



# Coronavirus (COVID-19)

## Information for early childhood education and care providers and services on Early Childhood Education and Care Relief Package payments from 6 April 2020.

The Government's primary aim is to support services to remain open to ensure that quality early childhood education and care continues to be available to support essential workers and disadvantaged and vulnerable children and families. The following information will be updated as needed. An overview of the support mechanisms in place to assist the early childhood education and care sector manage the impact of COVID-19 on its business, including support available up to and including 5 April 2020 can be found on the department's [website](#).

### **Payments to be made to providers under the Early Childhood Education and Care Relief Package from 6 April 2020 to support services to remain open**

To ensure ongoing access to early childhood education and care, from 6 April 2020 until the end of the 2019-20 financial year, services that remain open, and have children enrolled, will receive a weekly payment to ensure they can deliver early childhood education and care to families who need it. These payments will be made instead of the usual Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) payments. Services will not be able to upload session reports to the Child Care Subsidy System during this period but must continue to keep attendance records and provide statements to families while the payments remain active.

Payments will be calculated to be approximately 50 per cent of subsidy in a reference fortnight. Importantly, this measure will complement the Australian Government's [JobKeeper Payment](#).

The Government will also make payments of higher amounts (to the 50%) available in exceptional circumstances, such as where greater funding is required due to an increase in enrolments to meet demand to address the needs of essential workers or vulnerable children.

In return for receiving payments, services are required to:

- stay open unless closed on public health advice or for other health and safety reasons
- ensure families are **not** charged a fee, including an out of pocket or gap\* fee
- prioritise care to essential workers, vulnerable and disadvantaged children and previously enrolled children
- continue to record attendance of children
- comply with all other provider obligations including National Quality Framework and other relevant conditions of approval under Family Assistance Law.

It is important that if families have recently ceased their enrolment from your service that you encourage them to re-enrol. By families staying enrolled they will keep their CCS eligibility so the subsidies will flow again as per usual once the payments cease and they do not have to wait for CCS claims to be assessed.

Where children enrol at a service who otherwise would be considered 'at risk' for the purposes of ACCS (child wellbeing) services are required to make a referral to an appropriate support agency as per the existing ACCS (child wellbeing) referral requirements.

Services do not have to apply for payments, they will be paid automatically from 6 April 2020, but should ensure that their bank account details and email addresses are current.

Visit the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more information on how payments will work.

\*The out of pocket or gap fee is the difference between the fee charged and any CCS paid.

### **Where a service makes a business decision to close**

If a service decides to close, and it has not been directed to do so on public health advice or for other valid health and safety reasons, no payment will be payable.

### **Advice and reporting on potential service closures**

The decision whether or not a service should close in relation to COVID-19 will be made, and advised, by state and territory governments. Usually it is from the relevant [health department](#), but it may come from the [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

If you close your service, either voluntarily, or as advised, you must notify your [state or territory regulatory authority](#) **within 24 hours**.

### **Responsibilities as an employer**

The [Fair Work Ombudsman](#) has issued advice regarding your responsibilities as an employer including workplace entitlements and obligations if your business or your staff are affected by the outbreak of COVID-19. This includes information about workforce laws for business closures and shut downs during the COVID-19 outbreak because of government directions, reductions in trade or health and safety concerns; the different forms of leave for full and part-time employees; as well as information for casual employees.

### **Other Australian Government support available for business owners**

The Australian Government has developed an economic response package to support households and business and to address the significant economic consequences of COVID-19. For more information on the Government's Economic Response to COVID-19 visit [treasury.gov.au/coronavirus](https://treasury.gov.au/coronavirus).

The second set of economic responses announced on 22 March 2020 target three areas:

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*This information was last updated on 2 April 2020. Please regularly check [dese.gov.au/news/coronavirus-covid-19](https://dese.gov.au/news/coronavirus-covid-19) to help ensure that you are using the latest version of this information sheet.*

1. [Support for individuals and households](#) – includes support payments, payments to support households and temporary early releases of superannuation.
2. [Support for small business](#) – includes cash flow support for businesses and temporary measures to provide relief for financially distressed businesses to manage cash flow challenges and retain employees.
3. [Support for flow of credit](#) – includes ensuring the flow of credit is available to businesses to manage the impacts of COVID-19.

To access information on financial assistance, eligibility and timing of this assistance visit [business.gov.au](https://business.gov.au) or call 13 28 46. Information on other [Australian Government grants and programs](#) that you may be eligible for is also available.

In addition, [My Business Health](#) provides access to tools, templates and tips to manage mental health and business health to help small businesses find the services they need to face challenges and identify opportunities to grow their business.

## JobKeeper Payment

Under the [JobKeeper Payment](#) businesses that are impacted by COVID-19 will be able to access a subsidy from the Government to continue paying their employees. Affected employers will be able to claim a fortnightly payment of \$1,500 per eligible employee from 30 March 2020, for a maximum period of 6 months.

## Resources to support children through COVID-19

In recognition that children, along with their families and the broader community, are feeling the impact of the significant social disruption and health concerns associated with COVID-19, a number of resources are available specifically designed to support for children.

Emerging Minds have published a new resources for [supporting children during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#), which includes a video, fact sheets and tips about what you can expect and how you can help children cope.

The Raising Children Network have published an article on [Coronavirus and children in Australia](#), which includes health information and guidance about talking with children about COVID-19.

## Further information

Please visit the [Australian Government Department of Health](#) for the latest health advice.

The **Australian Government Department of Health** has also released a collection of [COVID-19 resources](#) for the general public.

Please contact the 24/7 **National Coronavirus Health Information Line** on 1800 020 080 which provides health and situation information on the outbreak.

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If you need help with translation services while seeking help, you can contact the **Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National)** on 131 450 or [tisnational.gov.au](https://tisnational.gov.au).

Please visit your [state or territory health department](#) for the latest local updates and guidance on COVID-19.

Please visit the **Department of Education, Skills and Employment** website for the latest information for early childhood education and care providers and services, including [Frequently Asked Questions](#). Education and training sector fact sheets are available at [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).

The **CCS Helpdesk** is available to assist with information for services to help them manage the impacts on their business. Please email the CCS Helpdesk on [ccshelpdesk@dese.gov.au](mailto:ccshelpdesk@dese.gov.au), send in your query via an [online form](#) or call 1300 667 276 between 9.00 am — 5.00 pm (AEDST), Monday to Friday.

Please make sure that if you are a child care provider or service you have [subscribed](#) to receive **communications** from the Department of Education, Skills and Employment.