

<b>POLICY/PROCEDURE NAME &amp; REVIEW PROCESS</b>	<b>PAYMENT of FEES POLICY</b> This policy and procedure has been created to provide all stakeholders with clear guidelines and transparency to our practices and procedures. We welcome feedback and input from all stakeholders at any time and this policy is subject to review based on feedback or due date of annual review.
<b>NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD</b>	<b>QUALITY AREA 7 GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP</b> <b>7.1 GOVERNANCE</b> 7.1.2 Management systems.
<b>NATIONAL LAW AND REGULATIONS</b>	111- Administrative space 168-Education and care service must have policies and procedure 170-Policies and procedures to be followed 171-Policies and procedures to be kept available 172- Notification of change to policies or procedures
<b>RELATED POLICIES and RECORDS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cancellation of care record</li> <li>▪ Change of child enrolment details record</li> <li>▪ Debt policy</li> <li>▪ Enrolment record</li> <li>▪ Holiday notification record</li> </ul>
<b>SCOPE OF POLICY</b>	This policy applies to all children, educators, families, management, students, volunteers, and visitors at our service.
<b>AIM OF POLICY</b>	To ensure that our service has strong guidelines, procedures, and practices in place regarding payment of fees for all stakeholders. Our aim is to provide a clear policy, implement the policy, support practices relating to the policy, train staff regarding the policy and maintain and update the compliance of the policy for all our stakeholders.
<b>SERVICE IMPLEMENTATION</b>	The policy outlines to our stakeholders the process regarding fee payment, debt avoidance and how Child Care Subsidy CCS works to ensure that all stakeholders are fully aware of what is involved. <b>Child Care Subsidy and enrolment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ On acceptance of enrolment, providing all documents are provided and enrolment record is completed a day of commencement, and a schedule of attendance will be decided based on family's request and availability.</li> <li>▪ Parents/ guardians must sign child/ren in and out of service on arrival and on departure. Nominated supervisor/ staff member will update information if parent / guardian forgets however on next arrival at service parent/guardian must acknowledge sign in or sign out completed by nominated supervisor / staff member. Signing children in and out is a legal requirement for parents/ guardians.</li> <li>▪ All absences must also be recognised by signing off at next attendance at service.</li> <li>▪ If eligible for <b>Child Care Subsidy CCS</b>, the service will link the child and family to the service and parent/guardian will accept the enrolment via MYgov app or portal. It is important to ensure that the child and parent/guardian CRN number and dates of birth are accurate in order to link to Services Australia to apply CCS to the account. Failure to accept enrolment via MYgov will delay the CCS being applied to your account and will therefore incur full fees until accepted. Once accepted based on the number of eligible CCS the family will pay a <b>GAP</b> amount each scheduled payment.</li> <li>▪ If your child is attending more than one service you will need to alert Services Australia if you want to distribute your hours across the services, otherwise Services Australia will pay each child care service in the order that they receive attendance reports for the child. You can allocate hours by calling <b>Family Line 136 150 Monday – Friday 8.00am – 8.00pm</b>.</li> <li>▪ A direct debit form must be completed and on commencement of the child's attendance the fee schedule will be charged 1 week in advance.</li> <li>▪ Every week after that, providing that fees are kept up to date a further gap week will be charged.</li> <li>▪ <b>IMPORTANT:</b> It is the family's responsibility to ensure funds are sufficient each week/ fortnight to cover the direct debit. Nominated supervisor can rerun the direct debit to capture payments later in the week and will not be held responsible for any bank fees incurred by the family if funds aren't available. Families who receive CCS must make a co-contribution to their child</li> </ul>

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care fees. This is a requirement under Law. They do this by paying the difference between the provider's fee and the CCS amount. This is known as the gap fee.

