

## *Policy: Child Care Services and Subsidies*

### Policy Purpose

To clarify Territory Families' role in supporting applications for the Australian Government Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS child wellbeing) for children 'at risk'.

### Policy Statement

When a child is in care of the CEO and placed with an Authorised Kinship or Foster Carer, access to a registered child care service (day care) may be supported, e.g. when a Carer is employed and provision of day care will support the placement. Territory Families financial support for these arrangements can only be provided if pre-approved by the Financial Delegate.

Application for Child Care Subsidies available from the Commonwealth Government must be made for all children in care who are attending a day care service. The [Family Assistance Act](#) (Cth) requires that child care subsidies are arranged with an 'individual'. Kinship and Foster Carers meet the definition of 'individual' under this Act. To receive the available subsidy, Carers must apply for CCS and the provider must apply for ACCS.

- Territory Families staff must offer assistance to Kinship Carers and Foster Carers to make the initial application for the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) through Centrelink.
- To be eligible the Carer must be an Australian Resident (Citizen or Permanent Resident), the child must be under 13 and the child's immunisation status must be current.
- Provided that a Carer is eligible for CCS they will be eligible for ACCS due to the fact that a child in care is defined as a child 'at risk' in the [Family Assistance Act](#).

When child care services are required, Territory Families staff must first contact the proposed registered child care provider to confirm that a space is available for the child. The staff member must also inform the child care provider that a 'letter of evidence' will be provided, which must be submitted by the provider when application for ACCS (child wellbeing) is submitted to the Department of Education and Training.

When the Carer's claim for CCS is successfully completed, Territory Families staff must complete the 'letter of evidence' and provide it to the registered child care provider, confirming that the child is 'at risk'. The letter must include:

- A statement that the child is 'at risk' because they are in care of the CEO, including the commencement and expiration dates of the Protection Order or Temporary Placement Arrangement;
- The child's name, date of birth, and the name and address of their Kinship or Foster Carer.
- A copy of the Order is to be attached to the letter of evidence if requested by the child care provider.

The provider must then make an application to the Department of Education and Training for ACCS (Child Wellbeing). ACCS is then paid directly to the provider. The provider may charge a rate higher than the subsidy and will invoice Territory Families at the agreed rate.

- Territory Families is responsible for the 'gap' payments, the difference between the ACCS and the actual fees charged, provided this is an agreed arrangement and the Financial Delegate has pre-approved the expenditure.

## Children placed with Carers who are not eligible for CCS will not receive ACCS.

As these costs are substantial it is imperative that approval of the Financial Delegate is provided prior to the child's day care arrangements being agreed.

- If the arrangements have been agreed and approved Territory Families must accept responsibility for the full, unsubsidised child care fees.
- When a child is placed with a Carer and day care is required before application of subsidies has been made or finalised, Territory Families will be responsible for the full fees associated with the child care. It is imperative that application for ACCS is urgently made.

## Legislative Basis and Related Documents

[Care and Protection of Children Act 2007](#)

[Family Assistance Act 1999](#)

[The Guide to ACCS \(child wellbeing\)](#)

[How to Claim CCS](#)

*Procedure: Child Care Services and Subsidy - Care and Protection Practice Manual.*

Registered child care providers can be found at [www.childcarefinder.gov.au](http://www.childcarefinder.gov.au).

Authorised by:

<b>Executive Leadership Group</b>	26/9/2019	<b>Active from:</b>	4/10/2019
<b>Version 1.0</b>	The policy clarifies and outlines the role of Territory Families in the application of the Commonwealth Government's Child Care Subsidy programs. 61:F2019/13443		
<b>Review due:</b>	October 19	<b>Maintenance:</b>	TF.Policy@nt.gov.au