



The Department for Child Protection and Family Support (the Department) understands that as a foster carer (including family or significant other carers) providing full time day-to-day care for a child you may need support and assistance with child care services.

The Department's child protection worker will establish the need for child care in consultation with you. The child protection worker will consider a range of factors including the potential undesirable impact on the child through prolonged separation from their foster carer.

Enrolment process

If child care is approved by the district director, the child protection worker will assist you with the enrolment process for the child to attend an approved child care service. This includes you as the foster carer:

- Completing the child care enrolment form and listing yourself as the primary contact, with the child protection worker as the secondary contact.
- Nominating two emergency contacts, one of which must be the contact details of the child protection worker including their telephone number and email address.
- Registering to receive the Child Care Benefit (CCB) at the time of enrolment. The child protection worker can assist you if necessary. An application form for the CCB can be obtained from the child care centre or the local Centrelink service centre, or online via the Department of Human Services (DHS) website.
- Signing the CCB form to indicate that you accept 'liability'¹ for payment of fees, even when the Department is providing financial support to assist with the fee payment.
- Answering 'no' on the form to question 7 "Will another organisation have liability for your child care fees?"

Prior to the child's enrolment, the child protection worker will obtain the child's Customer Reference Number (CRN) from the local Centrelink service centre and other required documentation.

Applications for CCB and all other documentation should be completed as soon as possible before the child begins attending the centre. Where this is not possible, you or the

child protection worker should advise the child care service and complete the paper work as a priority.

Fee payment

When the Department is providing financial support to cover the full fee, a portion of the fee, or all of the 'gap' fee (this is where you are eligible for the CCB and the Child Care Rebate (CCR) is being paid directly to the child care service), an agreement is to be made between you and the Department on the time frame for how long the support will be provided and how many days or hours per week that will be covered. This agreement will be noted and approved in the case plan, and for CCB purposes is considered a 'private' agreement.

You must specify to the child care service that the fee for service invoice is to be in your name and sent to your address. The invoice should include the child's details, the service period and the amount owing, less the CCB and CCR where applicable.

You will need to establish with the child care service how often the invoices will be sent (i.e. the payment cycle). The child protection worker can assist with this if required.

Where it has been agreed that the Department will provide financial support by assisting with the fee payment, you must forward the invoice to the child protection worker once received for payment. The invoice needs to be forwarded promptly, as most invoices require payment within 14 days.

On receipt of the invoice, the child protection worker must facilitate prompt payment of the fee to the child care service within five days.

Receipt of Child Care Rebate (CCR)

The CCR is an automatic payment to eligible individuals by the DHS to help families with the cost of child care.

When a person (including a foster carer) applies for CCB, the CCR is paid (even if the CCB rate is zero) to help with the out of pocket costs where the child care is necessary for paid or non-paid work, or study related reasons.

¹ 'Liability' for the child care fees sits with the carer despite the 'private' arrangement between the carer and the Department regarding payment of the fees.

When completing the CCB form, you must elect to receive the CCR on a fortnightly basis, paid directly to the child care service as a fee reduction (question 52).

Carers receiving the CCR paid directly to them should notify the DHS on 136150 (or online through DHS Self Service if registered) that they would like to have the CCR paid directly to the child care service as a fee reduction. This can be done at any point, but it only takes effect at the start of the new financial year.

Other relevant information required by the child care service

It is important that the child care service is provided with information about the child such as:

- challenging behaviours;
- traumatic experiences or areas of sensitivity, where these are likely to become relevant in the child care setting;
- special or additional needs, developmental or other. The child care service needs to know about these prior to the child commencing at the centre, as the centre may need to employ extra workers;
- dietary requirements;
- allergies and medical conditions;
- changes to the child's daily routine, such as access visits and persons collecting the child from child care to attend visits;
- changes or additions to authorised contacts. For example, a different family resource employee collecting or delivering the child from child care, or a change of child protection worker, whether temporary or otherwise and their contact details.

Special Child Care Benefit

The child protection worker will make enquiries as to whether or not the Special Child Care Benefit is applicable. The child protection worker will consult with you as required. More information is available from DHS or the child care service.

Grandparent Child Care Benefit

Where a grandparent is the sole or primary carer for their grandchild, they may be eligible to claim the Grandparent Child Care Benefit (GCCB).

For further information, contact the Grandparent Adviser at DHS on (08) 9229 2607.

Notification of a child's absence from child care

In respect of a child's attendance at a child care service, there are 42 allowable absences including public holidays per annum.

Two weeks' notice is required prior to a child leaving a child care service, and the child must attend for those two weeks.

If the child is absent in the last sessions of care at the service, no absences can be claimed and no CCB can be claimed for those sessions. The child care service can charge full fees for these absences.

A child care service can provide a printed statement, if requested, outlining absences and CCB components.

Contact information

Department for Child Protection and Family Support

Telephone: (08) 9222 2555

Country free call: 1800 622 258

Web: www.childprotection.wa.gov.au

Centrelink

Child Care Access Hotline: 1800 670 305

My Child

This service provides information on child care, including child care centres in your area and how to get assistance with the cost of child care. Web: www.mychild.gov.au