



Update for Families: New Child Care Subsidy

What is the new Child Care Subsidy (CCS)?

In **July 2018** the Australian Government will introduce a new child care fee assistance package, which will include a new payment known as the Child Care Subsidy (CCS), which will replace the existing child care fee payments. The new Child Care Subsidy (CCS) will provide financial support to families using Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services. This includes Long Day Care services, Occasional Care services (both to be known as Centre-based Day Care services), Before School Care, After School Care and Vacation Care (Outside School Hours Care services), In Home Care and Family Day Care services.

The new CCS will replace the Child Care Benefit (CCB) and Child Care Rebate (CCR). This payment will be made directly to the ECEC service and the family will pay any difference between the actual fee charged and the subsidy that is paid on their behalf.



How will the new Child Care Subsidy (CCS) affect existing subsidies for families?

While the new system will provide **many working families with greater financial support** to assist them in paying for child care services, unfortunately it will leave **some families with lower subsidies**, and **some families will no longer be eligible for any subsidy at all**.

The factors that will determine your family's level of CCS support include:

- Combined family income
- Activity level of both parents to be assessed via an "Activity Test" – www.bit.ly/ActivityTest (i.e. hours of paid work, self-employed work, approved training or study, and voluntary work)
- Type of child care services you use.

Greater support goes to families on lower incomes. Families earning up to \$65,710 per year will receive an 85% subsidy rate, while those on higher incomes will receive a lesser percentage on a sliding scale. Families earning \$170,710 to \$250,000 will receive a 50% subsidy rate, while families earning \$350,000 or more will not receive any subsidy. You can read more about the subsidy rates at www.bit.ly/CCSRates.



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In two parent families both parents, unless exempt, must meet the Activity Test. In the case where both parents meet different steps of the Activity Test, the parent with the lowest entitlement will determine the hours of subsidised care for the child.

According to the information released by the Australian Government, those families that meet the Activity Test (ie. that work a minimum of 8 hours per fortnight of paid work, self-employed work, approved training or voluntary work), will receive the following hours of subsidy:

Hours of Activity*	Hours of subsidy* (Maximum)
< 8 hours with combined family income of < \$65,710	24 hours
8 – 16 hours	36 hours
> 16 – 48 hours	72 hours
> 48 hours	100 hours

* Per fortnight

The CCS is also based on the type of child care your family uses. It will be calculated by the hour using an hourly rate cap:

- Centre-based care – \$11.55[^] per hour
- Family Day Care – \$10.70[^] per hour
- Outside School Hours Care – \$10.10[^] per hour.

Exemptions to the Activity Test

If your family receives a combined income of \$65,710 or less a year, and you do not meet the Activity Test, you will still have access to **24 hours of subsidised care per fortnight** under the new Child Care Subsidy (CCS) without having to meet the Activity Test.

This equates to 12 hours a week of subsidised care, which could be delivered over a period of one or more days. Families who are eligible for 12 hours a week of care under this arrangement will need to speak to their ECEC service about how they can access these hours of care.

Will the new Child Care Subsidy (CCS) affect my Family Tax Benefit A or B?

The introduction of the Child Care Subsidy **will not impact your Family Tax Benefit**. If you are currently receiving Family Tax Benefit, you'll continue to receive this as long as you're eligible.

What should families do to claim the new Child Care Subsidy (CCS)?

From April 2018, you will receive a notification from Centrelink outlining what you need to do to make sure you transition from CCB and CCR to the new Child Care Subsidy. This notification will come via the format your family has previously chosen to receive all myGov correspondence. This could be letter, email or text message.

You will be asked by Centrelink to provide your activity and income estimate for the 2018-19 financial year and confirm other details, via your myGov account. This information will be used to calculate your CCS. You will be asked to do this through your Centrelink account which you can access via your myGov account. If you don't have a myGov account, you are encouraged to create one and link it to your Centrelink account.

You won't have to fill out a new claim form, unless you are a new family using child care for the first time. Centrelink will tell families what their entitlement will be, based on all of the information provided.

Where can families get more information about the new Child Care Subsidy (CCS)?

The Department of Education and Training has published a list of frequently asked questions to help families understand the new package. These are available at www.education.gov.au/new-child-care-package-frequently-asked-questions.

There is also an online **Child Care Subsidy estimator**, which allows families to work out their level of subsidy under the new CCS. The tool asks users for details such as family income before tax, the number of hours each parent works a fortnight and how many children they have. You can access the estimator at <http://bit.ly/CCSEstimator>.



If you have any further questions about these upcoming changes, talk to your child care service or contact the Centrelink Family and Parent line on **136 150** (Mon – Fri 8am – 8pm).

