

Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace Relations

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2011-2012**

Outcome 1 - Early Childhood Education and Child Care

DEEWR Question No. EW0861_12

Senator Back asked on 20 October 2011, Hansard page 108

Special Childcare Benefit Scheme

Question

Senator BACK: Can you tell us how many families were deemed eligible over the last 12-month period under the special childcare benefit scheme? Again, if you cannot tell me now, please take it on notice. Ms Taylor: We might take that on notice. Senator BACK: I would also like a breakdown of the reasons for determining eligibility, the range of reasons that they fall under, and the percentage of families that receive more than one allocation—that is, more than a 13-week period. Could you tell us that? Ms Taylor: Yes, we will be able to tell you that.

Answer

Eligibility criteria for Special Child Care Benefit for a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect include:

- a state or territory child protection authority or other relevant agency seeks placement of the child at a service for at risk of serious abuse or neglect reasons; or
- a service provider has reason to believe that a child is at risk and that by subsidising the cost of child care fees will increase the probability of that child continuing in child care or attending extra hours or days; or
- a service provider has reason to believe that a child is at risk and that continued or increased use of child care could improve the developmental outcomes and/or the safety and well being of the child.

Eligibility criteria for Special Child Care Benefit for temporary financial hardship include:

- Loss of employment, reduced working hours, unpaid leave periods; or
- Failure of a business; or
- Local emergency/natural disaster; or
- Destruction or severe damage to family's home; or
- Reduction in income due to a death or serious illness in the family; or
- Family breakdown/separation.

In the 2010 calendar year, Special Child Care Benefit was granted in respect of 11,490 families. Of these, 3,850 families benefitted from more than a single 13 week approval of Special Child Care Benefit during 2010.

In 2010, 53 per cent of approvals of Special Child Care Benefit were in respect of a child at risk and 47 per cent due to temporary financial hardship.