

In May 2023, Services Australia joined a CRSA Peer Forum to discuss the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) program and income reporting. If you would like to access the forum's content, a recording is available for you to listen to or watch at your convenience.

[Watch the recorded session](#) and visit the [Services Australia website](#) for up-to-date information. Videos are available on the [Services Australia YouTube page](#).

Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is a government program in Australia that provides financial assistance to eligible families to help cover the costs of childcare, allowing them to participate in the workforce or engage in study or training.

Services Australia acknowledges [a range of activities](#) that meet the eligibility criteria for CCS entitlement. To qualify for CCS, families need to meet [certain criteria](#). Local Services Australia officers, rather than the refugee specialist team, will assess CCS claims.

Immunisation

There are [immunisation requirements](#) attached to the CCS, and the Family Tax Benefits Scheme. Services Australia refer to the Australian Immunisation Register, which is linked to a client's Medicare information.

Vaccination providers (e.g. GPs and community health clinics) can update a record on the [Australian Immunisation Register](#), including to reflect [immunisation history if done overseas](#). Contact the vaccination provider to learn more.

CCS rates

The CCS amount will vary based on factors such as combined family income, activities undertaken, and number of children. The rates are determined by an hourly fee cap set by the government for each type of childcare service. There is no distinction in subsidy rates between metropolitan, regional or rural areas. Subsidy rates are determined on a case-by-case basis - the easiest way to get an estimate is by using the [Starting Block calculator](#).

Under the CCS program, families have the flexibility to use more than one childcare provider. As well as asking whether the provider is approved for government childcare subsidy, it is important to be familiar with the rates and category of your childcare services to ensure that you can manage your fortnightly subsidised hours effectively. For additional information about eligible childcare providers and their rates, visit the [Services Australia website](#).

Making a claim for CCS

If you are unsure about your eligibility, it is advisable to lodge a claim online regardless. If your initial claim is unsuccessful, you have the option to request justification for the decision and make another claim when your circumstances have changed.

Families are required to report changes to their circumstances that may impact their eligibility or subsidy entitlement. Please visit the Services Australia website for further details.

12-week appointment

Around 12 weeks after their arrival, refugee clients are required to start attending regular meetings with Services Australia. During the 12-week appointment, Services Australia staff will explain the [reporting process and mutual obligation requirements](#) to refugee clients and create a specific Job Plan.

For refugee clients, mutual obligations are more aligned with settlement activities for the first 12 months. After this, they may be referred to mainstream services such as WorkForce Australia. Refugee arrivals are exempt from mutual obligation requirements for 13 weeks from their date of arrival, and mutual obligation enforcement outcomes (for example, reduction in payment if an obligation has not been met) are not applied for 12 months from their arrival.

The Job Plan may include activities such as:

- Learning English with the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP)
- Participating in Workforce Australia
- Doing other approved work, study or training activities

Depending on individual circumstances, Services Australia may refer clients for an [Employment Services Assessment \(ESAt\)](#), which will help to assess any barriers to work and ensure clients receive the correct service. Clients can also elect to transition WorkForce Australia earlier, knowing that an exemption from mutual obligation enforcement outcomes will cover the entire 12 months.

Income Reporting

It is important to begin [reporting income](#) as soon as it is being earned, as well as your partner's income if applicable. This can be done online, fortnightly, by reporting gross income, and not net income. Reporting is also an opportunity to update Services Australia about any other changes of circumstance, such as moving house or beginning study.

Most payments have a period where employment income won't affect payment, but as you move above thresholds the support payment will reduce, and eventually cut off.

Visit Services Australia website for [more information on income reporting](#).

Scams

With the increasing prevalence of scams, it is crucial to be able to distinguish between genuine communication and fraudulent attempts. One important thing to note is that Services Australia will never send direct links in their communications. Instead, they will provide instructions or directions on how to locate the relevant information or link independently.