- Cash is not accepted at the service.
- Make up days are not accepted due to rostering and CCS requirements.
- Families must meet requirements in order to receive **CCS (Child Care Subsidy)**
  - Care for a child 13 or younger who's not attending secondary school, unless an exemption applies.
  - Use an approved childcare service.
  - Be responsible for paying the childcare fees.
  - Meet residency and immunisation requirements.
- A child will cease to be enrolled if they do not attend the service for a 14-week period, if this situation occurs family must begin enrolment process all over again.
- A session report can be amended up to 28 days for the service to receive payment, this means that any errors in bookings can be amended by the service and back dated for 28 days to receive payment on family account. If there are issues with CCS applying the service can back date this up to 28 days. After this time, the family will need to deal with Services Australia for reimbursement. This could result in full fees being charged.
- From 7 March 2022, families with more than one child aged 5 or younger will get a higher Child Care Subsidy (CCS). Services Australia will calculate this not the service.
- It is important to note that the service has no control over what CCS you receive or how you receive it. Any issues regarding your subsidy can be discussed with the nominated supervisor however it can only be reconciled by Services Australia.
- Services Australia will withhold 5% of your subsidy to avoid overpayment. You can vary this amount by contacting Services Australia and this can be done twice a year by calling the **Family Line 136 150- Monday – Friday 8.00am – 8.00pm**
- Your family income is used to estimate CCS that you receive. At the end of each financial year the payment received – CCS is balanced against your family's actual adjustable taxable income.
- If you underestimated your family income, you may end up with an overpayment which you'll need to pay back to the service. Regardless of whether your fees were up to date this process can raise debt on your account. Services Australia will use the 5% withheld to help alleviate this debt but the balance if there is one will be the responsibility of the family. Again, this has nothing to do with the service. The service has no control over this. Nominated supervisor will inform you of accumulated debt and work with you to pay back this amount.
- It is important to note that all attempts will be made to negotiate a fee payment plan with all our families as per our debt recovery process, however failure to follow this process could result in termination of child/ren's place at our service and debt can be sent to a debt collection agency and therefore result in further charges incurred.
- If you overestimated your family income Services Australia will repay the amount owed directly to the family and will include the percentage withheld.
- Families can check the CCS that they may be entitled to by the following process in your Centrelink account through MYgov as per below:
  - Select the MENU
  - Select My family
  - From this menu select Child Care
  - Select Child Care Subsidy summary.

#### CCS Rates

- The maximum amount of Child Care Subsidy is up to 90%.
- Families earning \$83,280 or less will get a Child Care Subsidy rate of 90%.
- Families earning over \$83,280 may get a Child Care Subsidy rate starting from 90%. This will go down by 1% for each \$5,000 of income they earn above \$83,280. This rate reaches 0% for families earning \$533,280.
- Families earning below \$365,611 with more than one child aged 5 or under in care can still get a higher rate for one or more of their children.
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children can get at least 36 subsidised hours of early childhood education and care per fortnight, regardless of their family's activity level.

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### Absence's attendance and non-attendance

- Families can receive up to 42 allowable absence days per child each financial year. These absences can be used for any reason, including a local emergency.
- It is important to note that allowable absences only apply to the child not to individual parents - for example shared custody.
- Once allowable absences are completely used the only exemptions are for the following:
- *The child, the individual who cares for the child, the individual's partner, or another person with whom the child lives is ill and the service has been given a medical certificate by a medical practitioner*
- *The child is attending preschool*
- *Alternative arrangements have been made on a pupil-free day*
- *The child has not been immunised against an 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, and the service has a copy of the relevant court order or parenting plan for the child*
- *The service is closed as a direct result of a period of local emergency*
- *The child cannot attend because of a local emergency (for example, because they are unable to travel to the service), during the period of the emergency or up to 28 days afterwards*
- *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.*
- If a family has confirmed their child's last day at a service, but that child does not attend their last booked session of care, no Child Care Subsidy will be paid for any days after the child's last physical attendance at the service except in severe cases such as
- If you reach your allowable absence limit, you may get additional absences in some cases. Reasons may include:
  - Child or carer is ill
  - Child attends preschool or a pupil free day applies
  - Declared local emergency.
- In some cases, extra allowable absences may apply due to Covid – 19 circumstances – as these circumstances are changing on a regular basis, its best to talk to the nominated supervisor or admin person at the service.
- *If a long absence from care is anticipated, the plan for this, and how it will be managed, can be specified in the Complying Written Arrangement (including, for example, any changes to fees). However, where a child does not attend a service within a period of 14 weeks or more, the enrolment will be ceased. Even where an absence longer than 14 weeks is planned in the Complying Written Arrangement, a new enrolment notice will need to be submitted when care recommences after the absence. If a long absence is planned, the family may prefer to end the enrolment and submit a new notice when physical attendance recommences so that the child is not reported as absent (using up the child's initial 42 days of absence).*

