a salary sacrificing arrangement, or through the Adult Migrant English Program for the program's sessions of care.

See 10.4 ▶

Columns for JETCCFA recipients

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC**

14 Column L—No. of JFA standard hours—record the number of JETCCFA hours claimed in standard hours in the week in hours and minutes, for example, 6:15 or 11:45.

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC**

15 Column M—No. of JFA non-standard hours—record the number of JETCCFA hours claimed in non-standard hours in that week. Record the JETCCFA hours in hours and minutes, for example 3:30 or 7:45.

A customer's total JFA hours (column L plus column M) cannot exceed their CCB eligible hours.

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC**

16 Column N—Total fee for JFA hours—record the total fee charged for this child for the number of JFA hours listed in column L (and column M, if relevant).

When a child care service charges the same fee for 50 hours of care as it does for care in excess of 50 hours, the service should record that fee as the fee for the JETCCFA hours.

If the parent's approved JETCCFA hours do not correspond with the length of the sessions they use, ask the parent to phone the FAO on **13 6150** to have their JETCCFA reassessed. They may also ask to have their CCB eligible hours limit reassessed.

17 Column O—JFA fee reduction—record the amount of JETCCFA the family's fee is reduced by. JETCCFA is calculated by:

- the total fee for JFA hours (column N) **minus**
- the family's CCB fee reduction for the child's JFA hours claimed in a week (add the family's CCB fee reductions for both the JFA hours in standard and non-standard hours) **minus**

- the total JFA hours claimed (in columns L and M) **multiplied** by the parental contribution per hour.

JETCCFA parental contribution:

- is a flat rate per JFA hour per child
- should only be levied for the JFA hours claimed for a child for whom a JFA assessment has been included on the weekly statement
- does not have to be collected by a child care service prior to making a claim for JETCCFA.

Example—Completing a *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) form for a family receiving JETCCFA using long day care (sessional charging applies)

Annie has one non-school child attending a long day care service 10 hours a day (8:00am to 6:00pm), 5 days a week. The weekly statement indicates Annie is eligible for 50 CCB and 50 hours JETCCFA for her child per week. Her CCB percentage is 100 per cent. The service is open 60 hours per week and charges Annie a weekly fee of \$300.00. The following table shows how Annie's fee reductions were calculated using the *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) form.

| Column | Entry on form | Explanation |
|--|----------------|--|
| A. Week ending | 17 August 2008 | Must be the date on the Sunday of the week |
| B. CCB eligible hours | 50 | Hours in sessions attended were 50 |
| C. Eligible non-standard hours | — | All hours in sessions attended were in standard hours |
| D. Part-time % claimed | 100% | Weekly hours used were greater than 38, therefore 100% applies |
| E. CCB% | 100% | |
| F. CCB fee reduction for standard hours | \$173.50 | $\$3.47 \times 50 \times 100\% = \173.50 |
| G. CCB reduction for non-standard hours | — | None used |
| H. Reason code | — | |
| I. Increased eligible hours reason | — | |
| J. Total fee charged for CCB hours (includes CCB, excludes JFA fee reduction) | \$178.50 | The service charges a sessional charge whether the family uses 50 hours or more than 50 hours. Therefore, the total fee for CCB hours is \$300.00. Record the total fee charged for CCB hours minus Column O |
| K. Total fee charged (including CCB, excluding JFA fee reduction) | \$178.50 | Write the total fee charged for the standard service provided to a child in care (\$300.00), minus the JFA fee reduction (in column O—\$121.50) |
| L. No. JFA hours in standard hours | 50 | The number of hours Annie receives JETCCFA for each child is limited to 14 per week |
| M. No. JFA hours in non-standard hours | — | Non-standard hours are not applicable in long day care |
| N. Total fee for JFA hours | \$300.00 | The service charges a sessional charge whether the family uses 50 hours or more than 50 hours. Therefore, the total fee for JFA hours is \$300.00 |

| Column | Entry on form | Explanation |
|----------------------|---------------|---|
| O. JFA fee reduction | \$121.50 | Total fee for JFA hours minus CCB fee reduction for JFA hours minus JFA parental contribution $\$300 - \$173.50 - (50 \times 10 \text{ cents}) = \121.50 |

Note: *Transitional arrangements applied to families who previously received JETCCFA from July 2006. When the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations took over responsibility for Child Care. Some of these families were approved for increased eligible CCB hours and JFA hours to cover sessional charging. However, if the above example applies, the number of CCB/JFA hours do not need to be increased to limit the family's gap fee to the JFA hourly contribution.*



18 Allowable absences—write in the date of each allowable absence day. Write the number of hours for which a fee is charged against the date of each allowable absence.

If there is not enough space in this section of the statement, attach a separate piece of paper headed with the service's name, the child's name and Customer Reference Number (CRN), and the additional details.

The allowable absences section must be completed on each child's Statement of child care usage (FA020) form if allowable absences are used. This applies to children of families who receive Child Care Benefit as reduced fees and to children of families who do not receive Child Care Benefit as reduced fees. If the child takes no allowable absence days during a statement period leave this section blank.

Do not include allowable absences in excess of 30 days for the financial year, as this may result in a family not receiving the correct entitlements.

Do not include days taken as approved absences.

For more information about allowable and approved absences

See Section 12 ▶

19 24-hour care—write the date that each 24-hour care period began.

Making adjustments to the Statement of child care usage (FA020) form

To make an adjustment to a part of the form you have completed you simply change the information already recorded. Details that have been crossed out, or corrected, must be initialled by a person representing the service who has authority to do so. Statements must be completed in ink and the use of 'white-out' or other editing aids is not acceptable.

15.5 Completing the Child Care Benefit statement for payment summary

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC**

If you submit your quarterly statements to the FAO by e-lodgement or on a computer disk/CD, you do not need to complete a *Child Care Benefit statement for payment summary* (FA026) form.

Only complete this form if you use a manual reporting system for CCB. You must ensure the disk label—*Approved Service Provider Disk Lodgement Label* (FA028)—is signed by an authorised signatory, and their name printed clearly.

- 1 Statement type**—indicate whether it is a ‘primary statement’ or ‘supplementary statement’ by ticking the relevant box.

