

Child Care Information for Families

Top 10 tips for getting your child care payments right Parent Responsibilities

Contents

1. Get the right family assistance
2. Get the best payment method for your family
3. Get your Child Care Rebate on time
4. Get all your details right
5. Get the bill in the right name
6. Get your gap fee right after the end of the financial year
7. Get all the family details to the service
8. Get your child immunised or get an exemption
9. Get the right JET payments
10. Get CCB if you're a Grandparent



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1. Get the right family assistance

Make sure you have been assessed for CCB by the Family Assistance Office. It's not enough to have a Customer Reference Number (CRN), as this could be issued for your Parenting Payment or Family Tax Benefit claim and doesn't mean you are eligible for CCB and CCR. **You have to ask to be assessed for CCB.** The FAO will provide CRNs for you and your child/ren.

- It is your responsibility as a parent/guardian to provide timely and correct information to your child care service.
- Always put your advice to the service in writing.
- Centrelink can give you access to an online service where you can track the submission of child care attendance details and payments under your CRN.

In rare circumstances, you or your child may be given more than one CRN by Centrelink.

Make sure you give the correct CRN to your child care service. **Call Centrelink or the FAO on 136150 to check on this and other details.**



2. Get the best payment method for your family

Centrelink offers a range of payment options for CCB and CCR, so choose the option that suits your family's financial situation. The payment method you choose for CCB also affects the way CCR is paid.

You can still get CCR when your income is too high for CCB. If you want to receive CCR each quarter instead of waiting until the end of the financial year, you need to claim *zero rate* CCB.

If you are eligible for CCB as reduced fees at a *zero rate*, your CCR is paid automatically. Otherwise, you will need to complete a Lump Sum claim at the end of each financial year. If you choose this method, it's a good idea to complete the FAO form: *Registration for Formal Enrolment* (form number FA022) **and tell your service you have done this**, so they can formalise the enrolment. You can check on the details during the year and if anything is wrong, you don't have to wait until the end of the year to fix it.

Call the FAO on 136150 for more information about your payment options.

If you want your CCB entitlement to be paid to the child care service, so that you can pay a lower fee each week, choose the *"reduced fees"* option.

If you want to get your CCR each quarter, choose either the *"reduced fees"* or *"zero rate"* option. To do this, complete the FAO form: *Claim for Approved Child Care Payments* (form number FA002).

This is the quickest and easiest claim option.

3. Get your Child Care Rebate on time

- Quarterly CCR payments to most CCB Fee Reduction customers are completed approximately 5 weeks after the end of each quarter ending September, December and March. June quarters are paid after you lodge tax returns and have your CCB and CCR reconciled by the FAO.
- CCR will not be paid for any period of attendance for which **Special CCB** was applied. This is because SCCB covers the full fee and there is no gap fee for the family.

4. Get all your details right

When you enrol your child at a new service, you need to provide four unique pieces of information to identify your family. This allows the service to create a formal enrolment in the Child Care Management System and receive CCB on your behalf so they can reduce your weekly child care fees. The details you need to give are:

- Child's date of birth
- Child's CRN
- Parent's* date of birth
- Parent's* CRN

*** Make sure you give the date of birth and CRN details for the parent who is claiming CCB.**

The dates of birth and CRNs you give the service must be identical to the numbers on your FAO record. The CCMS uses numbers to match against the FAO record because this is more reliable than using names and addresses.

5. Get the bill in the right name

If one parent has been assessed for CCB, but the other parent enrolls the child at the child care centre and their details are put into the system, then you may not receive benefits as expected. Your payments may be delayed until the end of financial year and you may need to complete a Lump Sum claim. **A service is under no obligation to backdate a change in CRN to allow a different parent or guardian to be paid retrospectively. It is your responsibility to provide timely and correct information to your child care service.**

If you decide to change the account from one parent's name to the other, first make sure the "new" parent has been assessed for CCB and has their own CRN. Organise that with the FAO first and then give the details to your service so they can change the CCMS enrolment. See Tip #4.

Separated Parents

Make sure that all of the attendance that you are liable to pay for is placed under your own CRN, or you will not receive CCB or CCR for that period.

The service is under no obligation to backdate this information or sort through parental custody issues. It is important that each parent takes responsibility for this. Give your service written confirmation of your liability to pay child care fees and keep the proof that you do pay those fees.

6. Get your gap fee right after the end of financial year

The service may have to change your records after the end of the financial year, when your CCB has already been reconciled by the FAO. When this happens, any change to your CCB entitlement is managed between you and the FAO.



If the new CCB calculation is less than before, your gap fee will be higher. It is your responsibility to pay any outstanding fees to your service.

To query any payment details, speak to your service first for details. If you disagree with any CCB or CCR information, contact FAO on 136150. You will need to provide the payment statements issued by your service so they can analyse your problem.

7. Get all the family details to the service

Your CCB can be affected if you have other children in care or if one child attends more than one service. It's important to tell the service about your child's attendance at other child care services during the same period, so they can put the right details into the system.

Why is this important?

- If you advise the service when you have more than one child in care, the service can report the correct **multiple child count** for your family each week. This way, you can receive the correct CCB amount. There is no obligation on the service to backdate this information, so keep them informed of all changes. Otherwise, you may need to wait until the end of financial year for an adjustment.
- Make sure all attendance for the same period is placed on the **same parental CRN**. Otherwise, FAO will treat the children on different parental CRNs as individuals. When your payments are reconciled at the end of the financial year, the multiple child CCB percentage may not be applied.
- Make sure you tell the FAO **when your child starts school** because CCB is then paid at a lower rate. If you don't inform the FAO, you may receive too much CCB and be asked to pay it back.
- If you exceed your **42 day absence limit** any further absences must be for approved reasons (e.g. sick with a medical certificate) or CCB and CCR will not be paid for those absence days.

8. Get your child immunised or get an exemption

To get CCB and CCR for children under seven, you must comply with these immunisation requirements:

- be fully immunised or up-to-date according to the Australian Standard Vaccination Schedule, or
- on a catch up vaccination schedule, or
- have an approved exemption.

The FAO will send letters to you, giving plenty of notice before it stops your CCB so that you can comply with the immunisation schedule or apply for an exemption. If you do nothing and

your CCB is stopped, then your service will stop getting fee reduction payments on your behalf and you will have to pay the full fees for your child care. Even when you know your child's immunisation is up to date, if you get a letter from the FAO about it, you must contact them to make sure your record is correct. **You will not get any CCR for the period when not eligible for CCB.**

9. Get the right JET payments

- The FAO has to approve JET before the service can reduce your child care fees. The sooner you complete all JET plan and reporting requirements, the sooner you can start receiving the JET subsidy.
- Always provide your JET letters to the service as soon as you get them. This is equally important for approval and reassessments. **The service is under no obligation to reduce your fees before you provide the JET letter.**
- You may lose JET because your income support payments change, by not fulfilling your reporting requirements or if your CCB rate changes.
- To keep your JET, you must be receiving a CCB rate of 100%. **Do not** have continuous adjustment of the CCB percentage.
- JET is approved for a maximum of 12 hours for each day. Divide the hours shown on the FAO letter by 12 to find how many days JET is approved for.
- You can only have JET coverage for the hours of care you use, up to a daily total of 12 hours. You cannot use any 'leftover' hours on another day (if JET is approved for 36 hours, this is 3 days).

10. Get CCB if you're a Grandparent

If you have taken over the care of a grandchild, you are not *automatically* eligible for **Grandparent CCB**. If you think you may qualify for GCCB, contact the Family Assistance Office for more information.