### Additional childcare subsidy

Additional Child Care Subsidy provides additional support for payments for vulnerable or disadvantaged families and children. There are four different payments under the Additional Child Care Subsidy.

The types of Additional Child Care Subsidy, and a general outline of how they are calculated, are as follows:

- Child wellbeing—a subsidy equal to 100 per cent of the actual fee charged, up to 120 per cent of the Child Care Subsidy hourly rate cap, for up to 100 hours of assistance per fortnight.
- Grandparent—a subsidy equal to 100 per cent of the actual fee charged, up to 120 per cent of the Child Care Subsidy hourly rate cap, for up to 100 hours of assistance per fortnight.
- Temporary financial hardship—a subsidy equal to 100 per cent of the actual fee charged, up to 120 per cent of the Child Care Subsidy hourly rate cap, up to 100 hours of assistance per fortnight. It is limited to 13 weeks per event that gives rise to the temporary financial hardship.

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- Transition to work—a subsidy equal to 95 per cent of the actual fee charged (up to 95 per cent of the Child Care Subsidy hourly rate cap).
- Nominated supervisor can apply for childcare wellbeing subsidy on your behalf providing that you are currently receiving CCS and meet the criteria.
- All other additional subsidy application must be completed online via your personal MYgov account and ensure it is linked to Centrelink.
- Sign in to **MYgov** and go to **Centrelink**.
- Select **My Family** from the menu.
- Select **Childcare** then **temporary financial hardship** OR **additional childcare subsidy grandparent** OR **transition to work**.
- Follow the instructions for either application or if unsure follow the link [Additional Child Care Subsidy - Services Australia](#)

#### Statement of entitlement (fee statement)

Once every fortnight, providers must provide a Statement of Entitlement to parents eligible for Child Care Subsidy for children enrolled in their service. This statement must include details of the sessions of care provided and the resulting fee reduction amounts. The provider will need to use information about entitlements and payments for each child received in their payment advice (through their child care software or the PEP) to prepare these statements.

Statement of Entitlement can only be issued for care already provided, as they must include details of the child's physical attendance (in/out time) at the service and actual fee reduction amounts.

Statements of Entitlement cannot be issued in advance based on estimates.

Statement of Entitlement are issued to families to ensure that families have a clear understanding of the fees they have been charged, what those fees have been charged for and how their Child Care Subsidy has offset those charges. (Child Care Provider Handbook)

- Statements will be advised via email and will be sent to all families weekly or fortnightly if you are experiencing any difficulty in receiving statements, please check that the nominated supervisor has the correct information as in email address or if you prefer a printed paper copy contact nominated supervisor.
- Parents/guardians are able to view their statements online via the Centrelink online account.

#### Discounts and holiday fees

- Holiday fee will be applied providing that all fees are completely up to date and in advance as per this policy. A minimum of 2 weeks' notice must always be given, and a **holiday notification record** must be completed prior to applying for holidays. Contact your nominated supervisor in regard to discount and terms available to families.
- **Staff discount** will be discussed at orientation time and nominated supervisor will apply any discount you are entitled to, providing fees are not in arrears as per this policy.
- Fees are to be paid for all **public holidays**. The only exemption for this is if families book annual leave/ holidays that fall when public holidays are occurring, there will be a discounted fee providing the account is up to date as per **payment of fees policy**.

