



THE HON DAN TEHAN MP
Minister for Education

MEDIA RELEASE

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Supporting families and children using child care

The Morrison Government will help families with the cost of child care and provide support for child care centres to remain viable and pay staff during enforced COVID-19 closures.

The current expert medical advice is that the child care sector remains open except where individual services have been directed to close by health authorities.

Minister for Education Dan Tehan said legislation introduced on Monday would help minimise the impact of the coronavirus on families using child care.

The amendments allow the Minister for Education to:

- increase the number of days that a family can continue to claim the Child Care Subsidy in cases where a child is absent from child care for more than the currently allowable 42 days
- give a family access to additional absences, without the need for evidence, in relation to COVID-19
- waive the current obligation of child care services to require a family to pay gap fees if the service is forced to close.

Child care services will continue to be paid the Child Care Subsidy, which can be up to 85 per cent of the daily cost of a child's care, if they are directed to temporarily close, because of COVID-19.

"Our Government has made the health and safety of all Australians its number one priority," Mr Tehan said.

"We are making changes to ensure Australian families will continue to receive financial support through the Child Care Subsidy if their children can't attend child care because of COVID-19.

"By paying the Child Care Subsidy to services that are forced to close temporarily, we are providing financial support to businesses to pay their staff and remain viable so they can re-open when it is safe to do so.

"These reforms will support the families of the 1.3 million children in child care, and the 200,000 staff in the early childhood education and care sector.

“Federal Government assistance will only apply where the closure of a child care service is based on public health advice, not where the centre closes voluntarily.

“All early childhood education and care services should follow the advice from their state or territory authorities on matters related to COVID-19.

“Their advice and directions are informed by the expert medical advice of Australia’s Chief Medical Officer and the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee.”

The current clear advice of health officials is that service should continue to remain open, unless otherwise directed, and that children should continue to attend early childhood education and care.

Child care services seeking health and situation information about COVID-19 should contact the 24/7 National Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080. Information is also available from <https://www.dese.gov.au/news/coronavirus-covid-19>.

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