

FINANCIAL SUPPORT GUIDES 2023/24

These guides will assist foster carers , kinship carers and workers to understand payments associated with financial support arrangements.

For more information contact your Carer Support Worker or your child's Case Manager.

ACT Together is a consortium of:

- Barnardos Australia
- Australian Childhood Foundation
- Oz Child



A Step Up for Our Kids -
Out of Home Care
Strategy 2015-2020
is an ACT Government
funded initiative

Financial Support Payments

Financial support payments have been used in the Out of Home Care System in the ACT for a number of years as a process to support expenses directly related to the child or young person, in addition to what is covered by the carer subsidy including both therapeutic and non-therapeutic expenses. These may include specific medical needs, supervised contact visits or one-off, exceptional circumstances, events or expenses.

These support payments do not apply to children who are under an Enduring Parental Responsibility Order.

Therapeutic Services

All requests for therapeutic services should be referred to the child's Case Manager.

Approval for Financial Support Payment

Carers must discuss with their Case Manager the process for applying for financial supports that are not clearly documented below as a claim that 'will be paid'. Case Managers will be required to undertake an approval process and supporting documentation may be required. Where carers have made a request for a specific contingency payment, they will receive an outcome in writing with a rationale for the decision.

Claims for reimbursement should be made within the financial year in which they occur.

Concerns in relation to financial decision making should be discussed with the caseworker, or via the Agency's Service Feedback process (feedback@acttogether.org.au).

Claims that WILL be paid as a Financial Support ✓ (Reimbursed by Agency)

Driving lessons and any associated costs	Will pay up to a total of 6 professional lessons per young person only. Will pay insurance excess coverage for first 12 months on carers car if required.
Medical / Dental / Optical	Where the Medicare Gap exceeds \$40 for one occasion of service. Reimbursement will only be for the gap amount after Medicare Payment. Note: Therapeutic and Psychologist Assessments, and Counselling Services will not be paid through Contingencies. All referrals, payments and requests for these services are to be referred to the Therapeutic Team for consideration.

<p>Supported Contact</p>	<p>Costs associated with a child or young person's approved contact with his/her birth family or significant others. Contact mileage is recorded as a to/from rate.</p> <p>Mileage reimbursement will be made at \$0.75 per kilometre for the ACT and surrounding region. Interstate rate of \$ 0.25c per kilometre will apply.</p> <p>Other costs that may be covered include food or activities for contact.</p>
<p>Health and Safety</p>	<p>Occupational Health and Safety requirements - financial assistance may be available to assist carers with the purchase of fire blankets, first aid certificate, fire extinguishers or other safety items where necessary.</p>

Claims that **MAY** be paid as a Financial Support? (Requires further approval)

<p>Childcare Expenses and Vacation Care</p>	<p>Childcare may not be an appropriate option for all children depending on their circumstances and the nature of their placement, please discuss with the child's caseworker prior to enrolment.</p> <p>Children in foster and kinship care are eligible for the 'Additional Childcare Subsidy (child wellbeing)' which generally reduces the costs of childcare (day care, vacation care, before and after school care) to zero. To be eligible all carers must first apply for the Child Care Subsidy.</p> <p>Further information is available through Carer Support on 61 10 2200 or carersupport@acttogether.org.au or the Carer and Grandparent advisor in the Department of Human Services on 1800 245 965 or email grandparent.adviser.nsw.act2@humanservices.gov.au</p> <p>Supporting documentation will be required by the child's caseworker and action by the Childcare provider. Further information can be found at www.education.gov.au</p> <p>If there is a gap in fees once the 'Additional Childcare Subsidy (child wellbeing)' and 'Child Care Subsidy' is applied for, ACT Together may assist in covering the gap.</p>
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<p>Education Costs and Private School Fees</p>	<p>While it is expected that young people will attend government schools, fees for independent schools in exceptional circumstances will be considered on a case by case basis.</p> <p>Associated costs for vocational programs, specific needs for a special program/purpose and/or costs of obtaining employment may be provided.</p> <p>University fees may be reimbursed up to one year.</p> <p>Laptops/computers, dependant on individual circumstances.</p>
<p>Damage to property or personal injury by child in care</p>	<p>All claims seeking reimbursement for property damage, loss of property or personal injury caused by a child or young person in care should come through ACT Together in the first instance for review and investigation, and then may be sent to CYPs Admin/Finance team for processing an insurance claim. Caseworkers can provide processes for these claims.</p> <p>Claims must be made in a timely manner.</p>
<p>Establishment Costs</p>	<p>Furniture or special equipment required to set up a placement, any purchase remains with the child through any placement, or if under two years old should be returned to the agency to provide to other placements as required.</p>
<p>Excess Travel</p>	<p>Mileage is covered within the Subsidy.</p> <p>Travel related to contact is covered under the topic 'Supported Contact'.</p> <p>Should you identify that you will be undertaking excess mileage (more than usual day to day travel and appointment mileage) and that this is unavoidable, please discuss with the child's caseworker to prepare a financial brief for payment along with identification of log book records. Please note, mileage that is not agreed on in advance, will not be reimbursed.</p>