A primary statement is a statement of records prepared for all children attending during the most recent period. A **supplementary statement** is a statement of records for a child or children that was not included when a primary statement for an earlier period was submitted to the FAO, or a statement provided to correct previously submitted *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) forms.

- 2 Period covered**—tick the box that the statement covers.
- 3 Number of child care usage forms attached**—count the individual *Statement of child care usage*

(FA020) forms completed for the statement period that are attached to the *Child Care Benefit statement for payment summary* (FA026) form, and write the total number, in figures, in the space provided.

- 4 Name of approved service provider and reference number**—write the name and reference number of your service. Please print clearly or use a stamp.
- 5 Have you changed your hours of operation during the period?**—tick ‘yes’ or ‘no’. If ‘yes’, write the number of hours and minutes your service is now operating each week, and attach a copy of your service’s licence authorising the varied hours of operation.

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC**

- 6 What is the longest session of care for which a fee is charged?**—write the number of hours of care in that period.

FDC **IHC** **OSHC** **LDC** **OCC**

- 7 Signature (authorised signatory)**—the *Child Care Benefit statement for payment summary* (FA026) form must be signed by a person who is authorised to do so. This will be either the legal operator of the service or another person who is expressly authorised by the legal operator to enter into a legal obligation on their behalf. You must advise the FAO **in writing** of the express authority being granted.

See back cover ▶

- 8 **Date**—write the date the authorised signatory signs the form.
- 9 **Printed name**—clearly print the authorised signatory's name.



Australian Government
Family Assistance Office

Child Care Benefit statement for payment summary

For more information please refer to the Child Care Service Handbook. The authority to collect this information is contained in family assistance law.

| | |
|---|--|
| 1 Statement type | <input type="checkbox"/> Primary statement <input type="checkbox"/> Supplementary statement |
| 2 Period covered | <input type="checkbox"/> Family day care, long day care, occasional care, in-home care <input type="checkbox"/> Jan-Mar <input type="checkbox"/> Apr-Jun <input type="checkbox"/> Jul-Sep <input type="checkbox"/> Oct-Dec <input type="checkbox"/> Before school care, after school care <input type="checkbox"/> Term 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Term 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Term 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Term 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Vacation care <input type="checkbox"/> Break 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Break 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Break 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Break 4 |
| 3 Number of child care usage forms attached | 3 |

provider details

| | |
|---|--|
| 4 Name of Approved Service Provider | <input type="checkbox"/> Please print or use a stamp <input type="checkbox"/> Reference number <input type="checkbox"/> Have you changed your hours of operation during the period? 5 <input type="checkbox"/> no <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> How long is your service now open per week? Hours Minutes |
| 6 What is the longest session of care for which a fee is charged? | 6 hours |

statement

| | | |
|--|-----|-------------------------------|
| 7 <input type="checkbox"/> | / / | 8 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9 <input type="checkbox"/> Print name | | |

FM026.0707

Original—Family Assistance Office Duplicate—Approved Service Provider

15.6 Submitting Statement of child care usage forms with a Child Care Benefit statement for payment summary

FDC IHC OSHC LDC OCC

When you submit a *Child Care Benefit statement for payment summary* (FA026) form to the FAO, you must also submit **all** individual *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) forms for that same statement period.

If the FAO finds discrepancies, it has the following options:

- If the error is a minor calculation error, the *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) form will be adjusted and the service advised of the adjustment when payment is made.
- If you have not included all the required information, the FAO will contact you to ask for the information needed to enable processing and payment.
- If there are either a large number of errors detected, or a major error, the statements will be further investigated.

If you are lodging computer-generated Child Care Benefit statement for payment summary (FA026) and Statement of child care usage (FA020) forms, you are responsible for ensuring copies of the disk/CD are held at the service, or can be readily provided if the statements sent are lost in transit.

Submitting your *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) forms and *Child Care Benefit statement for payment summary* (FA026) forms within a month of the end of the statement period assists in the timely payment of your advance.

15.7 Backdating a Statement of child care usage form with a Child Care Benefit statement for payment summary

FDC IHC OSHC LDC OCC

Sometimes the CCB and JETCCFA backdating provisions mean you need to change information you have already given the FAO in your end-of-period statements.

For example, if a family wanting fee reductions starts at your service near the end of a statement period, you may not have the family's CCB assessment in time to include their child in your end-of-period statements. When you receive the family's assessment you will need to complete a *Child Care Benefit Statement of child care usage* (FA020) form for the weeks the child was entitled to CCB. You should then lodge the statement with a supplementary *Child Care Benefit statement for payment summary* (FA026) form.

When must a service backdate a family's eligibility for CCB?

The **only** situation where you must backdate a family's eligibility for CCB is when a child starts care at your service before you receive the assessment.

See 9.4 ▶

In this case, you must adjust eligibility in the current statement period or in your next statement.

In all other situations, if your service chooses not to backdate eligibility, the family will receive their financial entitlement for the relevant period after the end of the financial year. This follows a reconciliation of their actual entitlements against the fee reduction received throughout the year.

When must a service backdate a family's JETCCFA fee reductions?

Services should apply the JETCCFA fee reductions from the JETCCFA start date listed on a weekly statement or on a letter from the FAO asking that you do so.

Unlike CCB, if a service does not backdate a family's JETCCFA fee reductions, the family will not receive their correct entitlement.

If the period to be backdated starts after the beginning of the current quarter, you will need to backdate the family's JETCCFA on a *Statement of child care usage* (FA020) form for the weeks the family was entitled to JETCCFA.

If the period to be backdated starts before the beginning of the current quarter, you will need to complete a supplementary *Statement of child care*

usage (FA020) form for the weeks in the previous quarter the family was entitled to JETCCFA and a supplementary *Child Care Benefit statement for payment summary* (FA026) form.

Do not include CCB or JETCCFA usage information for a previous statement period on the current period statement. Supplementary statements must be made. These may be submitted at any time.



Appendices

- 1 Disclosure of service child care information held by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations 200
- 2 Calculating occupied places 202
- 3 Calculating and claiming Regional Travel Assistance Grant for family day care and in home care services 204
- 4 Rates for Set-up Assistance, Sustainability Assistance—outside school hours care (Year 1) and Sustainability Assistance outside school hours care (Year 1) and Sustainability Assistance 206

Appendix 1

Disclosure of child care service information held by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

Background

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) frequently receives requests for information about child care services.

