



# Emergencies and natural disasters

There is assistance available to families and providers in various types of emergencies and natural disasters, like bushfires or floods.

## For Families

### Absences

You can be paid Child Care Subsidy (CCS) when your child is absent from sessions of care they would normally attend for up to 42 days per child, per financial year for any reason, **including due to a local emergency**.

If your child has used their initial (42) absence days, you may be paid CCS for additional absence days due to a local emergency in these circumstances:

- the child care service was closed as a direct result of a period of local emergency;
- the child cannot attend as a direct result of a period of local emergency (for example, because they are unable to travel to the service), if:
  - the period of local emergency is still underway; or
  - the period of local emergency ended not more than 28 days before the absence; or
- you decide the child should not attend the service for up to seven days immediately following the end of a period of local emergency.

Your child care provider must first contact the Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment office in their state or territory before reporting additional absences due to a period of local emergency.

More information can be found in the fact sheet on [Information for child care providers when a local emergency occurs](#).

## Additional Child Care Subsidy (temporary financial hardship)

The Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) (temporary financial hardship) provides short-term increased child care fee assistance to families who are experiencing significant financial stress due to exceptional circumstances, to ensure continuity of care.

## Am I eligible?

You may be eligible if:

- you or your partner have been adversely affected by a major disaster, such as bushfire or flood within the last six months, and
- you are experiencing a substantial reduction in your ability to pay child care fees.

## What do I need to do?

- You can apply for the additional subsidy by accessing your [Centrelink online account](#) through [myGov](#) or by visiting a Centrelink office and applying in person.
- You will need to provide [evidence](#) as part of the application process.

More information can be found on [Services Australia](#).

# For Providers

## Business Continuity Payments

Business continuity payments may be made if a situation arises that is beyond the control of the approved provider and they are prevented from submitting session reports for reasons beyond their control. These payments are an emergency measure only and do not replace the requirement to submit session reports.

## Am I eligible?

You can apply for a business continuity payment if your service:

- is significantly affected by a natural disaster, like a bushfire or flood, and
- the event prevents your service from submitting session reports within 14 days after the end of the week when care was provided.

## How much will I receive?

- The amount to be paid will be based on the average weekly amount paid to the service during a similar previous period.
- Business continuity payments must be passed on to parents as fee reductions.
- The amount paid is recovered once you are able to submit session reports again.

## What do I need to do?

- You should contact the Department of Education, Skills and Employment CCS Help Desk (1300 667 276) between 9am to 5pm AEST, Monday to Friday, if you wish to apply for a Business Continuity Payment.

## **Discounting fees**

Under Family Assistance Law, you must take all reasonable steps to enforce payment of parent co-contribution amounts (gap fee), even when an emergency or disaster occurs. However, you may consider supporting affected families by charging reduced fees (which reduces the gap fee) or not charging fees for a limited time. It is important to remember that if you charge reduced fees, you must accurately reflect this in the relevant session report/s by reporting the discounted fee.

## **CCCF Special Circumstances Funding**

If your service's viability is significantly affected by a natural disaster, you may be eligible to apply for a one-off grant under the Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) special circumstances grant opportunity. The purpose of this grant is to support continuity of child care, in particular in disadvantaged or vulnerable communities. You can find more information, including the grant eligibility criteria, on the [CCCF special circumstances grant opportunity page](#), or by emailing [cccf@dese.gov.au](mailto:cccf@dese.gov.au) or phone 1300 650 848 between 9:00am – 5:00pm AEDT.