



# Absences from child care

## What is an absence day?

Under the Child Care Subsidy (CCS), families are allowed 42 absence days per child, per financial year. These can be taken for any reason, including public holidays and when children are sick, without the need for families to provide documentation.

Absences should only be claimed when care would have been provided if the child was not absent, and the family has been charged a fee for the session of care. CCS is only payable for absences submitted before a child has started at a service, or after a child's final day of actual attendance at a service, under limited circumstances.

If a child is booked in for more than one session of care on the same day, and is absent for one of those sessions, such as before or after school care, it is counted as one absence day.

Child care providers must keep records of each absence. Families can see their year-to-date absence count in their Centrelink online account via [myGov](#) or the [Express Plus Centrelink mobile app](#).

## Why do families pay for child care on a public holiday?

It is a business decision for each provider whether they choose to charge families a fee for public holidays, where a session of care would have usually been provided. If a family is charged a fee for public holidays, CCS can be paid as an absence day.

## What is an additional absence day?

CCS can only be paid for any additional absences where they are taken for a reason defined in the Family Assistance Law. Families can only access additional absences where children have already used their initial allowance of 42 absence days per child, per financial year.

Evidence is required for an additional absence day, noting the exception for COVID-19 related reasons below. Reasons for the additional absence days are:

- the child cannot attend because of COVID-19 related reasons (medical evidence not required from 24 March 2020 to 31 December 2020).
- the child, the individual who cares for the child, the individual's partner or another person with whom the child lives is ill

- the child is attending pre-school
- alternative arrangements have been made on a pupil-free day
- the child has not been immunised against a particular infectious disease, the absence occurs during an immunisation grace period and a medical practitioner has certified that exposure to the infectious disease would pose a health risk to the child
- the absence is because the child is spending time with a person other than the individual who is their usual carer as required by a court order or a parenting plan
- the service is closed as a direct result of a period of local emergency
- the child cannot attend because of a local emergency (e.g. because they are unable to travel to the service), during the period of the emergency or up to 28 days afterwards, or
- the individual who cares for the child has decided the child should not attend the service for up to seven days immediately following the end of a period of local emergency.

## **When can absences be reported before a child has started at a service, or after a child’s final day of actual attendance at a service?**

From 13 July 2020, families can receive CCS for absences from sessions the child was expected to attend that occur up to seven days before a child’s first, or after a child’s last, physical attendance at a service, for any of the following reasons:

- any of the [additional absence reasons](#) (listed in the additional absences section above)
- the child, the individual who cares for the child, the individual’s partner or another person with whom the child lives is ill (no medical certificate required if the child has not used 42 absence days)
- the service has changed ownership
- the usual service is closed and the child is attending a different service under the same provider
- a family tragedy (a major event including the death of an immediate family member) has occurred, or
- the enrolment ceased incorrectly.

## **When can a family’s gap fees be waived?**

With CCS payments recommenced from 13 July 2020, providers are obliged to recover gap fees again. A service may, however, waive a family’s gap fees in the following circumstances:

- Until 31 December 2020, while a service is closed as a result of a public health directive, the service may record an absence and waive families’ out-of-pocket fees.
- From 13 July until 31 December 2020, services open and located in an area of Stage 3 or higher – ‘stay at home’ restrictions are able to waive families’ out-of-pocket fees where a child is not attending due to COVID-19, and an absence is recorded. Areas subject to Stage 3 or higher – ‘stay at home’ restrictions are listed at [vic.gov.au](http://vic.gov.au)