Legislative framework

Information about families and child care services is protected information as defined under the family assistance law. The *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999* says:

'Protected information means:

- a information about a person that is or was held in the records of the Department or the Commonwealth Services Delivery Agency **or**
- b information about a person obtained by an officer under the family assistance law that is or was held in the records of the Australian Taxation Office or Medicare Australia **or**
- c information about a person obtained by an officer under the family assistance law that was held in the records of the Health Insurance Commission **or**
- d information to the effect that there is no information about a person held in the records of an agency.'

The family assistance law permits the Secretary of DEEWR to disclose protected information in limited circumstances. The Act says:

'Disclosure of information by Secretary
168.(1)

- b disclose any such information:
 - i to the Secretary of a Department of State of the Commonwealth or to the head of an authority of the Commonwealth for the purposes of that department or authority or
 - ii **to a person who is expressly or impliedly authorised by the person to whom the information relates to obtain it.'**

It is DEEWR's position that by informing services of its disclosure policy, unless specifically told otherwise, the department has the implied consent of services to provide protected information in the circumstances set out in its policy outlined below.

Disclosure of service information policy

DEEWR has a policy for the disclosure of protected information relating to child care services. Application of this policy is discretionary.

Information requests

Requests that are subject to this policy are for information that can, generally, be categorised into two groups:

- 1 listings of services providing name, address, service type and number of places within specific geographical areas—for example, town, state or national.
- 2 details of funding provided for child care services in specific geographical areas.

DEEWR's usual practice is to disclose some or all of the following information:

- name of service
- service type
- address
- number of places
- contact phone number
- funding details which are not determined by a family's or individual's eligibility—for example, Child Care Benefit, Jobs, Education and Training Child Care fee assistance, and/or Inclusion Support Subsidy.

Parties to whom information will generally be disclosed include:

1 Administrative authorities which require information for planning or administration purposes

This would include any government authorities which have an interest in the planning and/or administration of children's services.

2 Those who request information about services by regional or electoral boundaries

This would include Members of Parliament and Senators requesting information about services in their own or other electorates.

3 Those who make requests for information that may already be in the public domain

This would include:

- parents requiring child care near their work or home

- organisations or individuals considering establishing new child care centres
- employers and/or referral agencies establishing registers to assist employees to find child care
- lobby groups.

4 Those who want to provide information that is child-care related to child care services—for example information about education or welfare

This would include:

- organisations or individuals intending to distribute training material and child care newsletters
- resource and advisory, and supplementary service agencies to conduct Australian Government-funded activities such as distribution of training material, newsletters, and so on.

5 Those who conduct child care-related research

This would include researchers or research organisations working either on bona fide projects funded by or of interest to DEEWR.

PARTIES THAT INFORMATION WILL NOT BE DISCLOSED TO INCLUDE THOSE CONDUCTING COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES.

Note: This policy does not override the rights of persons from seeking access to information under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.

Disclosure of information required or authorised by law

Information may be required to be disclosed by law in limited circumstances.

Other requests for service information

Information requests about services generally, which do not disclose protected information about those services, will be considered by the Child Care Services Support Program taking into consideration the size of the request and resources required.

DEEWR does not hold or provide information about child care services' staff names and qualifications.

Appendix 2

Calculating occupied places

Occupied places

Services that receive funding assistance under the Community Support stream of the Child Care Services Support Program are required to provide information about their service to the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. This includes information about a service's occupied places.

Occupied places refers to child care usage and is based on actual hours of care charged.

The number of occupied places is one of the key factors in determining eligibility for the payment for the various child care types.

How is 'occupied places' calculated?

Formulas for the calculation of occupied places specific to each payment type under the Community Support stream of the Child Care Support Services Program are explained on the next page.

| FDC | IHC | OSHC | LDC | OCC | NMS | | | | |
|--|-----|--|---|-----|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| Total sessions of care charged during weekly statement period* | | ÷ | Number of sessions open during statement period | | = | Number of occupied places for weekly statement period | | | |
| FDC | IHC | OSHC | LDC | OCC | NMS | | | | |
| Total hours of care charged during weekly statement period* | ÷ | Number of weeks service open during statement period | | ÷ | Normal operating hours per week | | = | Number of occupied places for weekly statement period | |
| FDC | IHC | OSHC | LDC | OCC | NMS | | | | |
| Total hours of care charged during weekly statement period* | ÷ | Number of weeks service open during statement period | | ÷ | 35 | | = | Number of occupied places for weekly statement period | |
| FDC | IHC | OSHC | LDC | OCC | NMS | | | | |
| Total hours of care charged during weekly statement period* | ÷ | Number of weeks service open during statement period | | ÷ | Normal operating hours per week (40) | | = | Number of occupied places for weekly statement period | |

**Weekly statement period:* Usually a calendar quarter or a school term or vacation period.

See 15.1 ▶

Appendix 3

Calculating and claiming Regional Travel Assistance Grant for Family day care and in home care services

Family day care and in home care services wanting to apply for Regional Travel Assistance Grant (RTAG) funding must complete and submit the application for RTAG funding form, which is available from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR).

See 3.7 ▶

Conditions of grant

Services deemed as eligible to receive RTAG funding must comply with the following conditions:

- travel undertaken by coordination staff must only be to monitor, train or support carers
- all coordination staff who drive must possess a current driver's licence
- coordination staff who drive are expected to have their own current comprehensive and third party insurance cover on their private vehicles.

Note: Any claim for damage to a vehicle resulting from an accident while it is being driven to monitor, train or support carers must be made to the vehicle's insurer.

As the Australian Government does not carry or provide insurance on private vehicles, it will not accept any responsibility for financial liability or loss (including through operation of an 'excess' clause or

loss of 'no claim bonus') that may be incurred as a result of an accident or theft while using a private motor vehicle to monitor, train or support carers.

It is expected that coordination unit staff will use the most direct route when visiting carers. Where this is not appropriate, for reasons such as adverse seasonal conditions, a suitable alternative route may be used.

Payment of Regional Travel Assistance Grant

In general, RTAG payments are paid by DEEWR to eligible services in line with the department's Standard Funding Agreement.

