

FAMILY FAQ

Return to the Childcare Subsidy

What are the Key Changes?

The transition from the ECEC relief package back to the CCS system will occur over a period of around 12 weeks, (between 12th July to 4th October 2020).

1. **ECEC Relief Package / Free Childcare will cease on 12 July 2020** and absence days will return to 42 from 62.
2. **CCS will resume on 13 July 2020** meaning services will charge fees and be obliged to recover gap fees as usual.
3. **Relaxed activity test requirements from 13 July 2020 to 4 October 2020** for families who experience a reduction of hours worked compared to pre COVID-19. The new rules will enable individuals who can no longer engage in the same number of hours of work, training, study or other activity that they did prior to the COVID-19 crisis to access 100 hours of subsidised care per fortnight for up to 12 weeks. (For families who were eligible to receive more than zero hours under the old activity test immediately access to 100 hours).

This measure will support family's ability to access subsidised care if their activity circumstances have fallen but will require income estimation from families to qualify plus will be capped at 85%. Families will be able to advise Services Australia that they meet the new Activity Test requirements from 13 July 2020 with the results being backdated for up to 28 days.

4. **Fees will be capped at pre COVID-19 levels** – As a condition of Transition Payment receipts services will not be allowed to increase fees to above reference period levels, change their service offerings and/or add new administrative fees. This rule is in place for the duration of the transition period and will protect families from fee increases or other adverse value adjustments.
5. **Allowable Absence Provisions brought forward** – From 13 July 2020 families can receive CCS for absences up to seven days before a child's first physical appearance at a service and seven days after a child's last physical appearance to a service where they have been booked in for care, for a set of predetermined reasons. This amendment will provide operators with more security around securing allowable absences under certain circumstances.

Additional conditions on services:

- Services will be expected to maintain fee and service offerings at the same level as the reference period in March.
- Services must commit to not reducing average numbers of employees after the JobKeeper payments are withdrawn and for the duration of the transition period.

FAMILIES- Frequently Asked Questions

COVID-19: Return to CCS

Who will benefit from the relaxed activity test requirements?

From 13 July 2020 until 4 October 2020, individuals who can no longer engage in the same number of hours of work, training, study or other activity recognised by the CCS activity test immediately prior to the COVID-19 crisis, can advise Services Australia they meet the requirements to access 100 hours of subsidised child care per fortnight for up to 12 weeks. This can be done through their Centrelink online account through myGov or the Express Plus Centrelink mobile app.

What are the new Allowable Absences Provisions that take effect on 13 July 2020 (and contained in the Secretary's Rule that was registered on Friday 5 June 2020)?

This amendment, which was requested by the sector, was scheduled to take effect from 21 September 2020, but has now been brought forward to 13 July 2020, to coincide with the start of 2020/21 Child Care Subsidy year.

From 13 July 2020, families can receive Child Care Subsidy for absences up to seven days before a child's first, and after a child's last physical attendance at a service, where they have been booked in for care, for any of the following reasons:

any of the additional absence reasons

- the child, the individual who cares for the child, the individual's partner or another person with whom the child lives is ill (no medical certificate required if the child has not used 42 absence days)
- the service has changed ownership
- the usual service is closed and the child is attending a different service under the same provider
- a family tragedy (a major event including the death of an immediate family member) has occurred, or
- the enrolment ceased incorrectly.
- Preparing for transition – providers and services

What do families need to do for their CCS to start again?

Families who were getting CCS before 6 May 2020, won't need to do anything as long as they have remained eligible. Their CCS will start again automatically on 13 July 2020.

Families should check their details, like their family income estimate for 2020-21, to make sure they're up to date.

If families are new to child care they should look into CCS now and claim as soon as possible.

If families continue using child care from 13 July 2020 but aren't receiving CCS, they'll need to pay full fees.

Families who got CCS in 2018-19 and still haven't confirmed their income for that financial year must do so by 30 June 2020. If they don't, their CCS will not start again on 13 July 2020.

How can eligible families get the 100 hours activity test result?

FAMILIES- Frequently Asked Questions

COVID-19: Return to CCS

From 13 July 2020 until 4 October 2020, individuals who can no longer engage in the same number of hours of work, training, study or other activity recognised by the CCS activity test prior to the COVID-19 crisis, are entitled to an activity test result of 100 hours of subsidised child care per fortnight. These cohorts include:

- Individuals who are doing less recognised activity than they were immediately prior to COVID-19
- Individuals who are a member of a couple who are doing less recognised activity than they were immediately prior to COVID-19
- Individuals in receipt of carers allowance who have reduced any other recognised activity than what they were engaged in immediately prior to COVID-19.

From 13 July 2020, families will be able to advise Services Australia they meet these requirements to access the 100 hours. This can be done through their Centrelink online account through myGov or the Express Plus Centrelink mobile app.

No other CCS activity test requirements have been changed, however, the more hours of recognised activity families do, the more hours of subsidised care they can access, up to a maximum of 100 hours per fortnight for each child.

This result will not be backdated more than 28 days.