

# COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

## Assistance available for families

### We understand that many families have had their jobs and incomes affected by COVID-19 (Coronavirus).

It's really important that families know there is additional support out there to support their child to be able to continue to access early learning and care. Please don't be afraid to ask for help. This is an unprecedented time for everyone and it is impacting all of us in different ways.

### Additional Child Care Subsidy (Temporary Financial Hardship)

If you are experiencing financial hardship and you need some help paying your child care fees, you may be eligible for **Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) Temporary Financial Hardship**.

You may be eligible if: your income has been reduced, you or your partner have lost your job, you are caring for a seriously ill family member or have recently lost a family member.

This subsidy is to help you and your family through times just like this, so you have one less thing to worry about and your child's early learning can continue without disruption.

You can receive up to 13 weeks of subsidies towards your child care fees, for up to 100 hours of care per fortnight. In most cases, these subsidies will cover your full fees (up to 120 per cent of the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) hourly rate cap).

We **strongly encourage you to apply** if your income has been reduced or impacted by COVID-19 or any other significant event in your life.

### How to apply

You can apply in person by visiting your local Centrelink office or by accessing your Centrelink account online through [myGov](#).

If you have access to a computer and internet, we recommend applying online via [myGov](#) as it should save you time. After you log in, you need to:

- Select **My Family** from the menu.
- Select **Child Care**, then **Temporary Financial Hardship**.
- Answer all the questions.
- Review and submit your application.

You will have to provide supporting evidence about how and why your family's income has been impacted and how it affects your ability to pay child care fees. Evidence might include a letter or an email from your employer or receipts for medical expenses.

### Are you eligible for a second round of ACCS?

If you were approved for ACCS Temporary Financial Hardship before free child care commenced but did not receive your full 13-week entitlement, you may be able to access the remaining balance. For further information on what a second event might look like [visit our website](#).

Unfortunately, this will not happen automatically – you will need to reapply via your Centrelink online account through [myGov](#) or the [Express Plus Centrelink mobile app](#).

### Absences from child care

Every child can take up to 42 allowable absence days every year. You can use these for any reason, including when your child is sick, on holidays or in self-isolation and you don't need to provide any evidence. Taking an absent day means your child will still be eligible for Child Care Subsidy, even though they are not attending the centre. This means, you will still have to pay your out-of-pocket costs, but the allowable absence means you won't have to pay full fees.

As of 1 July 2020, your allowable absences were reset, meaning you were given another 42 absences to use this financial year.

For most families, 42 allowable absences will be enough. However, you can also access additional absences for a range of reasons if you can provide evidence.

**Importantly:** Up until 31 December 2020, you can access additional absences without medical evidence if your child is displaying symptoms similar to COVID 19 (ie, fever, runny nose, cough, etc). You will still have to pay your usual out-of-pocket costs but you won't have to pay full fees or need to get a medical certificate, which is great.

If you need to apply for additional absences, please speak to your Centre Director.

### Did you know?

You can check how many absences you've used this year at any time – just log into your Centrelink account via [myGov](#).

### Questions?

For the latest health advice and updates visit the Australian Government Department of Health website at [health.gov.au](#).