

Child Safety PROCEDURE

Title: Child Related Costs – Education and Child Care Support

Procedure no: 645.2-2

Purpose

This procedure guides the use of Child Related Costs (CRC) to fund all Education and Child Care Supports required to support children and young people in care or who have had a care experience, which includes children and young people subject to statutory intervention with Child Safety or support service cases.

This procedure is to be used in line with the Child Related Costs Policy (CRC Policy) – 645

Scope

CRC Education and Child Care Support provides financial support to children and young people in care or who have had a care experience.

The following categories are part of the CRC Education and Child Care Support procedure and show the associated General Ledger (G/L) Account Code:

- Public Education (G/L Account Code: 530433)
- Private Education (G/L Account Code: 530434) / Boarding School (G/L Account Code: 530404)
- School Uniforms (G/L Account Code: 530422)
- Child and Vacation Care (G/L Account Code: 530420)
- Early Childhood Education Minimum Gap Payment - Kindergarten (G/L Account Code: 530203)
- Early Childhood Education Minimum Gap Payment - Child Care (G/L Account Code: 530204)
- Tutoring (G/L Account Code: 530431)
- Vocational Training (G/L Account Code: 530478)

Federal Government Child Care Subsidy and Early Childhood Education Minimum Gap Payment.

Approved childcare providers are those approved by the Department of Human Services for eligibility for Australian Government payments such as Child Care Subsidy (CCS) that the carer must apply for and the Additional Child Care Subsidy - Child Wellbeing (ACCS child wellbeing) that the Child Care Provider must apply for.

Carers can claim CCS through their mygov account, for carers that do not have a mygov account one will need to be created. Please refer to the below link for more information on the CCS including how to claim.

- <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy>

In most cases the full cost of childcare will be covered when the CCS and ACCS child wellbeing is applied. Whether or not there is an out of pocket expense for the carer depends on how much the provider charges and how quickly the CCS and ACCS child wellbeing is applied.

The *Early childhood education minimum gap payment* will provide young children with greater access to centre-based child care and kindergarten, by assisting foster and kinship carers with these out-of-pocket costs should they be incurred.

Payment of an *Early childhood education minimum gap payment* of \$40 per week per child (\$2000 per annum) is available to assist carers meet costs arising from the child's attendance at centre-based childcare and kindergarten. Prior approval of the financial delegate is not required for payments up to \$40.

To be eligible for this payment, the child will:

- be aged one to five years and not yet commenced prep
- reside with an approved carer in family-based care, and
- attend an approved childcare service or kindergarten

For the purpose of the *Early childhood education minimum gap payment* only a selection of these childcare service types will be eligible, including child care and kindergarten.

CSOs must identify, through ICMS, in the child's 'education tab', that the child attends early childhood education.

Process

Upon a CRC request being received by the Child Safety Officer (CSO), the CSO is to refer to the CRC Policy – 645 and the corresponding procedure to determine if the request meets the guidelines for CRC.

Once the CSO has determined that the guidelines are met, the CSO can progress the request for approval. To progress approval the CSO will consult with their Business Officer and relevant financial delegate for the request.

Business Officers in each Child Safety Service Centre (CSSC) are authorised to manage and pay requests up to and in accordance with their delegated authority.

The carer, child, young person or parent will be required to provide receipts for all reimbursement requests.

For requests for payment/reimbursement of \$100 or under, a CRC form is not required. Consultation between the Business Officer, CSO and Senior Team Leader is required to determine the outcome of the request. If the request is supported, the Business Officer will approve the request and process the reimbursement.

For requests for payments/reimbursements over \$100 a completed CRC form is required. Consultation between the CSO, Senior Team Leader and the financial delegate is required to determine the outcome of the request. If the request is supported, the financial delegate will approve the request and Business Services will process the reimbursement.

A link to the financial delegations has been provided under Delegations at the end of this procedure.

Child Safety Officers will:

- Consider the use of CRC as part of the case planning processes.
- Make sure carers are aware of how to request CRC for unplanned expenses as they arise.
- Make sure CRC support is consistent with the case plan and/or supportive of the care arrangement.

Business Officers will:

- Ensure the correct CRC G/L Account Code is used
- Ensure all transactions are substantiated, and necessary substantiating documentation (for example, invoices and receipts) is filed to ensure an audit trail.

Should the request not be supported, the CSO will inform the person making the request of the outcome including an explanation for the decision.

Categories for CRC Education and Child Care Support

Public Education (G/L Account Code: 530433)

The Fortnightly Caring Allowance covers all general schooling and education costs including school lunches, travel to and from school, school excursions, school stationery, school uniforms and school related sporting activities.

This category is primarily for the payment of fees for educational activities or elective subjects associated with a child or young person's education at a public school. For children or young people in care, these costs must be for approved activities as part of a child or young person's case plan and where applicable, Education Support Plan. For children or young people residing at home, support may be provided where it enhances their safety and wellbeing and minimises the need for more intrusive child protection intervention.

Although school excursion costs are included in the fortnightly caring allowance, school camps will be funded through CRC Education and Child Care Support.

Expenditure under this category can include:

- school camps
- payment of compulsory fees (for example, library fees and educational costs)
- the gap between the Education contribution through the Textbook and Resource Allowance and full costs of the book levy
- the purchase of specific items that assist in meeting educational needs (for example, specified electives as per the Education Support Plan, or teaching aids)
- school photos

Private School (G/L Account Code: 530434) / Boarding School (G/L Account Code: 530404)

The Fortnightly Caring Allowance covers all general schooling and education costs including school lunches, travel to and from school, school excursions, school stationery, school uniforms and school related sporting activities.