The rate of RTAG is 66 cents, indexed annually, per kilometre travelled above the given threshold. The table below outlines the kilometre thresholds that apply.

| Size of service—occupied places | Kilometre threshold—per quarter |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 50 places or less | 975 |
| 51–150 places | 1950 |
| More than 150 places | 2925 |

Air travel may be undertaken if this is the most cost-effective and convenient travel method of travel to remote locations. For the purposes of the funding claim, services will be paid the lesser of:

- the cost of an economy airfare or in accordance with Australian Public Service guidelines on travel **or**
- the equivalent kilometres that would have been travelled by road by submitting estimates of the distances.

Funding for RTAG

Funding for RTAG will be paid in arrears. Services are required to submit for reassessment an RTAG claim form each quarter—that is, by 14 January, 14 April, 14 July and 14 October each year.

Accountability

Services that receive RTAG funding must keep logbooks to record all travel undertaken to monitor, support and train carers.

The logbook **must** contain the following information:

- the name of the driver of the vehicle and the driver's position within the coordination unit
- the registration, make, model and engine size (cc) of the vehicle
- the date of each journey
- start point and destination of each journey
- the purpose of each journey including the details and location of each carer visited
- odometer start and finish figures for each journey
- kilometres travelled for each journey.

In accordance with DEEWR's standard accountability procedures continued funding is conditional on:

- appropriate record-keeping and satisfactory acquittal of Australian Government funds
- DEEWR state or territory office staff being able to view all logbooks during service validation assessment visits

- retention of all forms and records relating to RTAG, including logbooks, for a period of at least three years (36 months).

Appendix 4

Rates for Set-up Assistance and Sustainability Assistance,

Set-up Assistance

| Type of service | Funding* |
|--|-------------|
| New family day care (FDC) and in home care (IHC) services of 25 places or more | \$12 913.00 |
| New FDC and IHC services that are supported by an existing service | \$6456.00 |
| Outside school hours care | |
| A new single before school or after school service | |
| Major city/Inner regional | \$2152.00 |
| Outer regional | \$2582.00 |
| Remote/Very remote | \$2798.00 |
| A new service with both before school and after school services | |
| Major city/Inner regional | \$3228.00 |
| Outer regional | \$3874.00 |
| Remote/Very remote | \$4197.00 |
| A new vacation care service | |
| Major city/Inner regional | \$2152.00 |
| Outer regional | \$2582.00 |
| Remote/Very remote | \$2798.00 |
| New long day care or centre-based services (in exceptional circumstances only) | \$12 913.00 |

*Indexed annually

Sustainability Assistance

| Care type | Occupied places | Funding per year*—Major city/Inner regional | Funding per year*—Outer regional | Funding per year*—Remote/Very remote |
|---|-----------------|---|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Long day care/centre-based component of multiple care service | 1–20 | \$37 663.00 | \$45 196.00 | \$48 962.00 |
| | 21–40 | \$32 282.00 | \$38 738.00 | \$41 966.00 |
| | More than 40 | \$26 902.00 | \$32 282.00 | \$34 972.00 |
| After school care | 1–20 | \$9 147.00 | \$10 976.00 | \$11 891.00 |
| | 21–30 | \$4 573.00 | \$5 487.00 | \$5 945.00 |
| Before school care | 1–20 | \$5 918.00 | \$7 101.00 | \$7 693.00 |
| | 21–30 | \$2 958.00 | \$3 550.00 | \$3 846.00 |
| Vacation care | 1–20 | \$9 147.00 | \$10 976.00 | \$11 891.00 |
| | 21–30 | \$4 573.00 | \$5 487.00 | \$5 945.00 |

*Indexed annually

| Care type | Occupied places | Funding per year* |
|---|-----------------|---|
| Family day care (stand alone)† | Less than 50 | \$53 803.00† |
| In home care (stand alone) | 1–15 | \$26 322.00 |
| | 16–24 | \$36 852.00 |
| | 25–50 | \$53 803.00 |
| Home-based component of multiple care service | 1–15 | \$26 322.00 |
| | 16–24 | \$36 852.00 |
| | 25–50 | \$42 116.00 or FDC NS/ IHC SS** (whichever is greater) |

*Indexed annually

**FDC NS = Family Day Care Network Support, IHC SS = In Home Care Service Support

†These payments are now closed to new applications.

Note: Outside school hours care services that open less than the standard number of terms or vacation weeks in a year will be paid pro-rata Sustainability Assistance.

List of shortened forms

| | | | |
|--------|---|---------|--|
| ABN | Australian Business Number | ISF | Inclusion Support Facilitator |
| ADRC | Accreditation Decisions Review Committee | ISS | Inclusion Support Subsidy |
| AMEP | Adult Migrant English Programme | JETCCFA | Jobs, Education and Training Child Care fee assistance |
| CCB | Child Care Benefit | LDC | Long Day Care |
| CCB% | Child Care Benefit percentage | LDCIS | Long Day Care Incentive Scheme |
| CCQA | Child Care Quality Assurance | NCAC | National Childcare Accreditation Council |
| CCTR | Child Care Tax Rebate | NPP | National Privacy Principle |
| CRK | Child at risk | OCC | Occasional care |
| CRN | Customer Reference Number | OSHC | Outside school hours care |
| DEEWR | Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations | OSHCQA | Outside School Hours Care Quality Assurance |
| EFT | Equivalent full-time | OSOCC | Operational Support for Occasional Care |
| EXC | Exceptional circumstances | PPIS | Private Provider Incentive Scheme |
| FAO | Family Assistance Office | PSC | Professional Support Coordinator |
| FDC | Family Day Care | PT% | Part-time percentage |
| FDC NS | Family Day Care Network Support | QA | Quality Assurance |
| FDCQA | Family Day Care Quality Assurance | QIAS | Quality Improvement and Accreditation System |
| FSF | Flexible Support Funding | RTAG | Regional Travel Assistance Grant |
| FDCSUP | Family Day Care Start Up Payment | SCCB | Special Child Care Benefit |
| GCCB | Grandparent Child Care Benefit | SHR | Standard hourly rate |
| GST | Goods and Services Tax | TFH | Temporary financial hardship or transition |
| IHC | In Home Care | | |
| IHC SS | In Home Care Service Support | | |
| IPSP | Inclusion and Professional Support Program | | |
| IPSU | Indigenous Professional Support Unit | | |

