

RESOURCE BOOKLETS for Kinship Carers

Support for grandparents
and non-parents caring for
children

INFORMATION ABOUT CENTRELINK PROGRAMS



Australian Government



Services
Australia

2026

Sometimes families find themselves in situations where parents are unable to care for a child. Instead, a grandparent or non-parent carer takes responsibility for the child's care.

Information in this brochure is for grandparent and non-parent carers who are looking after a child under:

- formal arrangements, when the care of the child is being managed by a state or territory welfare authority, or a family law parenting order is in place, and
- informal arrangements, when the non-parent carer has come to a private agreement about who provides care for the child.

If you're a grandparent or non-parent carer of a child and live in the same house as a parent, you may not be eligible for payments from Services Australia. If you're in this situation, you can contact us to discuss your circumstances.

Services Australia have specialist staff who can provide support to grandparents or non-parents caring for a child.

Grandparent, Foster and Kinship Carer Advisers

Grandparent, Foster and Kinship Carer Advisers provide extra support for formal and informal carers who provide ongoing care for children.

They can help you with all of the following:

- getting tailored information about payments and support services based on your family circumstances
- arranging appointments with specialist staff, including social workers
- getting referrals to federal, state and community service providers
- accessing Medicare, Child Support and Centrelink information and payments.

For more information about grandparent, foster and kinship carer advisers, go to

<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/grandparent-foster-and-kinship-carer-advisers>

For more information about assistance available for grandparent, foster and kinship carers, go to

<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/support-for-grandparent-carers?context=22151> or

<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/support-for-non-parent-carers?context=60011>

To speak to a Grandparent, Foster and Kinship Carer Adviser, call Freecall™ **1800 245 965**.

Social workers

Social workers can provide short-term counselling and information to help you through a difficult time. Social workers can also connect you with other support and services to help you.

To speak to a social worker call **132 850**
or **visit a service centre**.

PAYMENTS YOU MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR

FAMILY TAX BENEFIT

Family Tax Benefit (FTB) helps with the cost of raising children. It's made up of two parts: FTB Part A and FTB Part B.

Services Australia can pay FTB Part A for each child. The amount you get depends on your family's circumstances.

FTB Part B provides extra assistance to:

- single parents
- non-parent carers (including grandparents)
- some coupled families with one main income earner.

If a child under one comes into your care or you adopt a child of any age, your FTB Part A may increase. This increase is Newborn Supplement and will last for up to 13 weeks. If you get Newborn Supplement you will also get Newborn Upfront Payment as a one-off payment.

For more information, go to
<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/family-tax-benefit>

CHILD CARE SUBSIDY

Child Care Subsidy gives you assistance with the cost of child care. Services Australia will pay directly to your child care provider to reduce the fees you pay. Your child needs to be attending approved child care to be eligible.

Approved child care can include outside school hours care, family day care, vacation care, long day care, in-home care and some occasional care services.

If you're eligible for Child Care Subsidy you may get extra help with the cost of approved child care. To get this you need to be one of the following:

- an eligible grandparent getting an income support payment
- transitioning from certain income support payments to work
- experiencing temporary financial hardship
- caring for a child who is vulnerable or at risk of harm, abuse or neglect.

ADDITIONAL CHILD CARE SUBSIDY (GRANDPARENT)

You may be able to receive additional assistance called Additional Child Care Subsidy (Grandparent). It's for grandparents and great-grandparents who:

- have 65% or more care of a grandchild or great grandchild
- receive an income support payment, and
- make the day-to-day decisions about the child's care, welfare and development.

It provides extra help with the cost of approved child care.

If you aren't on an income support payment you won't be eligible for Additional Child Care Subsidy (Grandparent). However, you may still be eligible for Child Care Subsidy.

**For more information on Child Care Subsidy, go to
<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/child-care-subsidy>**

DOUBLE ORPHAN PENSION

Double Orphan Pension helps with the costs of caring for children who are orphans, or who can't be cared for by their parents. There's no income or assets test for this payment.

**For more information on Double Orphan Pension, go to
<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/double-orphan-pension>**

DAD AND PARTNER PAY

You or your partner may be eligible for Dad and Partner Pay if you take time off work to care for a newborn or recently adopted child. If eligible, you can get up to two weeks' Dad and Partner Pay at the rate of the national minimum wage.

**For more information on Dad and Partner Pay, go to
<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/dad-and-partner-pay>**

PARENTAL LEAVE PAY

Parental Leave Pay can support you if you're a primary carer taking time off work to care for a newborn or recently adopted child.

If you aren't the birth mother or adoptive parent, you can only get Parental Leave Pay in exceptional circumstances.

If eligible, you could get up to 18 weeks Parental Leave Pay at the rate of the national minimum wage.

**For more information on Parental Leave Pay, go to
<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/parental-leave-pay>**



EXTRA ASSISTANCE

CONCESSION AND HEALTH CARE CARDS

These cards give you access to some cheaper medicines under the:

- Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS)
- medical services funded by the Australian Government.

You may also have access to other concessions provided by state, territory and local governments. You may already have a Health Care Card or a Pensioner Concession Card if you get a payment from Services Australia.

If you aren't getting a payment, you may still be eligible for a Low Income Health Care Card.