#### Further enrolment information

- A late fee will be incurred at \$1 a minute if a child/ren is not picked up on time. This amount must be paid to the educators who attend after hours. Continuing to be late when picking up your child/ren may incur loss of child/rens position at the service.
- Cancellation of attendance requires a minimum of two weeks' notice, and a **cancellation of care record** must be completed.
- Any changes to existing enrolment will require 2 weeks' notice and we request that a **change of child enrolment details record** is completed for evidence of the amendment to the schedule.
- Fees that fall behind could jeopardise your child/ren's attendance at the service and if continually not paid could result in termination of your child/ren's place.
- The service reserves the right to cancel attendance for any child/ren after consultation with families.

#### Debts

Families who incur debt due to not paying gap amount will be notified by the nominated supervisor usually by phone or email initially, failure to acknowledge this communication will commence the following process. Families who receive CCS must make a co-contribution to their child care fees. This is a requirement under [Family Assistance Law](#).

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- **First reminder letter** - Families that have not paid for the week ending and are not in advance as per payment of fee policy will be issued the first reminder letter.
- Failure to acknowledge the first letter or rectify the account will result in – **second reminder letter**.
- If family is still not responding a **final letter** will be sent and if there is no further response from this letter or attempts to clear account, care may be cancelled, and all outstanding debt will be forwarded on to services debt collection agency.
- Nominated supervisor will be happy to work with families who may be experiencing difficulty or issues, and it is important to discuss with nominated supervisor who may be able to work on a **payment plan** with you. The payment plan should run for 6-8 weeks depending on the amount owing. Example: Gap amount each week then divide amount owing by 6 -8 weeks and add the two together to provide payment plan amount – Example family owes \$600 dollars divided by 6 = \$100 per week – Gap is \$50 – Payment plan amount is \$150 per week. This way gap is continually paid, and debt will be paid off resulting in NIL DEBT. again, failure to meet payment plan may result in cancellation of care and all outstanding debt will be sent to the services debt collector.

#### Continuous Improvement

We are dedicated to the ongoing improvement of our practices and procedures through the following actions:

- Conducting regular reviews and updates of this policy with all stakeholders.
- Actively seeking feedback from children, families, and staff members.
- Providing targeted skill development and training for staff when areas for improvement are identified or when gaps in policy and procedure implementation are observed.

Each member of the team plays an important role in the implementation of each policies guidelines, and they are outlined as below but not limited to the following:

#### The Approved Provider

- Will ensure that fees are set for families and will ensure 14 days' notice is given to families via email online, memos etc to advise of fee increases.
- Will ensure that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met.
- Ensure they take reasonable steps to ensure that the nominated supervisor, educators, staff, and volunteers follow the policy and procedures.
- Ensure that copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible to nominated supervisors,
- Educators, staff, volunteers, and families, and are available for inspection.
- Will notify families at least 14 days before changing the policy or procedures if the changes will
  - Affect the fees charged or the way they are collected or
  - Significantly impact the service's education and care of children or
  - Significantly impact the family's ability to utilise the service.
- Ensure they provide the nominated supervisor, educators, staff and volunteers the documentation to perform their role, follow policy, procedure, and document according to regulatory and service requirements.
- Will ensure that adequate induction process is provided to all staff to ensure they have time to read and understand policies and procedures and seek further information if unsure.
- Ensure that the nominated supervisor and staff are equipped with ongoing professional development and training they require to comply with this policy.
- Will encourage feedback from stakeholders regarding the policy's effectiveness, particularly in relation to identifying and responding to child safety concerns.
- Ensure the policy is kept up to date with current legislation, research, and best practice.

