

Frequently Asked Questions

Changes to the Community Support Programme

What are the changes to the Community Support Programme?

From 1 July 2015, all approved Family Day Care (FDC) service operators will be required to meet prescribed eligibility criteria to receive Community Support Programme funding. The new criteria requires services to be the sole FDC service located in a regional, remote or disadvantaged area and to demonstrate that there is demand for the childcare in that area.

A cap of \$250,000 per financial year on the amount of operational support funding FDC services can receive will also be introduced from 1 July 2015.

Why have these changes been made?

The Australian Government is making these changes to target the funding to where it is needed and make it a more fair, sensible and sustainable programme. These changes bring the support offered to FDC service through the CSP into line with the support provided to other types of child care.

The changes are consistent with the Australian National Audit Office's (ANAO) 2012 audit of the programme which pointed to key differences between the eligibility criteria for FDC and other care types, such as Long day care and recommended that the Government review the programme's eligibility criteria. The ANAO noted that 71 per cent of CSP funding in 2012-2013 was allocated to FDC which accounted for 10 per cent of the all children in care. In contrast, 21 per cent of CSP funding was allocated to Long Day Care and Outside School Hours Care which accounted for approximately 90 per cent of all children in care.

What support is available if my service is not eligible for CSP funding?

The Government has worked closely with peak bodies in the Family Day Care sector to develop a range of resources that will be made available over the next 12 months as part of a Business Development Package.

The Business Development Package is designed to provide access to a range of business workshops and webinars, as well as professional development, support and resources providing advice about key business fundamentals such as financial management, change management and business planning. It will provide services with the tools they need to consider their options for a successful transition over the next 12 months. Please visit www.fdcsupport.org.au to find out more.

When can Family Day Care services reapply for CSP funding?

The department is unable to consider applications from Family Day Care services for Community Support Programme (CSP) funding in 2015-16 at this time. The circumstances of your service and/or the services operating in your area may change over the next 12 months prior to 1 July 2015 when all Family Day Care services will be assessed under the new programme guidelines, these changes could affect any assessment of eligibility.

All Family Day Care services, including those with existing funding agreements, will be invited to reapply for CSP funding for 2015-2016 from April 2015.

How do I determine where the majority where my service is located?

In most situations the location of an FDC service is determined by where the majority of a service's educators are located because this is considered to be where the service is providing the majority of its care. Information on the location of all approved Family Day Care services and of the number of services in each Statistical Area (SA2/SA3) is available at www.education.gov.au.

Do the majority of my educators need to be in one location (i.e. a single SA2 or SA3) to be eligible?

A service can have educators working in a number of different regional and major city locations. The department has considered the location of each educator across Australia to determine where the majority of each service's care is taking place and to determine where each service is located. Information on the location of all approved Family Day Care services and of the number of services in each SA2/SA3 is available at www.education.gov.au.

What if there are two, or more, existing services operating in the same SA2/SA3 and they reapply at the same time in 2015?

If there is more than one service operating in an area neither service is eligible to receive support. This is similar to how the department assesses Long Day Care Centres applying for CSP funding.

Why are SA3 areas used for major city areas and SA2 areas for regional and remote locations?

Different units of analysis have been chosen for major city and regional/remote locations to reflect the different geographic and demographic characteristics of these areas.

In general, major city locations have a more dense population spread than regional/remote locations and general services and amenities are geographically concentrated. FDC services in major city locations can more easily operate across boundaries, having access to much higher population base than in regional and remote locations. This is why the larger SA3 has been chosen as the unit of analysis for major city locations.

Conversely, regional/remote locations have a more dispersed population spread than major city locations and general services and amenities tend to be geographically dispersed. FDC services in regional/remote locations are less able to operate across boundaries to reach a population base, which is why the smaller SA2 has been chosen as the unit of analysis for regional/remote locations.

How do existing FDC services who are meeting demand demonstrate unmet demand in order to meet the new eligibility criteria?

Existing FDC services can demonstrate an understanding of the childcare market and the needs of their community through demographic data, for example; the number of children in the area. They can also provide information on the number of children their service cares for, waiting lists, any population growth, perhaps the development or expansion of industries requiring flexible care, and details on other local child care services including the type of care they provide, for example local long day care or occasional care services.

Is there funding available if there is unmet demand in my area but my service is not eligible for CSP funding?

CSP funding for FDC services is only available if applicants can demonstrate both unmet demand for FDC in their area and satisfy the location based criteria. Even if your service is operating in an area where there is high demand for child care, your service will not be eligible for CSP funding if it is not the sole provider of Family Day Care in the relevant area.

There is currently no other direct funding available from the department for FDC services.

It is important to note that the changes to the CSP guidelines do not impact on the ability of service operators to open or expand a Family Day Care service or to continue to provide care for families.

In addition, families using approved Family Day Care can still apply for Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate to assist with the cost of child care. Also, parents using approved Family Day Care will continue to receive a rate of CCB assistance 33.3 percent higher than parents using other care. The maximum rate of CCB for one child in Family Day Care is \$5.47 per hour, compared to \$4.10 per hour for other types of care.

How much notice is required if a service decides to close or change ownership?

Under Family Assistance Law when an operator of an approved Family Day Care service decides to close, sell or transfer ownership of a service they are required to notify the Department of Education 42 days or more before ceasing to operate that service.

If an operator does not provide the required 42 days' notice the Secretary may issue an Infringement Penalty or a Civil Penalty.

The 42 days' notice will allow families time to find alternative care, and where the service is being sold or transferred, it will allow the new operator time to apply for CCB approval.

If a service believes it will not be able to provide 42 days' notice due to circumstances outside of the service operator's control, the operator should contact the Department of Education immediately via email at familydaycare@education.gov.au.

When will current funding agreements be terminated?

The Department of Education will terminate all Community Support Programme Family Day Care funding agreements effective 30 June 2015. The department will write to services to advise them directly. Service providers will need to reapply if they wish to be assessed for Community Support Programme funding from 1 July 2015.

Where can services get more information?

Visit the Department of Education's website, www.education.gov.au, to access the Community Support Programme guidelines, which detail eligibility requirements for Family Day Care.

Other resources to help services do a preliminary self-assessment are also available. You can also direct questions to: familydaycare@education.gov.au