Glossary

accountability requirements. These requirements are set out in legislation such as the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997* and in family assistance legislation. To meet these accountability requirements the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) imposes rules under its legislation and administrative procedures, examines from time to time the documentation provided by child care services to verify the entitlement of families to Child Care Benefit and the Child Care Tax Rebate, and assesses the accountability documents that must be retained by child care services.

accreditation. The National Childcare Accreditation Council administers the Quality Improvement and Accreditation System for long day care services; the Family Day Care Quality Assurance system for family day care schemes; and the Outside School Hours Care Quality Assurance system for outside school hours care services. A service receives a Certificate of Accreditation when it satisfactorily meets the requirements of quality assurance for its service type.

additional advance. A second advance of funds made when the initial advance will not be sufficient to provide Child Care Benefit fee reductions.

advances. Approved child care services are funded to provide Child Care Benefit fee reductions for eligible families using their service through monthly payments (advances) with quarterly acquittals.

allowable absences. Child Care Benefit is paid for up to 30 allowable absence days for each child per financial year across all approved long day care,

family day care, in home care and specialised outside school hours care services. Allowable absences can be taken for any reason. An absence from an occasional care service can be claimed when the session of care from which a child was absent had been booked and paid by the parent.

annual adjusted taxable income. The Family Assistance Office adds the following amounts in its assessment of family income for Child Care Benefit purposes—taxable income; adjusted fringe benefits total; tax free pensions, payments or allowances such as a Disability Support Pension under the *Social Security Act 1991* or an Invalidity Service Pension under part III of the *Veterans' Entitlement Act 1986*; net rental property losses; and non-taxable foreign income—and subtracts Child Support (maintenance) payments families make from the total amount.

approved absences. In specific circumstances, Child Care Benefit is paid when a family is charged for care that their child does not attend. There is no limit on the number of approved absence days a child's family may claim, providing they are taken for specified reasons.

approved care. Care provided by long day care, family day care, in home care, outside school hours care and occasional care services approved by the Australian Government to receive Child Care Benefit on behalf of families.

approved places. The number of places available to an approved service under the family assistance law for the purposes of Child Care Benefit.

approved provider. The entity approved to participate in Child Care Benefit under provisions set out in *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999* and *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999*, which sponsors the **service** and signs the funding agreement.

area. For the purposes of considering **sole provider**, a suburb (where defined as the smallest discrete community within a city or town); or a town (where a division to suburbs does not apply) of a statistical local area in the Australian Standard Geographical Classification.

areas of need approved by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. The set of factors that are taken into account by the department when determining eligibility for payments provided under the Community Support stream of the Child Care Services Support Program. It does not mean a geographical area.

Australian Standard Geographic Classification remoteness areas. The geographical classification, based on an enhanced measure of remoteness, used to group areas with similar characteristics and describe regional differences across a range of issues.

baby places. Approved or licensed places provided specifically for children aged from birth to 24 months (inclusive).

bicultural support. Bicultural support is time-limited specialist support to assist a child care service to successfully include an Indigenous child or a child from a culturally and linguistically diverse background into care.

budget-based funding. A sub-program of the Community Support stream of the Child Care Services Support Program. This funding is available to not-for-profit organisations to meet the operating costs of an early childhood education and child care service when that service cannot be fully supported by other funding arrangements. The funding is based on a service budget submitted by the organisation to provide non-mainstream child care services in areas of need approved by DEEWR.

carer. A person who provides care for someone else's child or children in their own home or, in the case of in home care, in the child's own home.

centre-based component. The combined occupied place rates of long day care and Child Care Benefit approved occasional care services used for the purposes of assessing eligibility for Sustainability Assistance only.

child at risk. A child at risk of serious abuse or neglect.

Child Care Access Hotline. A central register of child care availability across Australia provided by the Australian Government. Child care services must report availability and usage data on their Child Care Benefit approved places to the hotline. The hotline provides callers with contact information on child care services and whether these services have reported vacancies, types of child care available, and information on Australian Government assistance with the cost of child care.

Child care attendance record. A form for recording the daily attendances and absences of an individual child at child care.

Child Care Benefit. A payment made by the Australian Government to families to assist with the cost of child care.

Child Care Benefit fee reduction. The amount by which a family's child care fees are reduced in line with their Child Care Benefit entitlement.

Child Care Benefit percentage. One of the factors used to calculate the amount of fee reduction to which a family is entitled. The Child Care Benefit percentage represents the portion of the standard hourly rate a family is entitled to receive for each hour of care used.

Child Care Benefit statement for payment summary.

A compulsory reporting mechanism for services to advise the Family Assistance Office of the details of child care provided. It accompanies the Statement of child care usage prepared for a statement period.

Child Care Services Support Program. The program that supports and promotes access to quality child care for children, families and communities through strategies that complement the significant assistance provided to families through Child Care Benefit and Child Care Tax Rebate.

Child Care Tax Rebate. A payment made by the Australian Government to assist eligible working families with the cost of child care.

children with ongoing high support needs. Can include children in the following categories—children with diagnosed disabilities; children undergoing continuing assessment for disabilities or developmental delay; and/or refugee children who have been subjected to torture or trauma.

community-based organisation. See 'not-for-profit organisation'.

Community Support payments. A range of payments designed to support access to child care for children and families in areas or circumstances where the market would otherwise fail to provide child care services. The payments are available from the Establishment sub-program, Sustainability sub-program and Budget-based funding sub-program under the Child Care Services Support Program.

consent order. A court order for parenting arrangements, without the need for a court hearing. A consent order can be enforced by the Family Court.

Customer Reference Number. An individual reference number allocated by the Family Assistance Office for each child and one for each parent or guardian who is claiming Child Care Benefit.

debt. If an individual or approved child care service has been paid more than they were entitled to receive, the amount in excess of their entitlement is a debt to the Australian Government under the *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999* and *Data Matching Program (Assistance and Tax) Act 1990*.

demand. There is no access to similar service types in the area (see 'sole provider'); a high likelihood of ongoing need for child care of the type due to work-related/training/study needs of the area; limited access to child care of any type in the adjoining areas (because the number of children in the adjoining area requiring care means there are significant waiting lists in the area); distance (that is, distance to travel is unreasonable); or none or limited public areas between areas.

department. Following the 2007 federal election, responsibility for the Child Care Services Support Program transferred from the then Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs to DEEWR.

eligible hours. The number of hours of care in a week for which a family is eligible to receive Child Care Benefit for a child.

equivalent full-time place. Care provided by a family day care or in home care service for 35 hours per week.