This category is primarily for the payment of private school fees and educational activities or elective subjects associated with a child or young person's education in a private or boarding school. These costs must be for approved activities as part of a child or young person's case plan and where applicable, Education Support Plan.

Although school excursion costs are included in the fortnightly caring allowance, school camps will be funded through CRC Education and Child Care Support.

Generally, children and young people will attend public schools unless a private school has been assessed as the most appropriate response to the child or young person's educational needs. For example, attendance at a private or boarding school may also be considered for a child or young person where:

- the child or young person was attending the private school prior to entering care and the child or young person is not changing schools with the care arrangement; and/or
- other children or young people residing in the same care arrangement are attending a private school; and/or
- educational facilities in remote communities do not extend beyond Grade 10 and attendance at boarding school is required in order to complete Grades 11 and 12.

Expenditure under this category can include:

- school camps
- payment of compulsory fees (for example, library fees and educational costs)
- the gap between the Education contribution through the Textbook and Resource Allowance and full costs of the book levy
- the purchase of specific items that assist in meeting educational needs (for example, specified electives as per the Educational Support Plan, or teaching aids).
- school photos

The Boarding School (G/L Account Code: 530404) is to be used for boarding costs only.

School Uniforms (G/L Account Code: 530422)

The Fortnightly Caring Allowance covers the costs of one school uniform per school year. Access to financial support for school uniforms due to extraordinary circumstances will be determined on a case by case basis. For children residing at home, support may be provided where it enhances their safety and wellbeing and minimises the need for more intrusive child protection intervention.

Support may be provided for (but not limited to):

- successive care arrangement changes and/or exclusions necessitating changes of school within the school year
- damage or loss of school clothing

- circumstances where a carer has had a child or young person placed with them at the beginning of a school year but has had no capacity to budget and cover the expenditure.

This category may be used for the payment of all costs associated with a child or young person's standard school uniform, including:

- hat
- school shoes
- school bag (if stipulated by the school)
- graduation clothes and/or hire
- school and sports uniform.

Child Care and Vacation Care (G/L Account Code: 530420)

This category provides financial support to carers for approved childcare fees, before/after school care and vacation care fees. For childcare costs this category is to be used for payments/reimbursements in excess of the *Early childhood education minimum gap payment*.

This category can also be accessed for baby-sitting fees and other fees associated with childcare/child minding incurred while the carer attends foster carer training, foster carer forums, and other carer-related activities.

Early Childhood Education Minimum Gap Payment - Kindergarten (G/L Account Code: 530203)

This category is to be used when the *Early childhood education minimum gap payment* is being used to pay/reimburse costs associated with Kindergarten costs.

Early Childhood Education Minimum Gap Payment - Child Care (G/L Account Code: 530204)

This category is to be used when the *Early childhood education minimum gap payment* is being used to pay/reimburse costs associated to childcare and/or vacation care.

The following information applies to both Kindergarten, Child Care and Vacation Care.

To pay an invoice or reimburse a carer, the payment must be:

- approved by the appropriate financial delegate, and
- substantiated with supporting documentation.

The supporting documentation required to pay a childcare service provider is a valid statement or invoice. The documentation will specify the total hours/charges for the period in question, the amount paid through CCS and any other Australian Government deductions, such as ACCS child wellbeing which are specific to child care payments and also display the final amount owing (the gap payment).

Supporting documentation required for a reimbursement to the carer includes a proof of purchase (provided by the carer), a CRC Approval form and a statement or invoice from the child care service provider.

Tutoring (G/L Account Code: 530431)

This category is to be used to provide financial support for a child or young person who requires additional tutoring outside school as part of an approved case plan and where applicable, Education Support Plan (ESP). Tutoring may also be arranged to assist a young person's reintegration into mainstream education. For children residing at home, support may be provided where it enhances their safety and wellbeing and minimises the need for more intrusive child protection intervention. Children and young people must be assessed as being in need of additional educational tutoring by an education specialist or other relevant qualified professional.

The qualifications of the proposed individual employed to tutor the child or young person must also be reviewed and assessed as appropriate.

Vocational Training (G/L Account Code: 530436)

This category provides financial support for the payment of case plan and where applicable, ESP approved fees and the cost of course-related items for a young person to attend a vocational course, TAFE course, university or other tertiary institution.

Expenditure under this category can also be approved for a young person who has transitioned to adulthood if they are still attending an educational institution.

Carers in receipt of the Fortnightly Caring Allowance are to contribute towards general attendance fees and provide the day-to-day care costs, regardless of whether a young person placed with them is in receipt of the Youth Allowance, Abstudy or a wage.

Child Safety can contribute towards other compulsory fees and the purchase of special uniforms, clothing and equipment necessary for a young person to attend the course (e.g. knives and chefs' uniforms for a catering course).

Authority:

Child Protection Act 1999

Financial Accountability Act 2009

Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009

Delegations:

The use of CRC will be in accordance with departmental financial delegations and standards.

[Financial Delegations](#)

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Office: Investment and Commissioning

Help Contact: Family Based Care and Support

Links

Related Policy

CRC – 645

Case Planning (263)

Early Childhood Education and Care Participation Minimum Gap Payment Policy – CPADC 640-2

Related Procedures

CRC – Health and Wellbeing Support 645.1

CRC – Travel Support 645.3

CRC – Child and Young Person Support 645.4

CRC – Carer Support 645.5

Child Safety Practice Manual

Related Legislation

Financial Accountability Act 2009

Child Protection Act 1999

Child Protection Regulation 2023

Adoptions Act 2009

Human Rights Act 2019

Related documentation

Related Guidelines

Financial Support for Foster and Kinship Carers: Quick reference guide – Who Pays?

Forms

CRC Approval Form

Rescinded Policies/Procedures

CRC - Education support (599) policy

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