

# FREE CHILDCARE TO HELP WORKERS, CENTRE STAFF AND FAMILIES

# COVID-19 FACT SHEET

## Support to ensure the early childhood education and care sector survives.

Around one million families are set to receive free childcare during the coronavirus pandemic under a plan to deliver hip pocket relief and help the early childhood education and care sector make it through to the other side of this crisis.

### HELP FOR CENTRES

The Australian Government has announced that services will now be able to waive out of pocket fees for families where a service remains open, but children are not attending for COVID-19 reasons.

This change will apply retrospectively from March 23, 2020 and extends the rule which allows services to waive out of pocket fees where a service is directed to close on public health advice.

Under the plan, the Government will pay 50 per cent of the sector's fee revenue up to the existing hourly rate cap, but only so long as services remain open and do not charge families for care.

The funding will apply from April 6 based on the number of children who were in care during the fortnight leading into March 2, whether or not they are attending services.

This measure is designed to ensure childcare is available for workers and vulnerable families who need those services.

### SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES

The measure supports families while also ensuring as many of the sector's 13,000 childcare and early learning services as possible could keep their doors open for those who need them.

This package will help support families during these difficult times, particularly those who have lost their job and are doing it tough.

Until the payments arrive, the Australian Government is allowing services to waive gap fees for families who keep their children home, and families will be able to use the 20 extra absence days the Government has funded for coronavirus related reasons without giving up their place in a childcare centre.

Payments will be made until the end of the 2019-20 financial year and families will not be charged fees during this time. These payments will complement the JobKeeper Payment announced on March 30, 2020.

Early childhood education and childcare services do not need to apply for the payments, they will be paid automatically.

The Department of Education, Skills and Employment is holding regular COVID-19 coronavirus information sessions for early childhood education and care providers and services.

## Fast facts...

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