Establishment. The funding under the Community Support stream of the Child Care Services Support Program to establish new services in areas of need determined by DEEWR.

exceptional circumstances. Short-term family crises that result in the need for more eligible hours than would otherwise have been available.

existing service. A current child care service operating prior to lodging a new application for a payment under the Community Support stream of the Child Care Services Support Program.

Family Assistance Office. The Australian Government agency that processes payments for families, including Child Care Benefit advance payments to approved providers.

Family Day Care Network Support. A payment under the Community Support stream of the Child Care Services Support Program to assist Child Care Benefit approved family day care services to support a network of carers providing flexible care, operating in a number of different locations.

Family Day Care Start Up Payment. Family Day Care Start-Up Payments of \$1500 and \$5000 (remote) are targeted to prospective carers to assist them in meeting the initial set-up costs of establishing a family day care business. The payment assists carers to meet the standards required to provide approved care.

financial statements. The annual income and expenditure statements, audited where required by the funding agreement and as submitted to the relevant body as required by state/territory laws that can be used to evaluate a service's past and current financial position.

flexible care. Child care that is responsive to the needs of individual families and communities. This may include care for mothers with children under 24 months who require graduated hours to return to work; care in non-standard hours and on weekends, including care for the children of shift workers and workers working non-standard hours; short-term arrangements, including care for a child due to a parent's medical condition, job interview, exam period or seasonal workforce participation; and emergency care for sick children due to work/study commitments of parents.

Flexible Support Funding. FSF is a time-limited support provided to eligible child care services to build their capacity to include a child with ongoing high support needs, including children with a disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.

for-profit organisation. An organisation that is run for the benefit of its owners or shareholders—includes companies, sole traders, owner-operators, partnerships, and trusts.

funding recipient. The entity (non-Child Care Benefit approved) or approved provider (Child Care Benefit approved) described in and signing the funding agreement, including, for example, all successors, officers, employees, agents, sub-contractors and volunteers of the entity or service provider.

gap fees. The amount remaining after a family's Child Care Benefit fee reduction has been deducted from the fee charged.

grandparent. A person who is the natural, adoptive or step-grandparent, or great-grandparent of the grandchild. Also includes the grandparent's or great-grandparent's current or former partner.

hardship. Occurs when there is an unforeseeable event that substantially reduces a family's capacity to pay for child care because of a short-term crisis such as a loss of employment.

high, unmet demand (for the Long Day Care Incentive Scheme only). There is no operational long day care service in the selected region; a sufficient number of children in the selected region requiring care substantiates the need to establish a new child care service; no access to child care in surrounding regions because there is no child care service in that region; or significant waiting lists at child care services in that region; distance (that is, travel distance is unreasonable); or transport restrictions (that is, there is no public transport between regions).

home-based component. The combined number of occupied places of family day care and in home care services used for the purposes of assessing eligibility for Sustainability Assistance only.

In Home Care Service Support. A payment under the Community Support stream of the Child Care Services Support Program to assist Child Care Benefit approved in home care services with the cost of recruiting, training, monitoring and supporting carers and allocating carers to provide care for children in their family home.

immunisation requirements. To meet the immunisation requirements, children aged under seven must be immunised according to the standard vaccination schedule, be on a catch-up vaccination schedule, or have an approved exemption from the requirements.

income. See 'annual adjusted taxable income'.

Inclusion Support Agency. Inclusion Support Agencies provide assistance and support to child care services to include all children, including those with additional needs, in the child care environment.

Inclusion Support Facilitator. Inclusion Support Facilitators are contracted by Inclusion Support Agencies to provide practical advice and a range of support designed to strengthen a child care service's ability to create a quality care environment inclusive of all children.

Inclusion Support Subsidy. Assists Australian Government funded care services to build their capacity to include children with ongoing high support needs in quality child care. This includes children with a diagnosed physical, sensory,

neurological or intellectual disability, children that are undergoing continuing assessment of a disability and refugee children who demonstrate behaviours symptomatic with having experienced or having been subject to torture or trauma.

Indigenous Professional Support Unit. Indigenous Professional Support Units provide professional support, advice and training to Indigenous-run child care services.

Jobs, Education and Training Child Care fee assistance (JETCCFA). Provides extra help with the cost of approved child care for eligible parents undertaking activities such as job search, work, study, training or rehabilitation as part of an activity agreement with Centrelink or an employment service provider, to help them to enter or re-enter the workforce.

Jobs, Education and Training Child Care fee assistance parental contribution. Fee incurred per child for each hour of JETCCFA claimed.

licensed places. The number of children a child care service can care for at any one time under the licence issued to the service by a state or territory government.

licensing requirements. State or territory requirements that must be met for a service to operate. These include physical requirements, maximum number of children in attendance, staff qualifications, and carer to child ratios. Not all states and territories license family day care or outside school hours care.

Long Day Care Incentive Scheme. Is funding provided for selected organisations to establish new, viable long day care services in areas of high, unmet demand for long day care.

lump sum payment. A payment made for approved child care to a family after the end of the financial year in which care was used. Payment can be made when child care usage and income information has been supplied to the Family Assistance Office.

mainstream service. Child Care Benefit approved services including long day care, outside school hours care, in home care, family day care, and Child Care Benefit approved occasional care centres.

Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Service. A service designed to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities meet their child care needs. These services provide a range of child care, as well as cultural programs appropriate to the social, educational and developmental needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

multiple care services. Approved services designed to provide flexible care to meet the needs of their communities. They offer an integrated service delivery model where more than one care type is available.

multiple-child percentage. A higher rate of Child Care Benefit paid for families with two or more children in approved child care.

new service. A service that has not commenced operation—that is, has not provided care for any child; is not taking over or replacing any existing service or other early childhood program that has operated at any time in the previous 12 months; and is not a relocation of an existing service.

non-approved services. Services that are not approved to receive Child Care Benefit on behalf of families.

non-mainstream services. Non-approved services that provide early childhood education and child care where a mainstream service is inappropriate or not available. Non-mainstream services are defined as 'other services—non-approved services' and do not administer Child Care Benefit. These services may be subject to licensing requirements according to state and territory legislation. Non-mainstream service models may include:

- flexible/innovative child care services
- Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Services
- mobile child care services
- Indigenous playgroups
- Indigenous outside school hours care and enrichment programs
- crèches (including JET crèches)

non-school child. A child who is not yet attending school.

non-standard hours. Hours of care in a child care service outside standard hours.

not-for-profit organisation. An organisation incorporated under relevant state or territory legislation, where all income received from providing child care services, including all funding from the Australian Government, is spent on providing child care. Eligible organisations include local government, religious and charitable organisations, and incorporated community-based organisations.

occupied places. The calculation of child care usage at a service based on actual hours of care charged to families per reporting period.

Operational support for occasional care. Funding under the Community Support stream of the Child Care Services Support Program to Child Care Benefit approved occasional care services in recognition of the flexibility of care provided for children not yet attending school; the less predictable usage patterns experienced; and the proportionately higher administrative load experienced by the service in delivering the care type.

parenting order. An order made by the Family Court when parents cannot decide matters concerning their children.

part-time percentage. Applies to non-school children in care at approved long day care centres. It results in higher rates of Child Care Benefit for those with fewer than 38 eligible hours charged for care across all approved long day care services, with the rates increasing as the number of hours decrease.

primary carer. The sole or major provider of ongoing daily care for the child, with substantial autonomy for day-to-day decisions about the child's care, welfare and development.

priority of access. Priority of Access Guidelines apply when an approved child care service (except occasional care) fills vacant places. Priority groups include a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect, and a child of a single parent who satisfies, or of parents who both satisfy, the work, training and study test.

professional support. Support, advice, resources and training provided to child care staff and carers to assist them to provide high quality care to children.

Professional Support Coordinator. Professional Support Coordinators oversee and manage the delivery of professional support to child care services and Inclusion Support Agencies.

Program. The Child Care Support Program administered by DEEWR.

quality assurance non-compliance. When a service fails to comply with the Child Care Benefit (Breach of Conditions for Continued Approval) Amendment Determination 2000, 2001 and 2003 or fails to make satisfactory progress through the quality assurance process.

ready reckoner. Produced each year by DEEWR to assist services in estimating an individual family's Child Care Benefit fee reduction.

reassessment. A changed assessment for a child whose family is already receiving Child Care Benefit by fee reduction.

reconciliation. The process the Family Assistance Office uses to ensure families receiving fee reductions get their correct Child Care Benefit entitlement. Reconciliation occurs after the end of the financial year in which reduced fees were received. The Family Assistance Office compares the amount of fee reduction a family was entitled to, using their actual income, with the fee reductions received (based on their estimated income), and recovers or pays any adjustment when necessary.

Regional Travel Assistance Grant. Supports family day care and in home care services by assisting with travel costs associated with supporting networks of carers located in rural and remote areas.

registered care. Care that may be provided by relatives, friends, neighbours, individual home-based carers, nannies or babysitters, individuals in some private preschools and kindergartens, some occasional care services, and some outside school hours care services. Families who are working, training or studying and use registered care are entitled to Child Care Benefit for up to 50 hours per child per week, but are not entitled to the Child Care Tax Rebate.

registered carer. Registered with the Family Assistance Office, a registered carer is an individual who provides care, or proposes to provide care, for a child or children. The person can apply for approval as a registered carer to offer Child Care Benefit if the individual is 18 years or over, has a qualification which may determine eligibility for approval as a registered carer, and has a tax file number.

rural. Non-metropolitan areas that are defined in the Australian Standard Geographic Classification as 'Inner regional', 'Outer regional', 'Remote', or 'Very remote'.

school child. A child who attends primary or secondary school, and/or who is on a break from school (for example, school holidays) and will be returning to primary or secondary school after that break.

schooling percentage. A percentage used to calculate the level of Child Care Benefit. The percentage applied is 85 per cent for school children and 100 per cent for non-school children.

service. Used in this handbook as a term that may include scheme and centre, whatever the type of care.

session of care. A period of care for which a fee is charged, if the child attends any of the period. Rules apply to the length of sessions.

Set-up Assistance. Payment under the Community Support stream of the Child Care Services Support Program to help organisations establish new child care services in areas of need, as approved by DEEWR.

shared care. When a child is considered a dependent child of two families, such as when separated parents share the care of a child.

sole provider. Not-for-profit or for-profit organisation providing the only form of child care of its care type in an area.

Special Child Care Benefit. Extra assistance available to families for a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect, and/or a family in hardship.

stand alone service. A child care service providing only one service type located independently from all other entities, and which does not attract or share any support or resources of another child care service or service type.

standard hourly rate. The hourly rate used to calculate a family's entitlement to Child Care Benefit.

standard hours. Occur only in Family Day Care and In Home Care services. Standard hours are 10 hours each weekday within the range 7am to 6.30pm, chosen by the service as their standard operating hours.

Statement of child care usage. A compulsory reporting mechanism for services to advise the Family Assistance Office of child care usage details for each child for whom care was provided in the statement period.

Statement period. Reporting period for Child Care Benefit, usually for a calendar quarter, or a school term, or vacation period.

Sustainability. A program under the Community Support stream of the Child Care Services Support Program to support access to established child care services in areas of need determined by DEEWR.

Sustainability Assistance for outside school hours care. A payment provided under the Community Support stream of the Child Care Services Support Program to support small not-for-profit child care services with 30 or less utilised places in areas of need determined by DEEWR. For-profit operators may be eligible for the payment for one year only.

trust. An arrangement in which a 'settler' transfers property to one or more trustees, who hold it for the benefit of one or more persons who are entitled to enforce the trust, if necessary by action in court.

24-hour care. When a child does not return to the care of their parent or guardian for a 24-hour period, and is cared for by an approved service.

24-hour care period. Any period of 24 consecutive hours or more, but less than 48 consecutive hours, of approved care. A 24-hour period may commence at any time during the day or night.

