



Update to families- ACCS

Monday 23rd March

Dear Families,

These are difficult times. To tackle the COVID-19 crisis, the government has decided to shut down non-essential services in many states including Victoria.

At this stage, we understand the childcare industry is still open. We have had no official notification that we are closing and will continue to keep you updated.

We understand that our families may have many questions and we have therefore put together some FAQs for you.

Q1. I can't afford to pay my fees due to temporary financial hardship. What are my options?

We understand these shut downs may have a significant impact on your income. The government is promoting the Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) for families experiencing temporary financial hardship due to COVID-19. The ACCS (Temporary Financial Hardship) is a short-term payment from the Australian Government to help families experiencing significant financial stress with the cost of child care and to ensure continuity of care.

Eligible families will receive a subsidy equal to the actual fee charged by the child care service; up to 120 per cent of the CCS hourly rate cap. In most cases, the full cost of childcare will be covered. It can be accessed for up to 13 weeks and eligible families are entitled to up to 100 hours of subsidised childcare per fortnight.

Q2. How can I apply for ACCS?

You can apply for ACCS (Temporary Financial Hardship) via the online portal at [myGov](#) which can be accessed [here](#). Families will be required to provide supporting evidence of a substantial reduction in their ability to pay child care fees such as an email from their employer.

Conditions that may meet eligibility include:

- unexpected loss of employment of an individual, or a partner of the individual, other than due to resignation or retirement
 - loss of income or business failure of an individual, or the partner of the individual, due to circumstances outside of their, or their partner's control (such as serious illness)
- More information is available via the Services Australia website which can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

Q3. I have chosen to keep my children away from care but I am not suffering temporary financial hardship. What assistance is available?

We remind families Child Care Subsidy (CCS) can be paid for up to 42 absence days per child, per financial year, without the need for families to provide documentation. If your child requires greater than 42 days, you will need a medical certificate supporting the self-isolation to access additional CCS.

We remind families choosing to self-isolate at home and who are not suffering financial hardship, that we are offering Explorers Home Isolation Support which applies a 50% discount against the full fee for approved periods.

We do require notice for applications so we can adjust staffing levels. If you have not already applied for Home Isolation Support for this week you can still apply for the Wednesday to Friday block by applying before 3pm on Monday 23rd March. Applications for additional weeks are also currently open.

[CLICK HERE to apply for Maples Home Isolation Support.](#)

Q4. If the government shuts down the centre will I be charged fees?

Fees will not be charged to families in the event of a shut down.

Q5. I want to keep my child home. Can I still get the Child Care Subsidy (CCS)?

Whether a child is actually ill or not, including where a child does not attend care as part of the family's own precautionary measure against potential contact with COVID-19, CCS can be paid for up to 42 absence days per child, per financial year, without the need for families to provide documentation.

Q6. I have used my 42 allowable absence days. Will I get CCS?

If a child is not ill and does not attend care as part of the family's own precautionary measure against potential contact with COVID-19, some medical practitioners may support families by providing a medical certificate allowing them access to additional absences if required.

Q7. Is my child safe attending childcare?

We are taking additional measures to increase the safety of the children and educators over and above our normal high standards.

Some additional measures we have implemented include:

- Creation of 'Pods' that isolate Educators and children into groups and revision of our rosters so that all Educators and children remain only in direct contact with those in their Pod. Each Pod is normally split over 2 rooms. This means we are no longer doing Family Grouping across the whole centre and this is only occurring in the classroom's Pod.
- Educators are only being rostered within a Pod (normally across 2 rooms) and not across the whole centre. For example, prior to COVID-19 we would roster an Educator to cover breaks across many rooms. Now the Educator covering breaks will only be working within that particular Pod.

We hope we have answered some of your questions. If you have any queries about your fees, please contact our Support Services team either via the centre email or via our website chat accessible via maplesearlylearning.com.au

Things are changing daily. As we receive updates, we will keep you informed.

Stay safe and healthy.

Yours sincerely

Jarrod & Samantha MacDonald