

More families to get child care fees waived during COVID lockdowns ^[1]

Author: 9News Staff

Source: 9News

Format: Article

Publication Date: 16 Aug 2021

AVAILABILITY

Access online ^[2]

EXCERPTED

The Federal Government is now allowing child care centres to waive gap fees in any area declared a COVID-19 hotspot for more than seven days.

The move means more Australian families impacted by COVID-19 will not pay child care fees when they keep their children home during lockdowns, Education and Youth Minister Alan Tudge said.

The gap fee is the difference between the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) the government pays to a service and the remaining fee paid by the family.

Services will also be able to waive gap fees from day one of the hotspot declaration if a state or territory directs centres to only open for some children, for example children of essential workers and vulnerable children.

Mr Tudge said families keeping children home from child care services in a hotspot had also recently been offered more allowable absence days.

"Together these changes provide certainty for families. They will immediately benefit families in Metropolitan Melbourne, the ACT and many NSW LGAs which have been identified as hotspots."

"This will take some additional financial pressure off families who are struggling during COVID-19 lockdowns," Mr Tudge said.

"It is also good for services because it means families are less likely to pull their children out of care altogether and services still get the government subsidy, even if children aren't attending."

However, it is up to individual child care centres to make the decision on whether to waive the gap.

Some child care operators have expressed concerns about it not being financially viable for them to do so. In some cases, parents have told nine.com.au the centre they are sending their children to has chosen not to waive the gap.

Region: Australia and New Zealand ^[3]

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