If you're caring for someone else's child, such as a grandchild, you may be eligible for a Foster Child Health Care Card. There isn't an income or assets test for the Foster Child Health Care Card. Services Australia issue it in the name of the child you care for. You must apply for a new card for any child coming into your care.

For more information on Concession and Health Care Cards, go to <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/concession-and-health-care-cards?context=60091>

CHILD DENTAL BENEFITS SCHEDULE

The Child Dental Benefits Schedule provides eligible children with benefits for basic dental services, capped at \$1000 per child over two consecutive calendar years. You can confirm the eligibility and balance amount for a child in your care by accessing your Medicare online account through myGov or by calling 132 011.

For more information about the Child Dental Benefits Schedule, go to <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/child-dental-benefits-schedule>

MEDICARE BENEFITS

You can claim Medicare benefits for a child you're caring for if you're the person who paid for the service. They don't need to be registered on your Medicare card.

To claim Medicare benefits for them, you need to provide:

- the child's Medicare number
- an account or receipt with the child listed as the patient, and
- your Medicare number.

Where you have high out-of-hospital medical expenses, the Medicare Safety Net may help you cover some of these costs. To be eligible to receive Medicare Safety Net benefits for a child who is in your full time care, you must have legal authority for the child and the child must be registered in your Safety Net family.

PBS Safety Net can also help your family with the cost of some medicines.

**For more information about Medicare, go to
<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/medicare>**

CHILD SUPPORT

Grandparents or non-parents caring for children may be able to receive child support from one or both parents of the children. It's important to know that child support is included as income when calculating the rate of FTB that can be paid to you.

For more information about child support, go to <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/learning-about-child-support?context=60015> or call 131 272.

OTHER ASSISTANCE

You may be able to access:

- Rent Assistance
- Carer Payment
- Carer Allowance
- Parenting Payment
- JobSeeker Payment
- Centrepay, or
- the Financial Information Service.

NEXT STEPS

For more information:

- go to <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/support-for-grandparent-carers?context=22151> and <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/support-for-non-parent-carers?context=60011>
- call a Grandparent Adviser on Freecall™ **1800 245 965**, or
- go to a service centre.

Help in your language

Services Australia provide free interpreters and translated information including videos, audio and written products. Go to <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/information-your-language?context=64107>

If you are claiming one of our payments or services, documents you need can be translated for free.

Call 131 202 to speak to someone in your language about Centrelink payments and services. For help with Medicare or Child Support services call the **Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National)** on **131 450**.

Note: calls from your home phone to '13' numbers from anywhere in Australia are charged at a fixed rate. That rate may vary from the price of a local call and may also vary between telephone service providers. Calls to '1800' numbers from your home phone are free. Calls from public and mobile phones may be timed and charged at a higher rate.

DISCLAIMER

This information is accurate as at November 2023. If you use this publication after that date, please check that the details are current.

ADDITIONAL CHILD CARE SUBSIDY

What is the Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing)?

The Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) is a payment from the Australian Government for families who need practical help with the cost of child care to support their child's wellbeing.

How does a parent know if the Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) is right for their child?

If a parent feels they need help to support their child's wellbeing, it is a good idea for the parent to talk to their child care provider. Speaking with the child care provider can be a good way to get advice and find out what support services in the community are available to help. The provider can help parents find out what support is best for their situation and put them in touch with support services in their community.

The provider can also tell parents if their child could benefit from Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing).

If the provider determines eligibility for Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing), parents can receive a higher subsidy for up to six weeks. If the provider thinks this subsidy is needed for more than six weeks, they can apply to Centrelink to approve Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) for longer periods.

How many hours of child care subsidy will an eligible family receive?

Families are exempt from the Child Care Subsidy activity test for any child that is eligible for the Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing). This means they will be entitled to access up to 100 hours of subsidised child care per fortnight regardless of their activity.

How will the Additional Child Care Subsidy be paid?

The Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) is paid directly to approved child care services to reduce the cost of child care for eligible families. Eligible families will receive a subsidy equal to the actual fee charged by the child care service, up to 120 per cent of the Child Care Subsidy hourly rate cap, whichever is lower. In most cases, the full cost of care will be covered.

What if the family's circumstances change?

If the provider has determined that a child is no longer eligible, they will notify Centrelink and the Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) will cease. The family may still be eligible to receive the Child Care Subsidy.

Where can I get further information on the child care package?

- Visit the Department of Education and Training Child Care Package website at education.gov.au/eccc
- Visit the Department of Human Services Child Care Subsidy website humanservices.gov.au/childcaresubsidy

Residence rules for New Zealand citizens

A person arriving in Australia using a New Zealand passport is generally allocated a Special Category Visa (SCV).

An SCV holder can remain indefinitely in Australia and have access to Australian services similar to that of a permanent visa holder.

The social security rules relating to SCV holders are in line with those that apply to all other migrants to Australia. There are special provisions to ensure that SCV holders who were already residing in Australia on or around 26 February 2001 are not disadvantaged.

To be entitled to most social security payments, New Zealand customers who take up residence in Australia after 26 February 2001 need to:

- have permanent residence status (a permanent visa), or
- have Australian citizenship, or
- be a protected Special Category Visa (SCV) holder.

To be considered a protected SCV holder an SCV holder must have been:

- in Australia on 26 February 2001, or
- in Australia for at least 12 months in the two years immediately prior to 26 February 2001, or
- issued with a Certificate of Residence (XOB073) by International



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