#### The Nominated Supervisor

- Will ensure that when families are orientating that they are made aware of fee structure, CCS component and how it is applied to accounts.
- Will monitor families accounts and advise of debt, CCS fluctuations and support families with a solution to keep statements and accounts up to date.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will adhere to and implement the obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations.</li> <li>Ensure they take reasonable steps to ensure that the educators, staff, and volunteers follow the policy and procedures.</li> <li>Ensure they provide the educators, staff and volunteers the documentation to perform their role, follow policy and procedure and ensure they are checking the documentation according to regulatory and service requirements.</li> <li>Ensure that a rigorous recruitment process is completed, and a thorough induction process is provided to all staff to ensure they have time to read and understand policies and procedures and seek further information if unsure.</li> <li>Ensure that the staff are supported with ongoing professional development and training they require to comply with this policy.</li> <li>Will encourage feedback from stakeholders and staff regarding the policy's effectiveness, particularly in relation to identifying and responding to child safety concerns.</li> <li>Ensure the policy is kept up to date with current legislation, research, and best practice.</li> <li>Conduct regular staff meetings to address policy compliance with legislation, policy implementation, changes to policy and or collect feedback for annual review of policy.</li> </ul> <p><b>Educators</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will adhere to and implement the obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations.</li> <li>Ensure they take reasonable steps to follow the service policy and procedures and seek advice or further support if unsure.</li> <li>Ensure they complete and document any related records regarding the implementation of this policy and practice requirements of the service.</li> <li>Will attend any ongoing professional development, staff meetings and training they require to comply with this policy and practice requirements of the service.</li> <li>Will provide feedback to the nominated supervisor or approved provider regarding the policy's effectiveness, particularly in relation to identifying and responding to child safety concerns.</li> </ul> <p><b>Families</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We expect that families are familiar with this policy and adhere to the procedures relating to the policy.</li> <li>Ensure that any issues regarding their account are discussed with the nominated supervisor and admin person and not discussed with staff and other families.</li> <li>Ensure funds are available to meet the fee gap amount each week.</li> <li>Be aware that failure to pay account and repeatedly attending the service for pick up after hours, despite attempts to support the family, may result in cancellation of care.</li> </ul>
<b>REGULATION IMPLEMENTATION</b>	The following procedures outline and support all stakeholders to understand and implement the regulatory guidelines of this policy.
<b>In regard to regulation 111- administrative space</b>	<p><b>Approved Provider will</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a space for nominated supervisor to conduct all administrative requirements for the service.</li> <li>Ensure there is also an allocated area that nominated supervisor can conduct a family meeting that may be private and confidential.</li> <li>Provide a space for nominated supervisor and staff to attend confidential meetings or to complete programming and administrative duties in a quiet area.</li> </ul>
<b>In regard to regulation 168- Education and care service must have policies and procedures.</b>	<p><b>Approved Provider will</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met.</li> <li>Ensure they take reasonable steps to ensure that the policy and procedures are current, reviewed regularly and communicated to educators, staff, and stakeholders.</li> <li>Take reasonable steps to inform and support educators and staff regarding their responsibilities in implementing the policy and procedures at all times.</li> <li>Take reasonable steps to ensure that nominated supervisor, educators, staff, and volunteers follow the policy and procedures.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible to nominated supervisor, educators, staff, stakeholders, and volunteers and are available for inspection.</li> <li>Notify families at least 14 days before changing the policy or procedures if the changes will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affect the fees charged or the way they are collected or</li> <li>Significantly impact the service's education and care of children or</li> <li>Significantly impact the family's ability to utilise the service.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Ensure policies and procedures regarding regulatory requirements are in place at the service.</li> <li>Ensure that a suitable Nominated supervisor is in place and will monitor practices and procedures relating to all policies in the service.</li> <li>Ensure policies and procedures are reviewed at least annually and changes are made if required prior to this review.</li> <li>Ensure all stakeholders are involved in the review.</li> <li>Ensure the service is conducive to a child safe environment and guidelines set out in the policy and procedure are clearly outlined.</li> </ul>