Utilisation Support. Funding under the Community Support stream of the Child Care Services Support Program intended to support either the viability of not-for-profit child care services where access to Child Care Benefit is not possible; and/or, in areas of need determined by DEEWR, where child care services would otherwise not be established or fail without additional support; or a viability payment to support services approved under the Long Day Care Incentive Scheme for a maximum period of two years.

viable service. A child care service capable of operating without any Australian Government funding support other than Child Care Benefit.

work-related child care. Care required for children when both parents, or a sole parent, are in the workforce (full-time or part-time), actively seeking work, or studying or training for employment.

work-related commitments. Commitments to paid work including self-employment; attending a course for education or training to improve work skills and/or employment prospects; actively looking for work; or actively setting up a business that has not yet started to operate.

work test (for between 24 hours and 50 hours of Child Care Benefit). The work test determines eligibility for between 24 hours and 50 hours of Child Care Benefit per child per week. To satisfy the work test, a sole parent or both parents must have work, or work-related commitments—like study, training or looking for work—for at least 15 hours in a week, or a total of at least 30 hours in a fortnight, or be exempt from the work test.

work test (for the Child Care Tax Rebate only). To satisfy the work test for the purposes of the Child Care Tax Rebate, a sole parent or both parents must have work, or work-related commitments—like study, training or looking for work—at some time during a week or be exempt from the work test. No minimum number of hours is required.

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Child Care Benefit (CCB) rates

The rates below are as a result of the annual indexation of CCB. The indexation is based on the Consumer Price Index increase over the last calendar year. CCB hourly rates increased by 3 per cent from 7 July 2008. The rates and income limits below apply from 7 July 2008 to 5 July 2009.

APPROVED CARE

CCB rates for one child in care¹

| Rate from Monday 7 July 2008 | | |
|--|-----------------------------|--|
| Centre-based long day care, ² outside school hours care and occasional care | | \$3.47 per hour |
| Family day care and in home care | Rate for standard hours | \$4.63 (\$3.47 x 1.3333) x hours (up to a maximum of \$173.50 per week) ³ |
| | Rate for non-standard hours | \$4.63 (\$3.47 x 1.3333) per hour |

1 Rates for school children are 85 per cent of the rates in the table.

2 A part-time loading percentage applies to non-school children in centre-based long day care centers.

3 CCB ceiling amount for family day care and in home care services.

CCB income limits for minimum rate no longer apply.

The table below gives the new cut-out points for CCB.

| Number of children in the same type of care ¹ | Annual adjusted taxable income | Weekly adjusted taxable income |
|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 child | \$126 793.00 | \$2 438.33 |
| 2 children | \$131 456.04 | \$2 528.00 |
| 3 children | \$148 451.29 | \$2 854.83 |
| 4 children | \$176 479.29 | \$3 393.08 |
| Each additional child | +\$28 028.00 | +\$539.00 |

1 Centre-based long day care, family day care and specialised outside school hours care are considered to be the same type of care for this purpose.

The **lower income threshold** for receiving the maximum CCB payment is \$36 573 a year (\$703.33 a week), subject to other eligibility requirements.

NOTE: Families who are eligible for CCB but whose entitlement is zero due to income, may still be eligible for the Child Care Tax Rebate.

REGISTERED CARE

The registered care rate per hour is \$0.581 cents (or \$29.05 for 50 hours per week) for each child in care. Rates for school children are 85 per cent of the amounts listed.

Family Assistance Office (FAO) child care payment teams

For services needing information about the Child Care Benefit and Jobs, Education and Training Child Care fee assistance administration and calculation, phone Family Assistance Office payment teams on **1800 050 021**.

For families needing information about their eligibility and assessment of Child Care Benefit and Jobs, Education and Training Child Care fee assistance, phone the Family Assistance Office on **13 6150**.

Services should send completed Child Care Benefit and other forms by mail, fax, or on disk by mail to:

New South Wales

FAO child care payment team*

PO Box 506

Sutherland NSW 1499

F: 1800 700 533

*Note: Correspondence formerly sent to the Bankstown and Queanbeyan addresses should now be sent to the Hunter area address

FAO child care payment team

(Hunter area)*

Locked Bag 12

Gosford DC NSW 2250

F: 1800 700 533

*Note: The Gosford CCB payment team has assumed responsibility for Child Care Operator System (COS) processing for the Northern Territory and North Queensland Child Care services. The Gosford CCB payment team has assumed responsibility for COS processing for those child care services that currently electronically lodge claims with the Brisbane CCB. The Gosford CCB payment team has taken over all other processing that was previously done in Brisbane.

Victoria

FAO child care payment team
Locked Bag 2001
Rosanna VIC 3084
F: 1800 700 533

Queensland—Brisbane*

FAO child care payment team
Locked Bag 55
GPO Brisbane QLD 4001
F: 1800 700 533

*Note: Correspondence formerly sent to the Aitkenvale addresses should now be sent to the Brisbane address.

South Australia*

FAO child care payment team
GPO Box 1571
Adelaide SA 5001
F: 1800 700 533

*Note: The South Australian CCB payment team has assumed responsibility for Child Care Operator System (COS) processing for Tasmanian child care services.

Western Australia

FAO child care payment team
PO Box T1642
Perth WA 6845
F: 1800 700 533

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations state and territory offices

Services to send any written notices or information by mail to:

New South Wales

GPO Box 9880
Sydney NSW 2001
P: 13 36 84

Victoria

GPO Box 9880
Melbourne VIC 3001
P: 13 36 84

Queensland—Brisbane

GPO Box 9880
Brisbane QLD 4001
P: 13 36 84

North Queensland— Townsville

PO Box 1088
Townsville QLD 4810
P: 13 36 84

South Australia

PO Box 9880
Adelaide SA 5001
P: 13 36 84

Western Australia

GPO Box 9880
Perth WA 6848
P: 13 36 84

Northern Territory

GPO Box 9880
Darwin NT 0801
P: 13 36 84

Tasmania

GPO Box 9880
Hobart TAS 7001
P: 13 36 84

To ask for more Child Care Service Handbooks and the current 'ready reckoner':

P: 13 36 84
TTY: 1800 554 609 (Use this Teletypewriter Freecall™ number if you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment. A TTY phone is required to use this service.)