<b>In regard to regulation 170- Policies and procedures to be followed.</b>	<p><b>Approved Provider will</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that all staff and volunteers are made aware of Regulatory policies and procedures by ensuring that this forms a part of the induction process.</li> <li>Ensure probationary reviews will be conducted once new staff are appointed at the 3- month and 6-month mark to ensure that they are following policy and procedure and to review and revise regulatory policies.</li> <li>Ensure staff meetings will be conducted on a regular basis to allow for review of policy and procedure and further training and revision of procedural practices in relation to policy and procedure.</li> <li>Ensure annual review and revision of policies and procedures will be conducted, and all educators will be given the opportunity for input.</li> </ul>
<b>In regard to Regulation 171- Policies and procedures to be kept available.</b>	<p><b>Approved Provider will</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that policies and procedures are available to all staff and the location and availability will form a part of the induction process.</li> <li>Ensure policies will be available on request for all staff members to have access when required.</li> <li>Ensure policies will be available when required for staff members to download copies and/or print out if required in order to complete assignments or to form part of their research and/ or update their knowledge.</li> <li>Ensure policies will be available for all stakeholders when requested and when updating.</li> </ul>
<b>In regard to Regulation 172- Notification of change to policies or procedures</b>	<p><b>Approved Provider will</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure staff meetings will be conducted on a regular basis to allow for review of policy and procedure, provide further training and allow for input if required in relation to policy and procedure.</li> <li>Ensure stakeholders will be invited to provide feedback for policies and procedures at any time, not just on annual review but will also be invited to add feedback at review time or after an event that may require change to policy or procedure.</li> <li>Ensure policies and procedures will be emailed or put on display in the foyer for stakeholders to have the ability to provide feedback.</li> <li>Ensure feedback will be considered from stakeholders and educators and may result in a change in policy.</li> <li>Ensure policy and procedure may be changed at any time if there has been an incident in the service that has required a change to be implemented for the safety and health of children and or educators.</li> <li>Ensure in the event of a change to a policy after feedback or a situation that occurs, we will provide 14 days' notice to all stakeholders before the change takes effect.</li> </ul>
<b>KEY TERMS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>ACECQA</b> – Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority. The independent national authority that works with all regulatory authorities to administer the National Quality Framework, including the provision of guidance, resources, and services to support the sector to improve outcomes for children.</li> <li><b>Customer Reference Number</b>-An individual reference number allocated by Centrelink for each child and one for each parent or guardian who is claiming Child Care Subsidy (or any welfare benefit via Centrelink).</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>PEP-Provider Entry Point</b> -Part of the secure Child Care Subsidy System through which providers can apply for provider and service approval, and which subsequently enables them to access information, add or remove a service, make notice of a change in their circumstances, and give enrolment notices and session reports in relation to Child Care Subsidy.</li> <li>▪ <b>Stakeholder</b> - a person or group of people who have an interest in a business, a person such as an employee or customer. They have a sense of responsibility toward it and an interest in its success.</li> </ul>
<b>WE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE THE FOLLOWING SOURCES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Australian Children’s Education &amp; Care Quality Authority. ACECQA</li> <li>▪ Code of Ethics</li> <li>▪ Child Care Provider Handbook- July 2024</li> <li>▪ Education and Care Services National Regulations.</li> <li>▪ Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010.</li> <li>▪ Family Assistance law <a href="#">Child Care Subsidy - Department of Education, Australian Government</a></li> <li>▪ Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services</li> <li>▪ Guide to the National Quality Framework</li> <li>▪ National Regulations.</li> <li>▪ National Quality Standard.</li> <li>▪ United Convention on the Rights of the Child</li> <li>▪ <a href="https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/additional-child-care-subsidy">https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/additional-child-care-subsidy</a></li> </ul>

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