International Travel	<p>International travel costs-please note that payments for overseas travel will not be given for the purpose of family holidays. Payment for a child or young person to travel overseas will be on a discretionary one-off basis. Consideration will be given to payments towards overseas travel where this relates to purposes such as; education, sporting and cultural experiences/activities for example a school trip or participating in a sporting event.</p> <p>Passports fees will be paid for a child.</p> <p>Note: At least four (4) months notice should be given when making a request for a passport or seeking approval for a child or young person to travel overseas.</p> <p>International travel requires approval from CYPs Director/Executive Director prior to any arrangements being made.</p>
Other One-off expenses/events	<p>Any other claims not covered by Guides</p>

Claims that WILL NOT be paid as a Financial support X (included in Subsidy)

General Accommodation and food costs	<p>Including special dietary needs, cleaning and maintenance of home, general utility (gas, electricity, gas, phone), toys, gifts and presents</p>
Baby Sitting and Occasional Care	
General Clothing and Footwear	<p>Including school clothing and footwear</p>
General Education Costs	<p>Includes all ACT Government and Preschool and School costs, elective and subject costs, books, stationery materials and equipment, school formals, school photos, excursions and camps. Voluntary contributions are not required to be paid.</p>
After Care Assistance	<p>Any After Care Assistance should be in child/young person's transition plan and discussed with agency caseworker. Supports provided through Post Care Support are subject to an application process and approval by CYPs.</p>

General Practitioner, Dental, Optical, Therapy Services	Including general pharmaceutical needs The payment of out of pocket expenses before Medicare gap
Haircuts/ tattoos/piercings	Birth parents' permission must be sought to change a child or young person's appearance by hairstyle or invasive process when the Director General does not hold long term parental responsibility.
Stolen goods (property of child or young people) replacement	
Activities, Entertainment and Holidays	Includes leisure/hobby activities/non-school sporting activities, cultural activities and holidays. All children and young people are encouraged to participate in community activities
Pet/ Pet costs	A child or young person should not have sole responsibility for pet care.
Communication costs	Telephone, mobile phones, phone cards, internet costs.

Note:

- As every child and young person's circumstances are different, the advice in these Guides should not be read as a statement of entitlement.
- Any claims that are seen as exceptional individual circumstances of the child or young person and fall outside the coverage of the subsidy, and/or are not covered by the Financial Support Guide that is sought to be paid are to be referred to the child's case manager to seek appropriate approval by a delegated staff member. Carers who request financial support outside of the agreements within this guide will receive an outcome in writing with a rationale for the decision.

Other Financial Related Information

A range of other financial assistance is available from the ACT and Commonwealth Government. For more information see:

ACT Government - www.assistance.act.gov.au

Commonwealth Government - www.humanservices.gov.au

Health Care Card	All children and young people in the care of the Director General are eligible for Health Care Card. This facilitates that access to medical services that bulk bill, PBS medications, Dental Health Scheme, Spectacle Support Scheme etc. Further information is available at www.humanservices.gov.au
Bus Passes	All children and young people with Health Care Cards attending ACT Government schools, are eligible for a term bus pass if they are residing outside a radius of 1km for primary school children, 2km for high school, college or students enrolled in a year 10 or 12 equivalent CIT Course. Applications must be made before the start of term and are available at www.assistance.act.gov.au Carers living in rural areas may be eligible for allowances to assist with the costs of transporting children. Further information can be found at www.transport.act.gov.au
Federal Government Benefits	All carers and young people should apply for Federal Government Benefits if restoration to family is not planned for in the very near future. This can include Family Tax Benefit, Parenting Payments, Double Orphan Pension, Carer Allowance, Youth Allowance and Disability Allowance. Further information is available at www.humanservices.gov.au Freecall 1800245965 Email: grandparent.adviser.nsw.act2@humanservices.gov.au
ACT Spectacle Scheme	The Spectacles Subsidy Scheme provides eligible ACT residents with a Subsidy of up to \$200 once every two years. Eligible people for the scheme must be residents of the ACT and hold a Pensioner Concession Card from either Centrelink or the Department of Veterans Affairs, or Healthcare Card which the holder has been entitled to for three months or more. Dependants of cardholders are also entitled to assistance under the Scheme if their name appears on the card. For more information and application forms go to https://www.revenue.act.gov.au/communityassistance/spectacles-subsidy-scheme

<p>TILA – Transition to Independent Living Allowance</p>	<p>TILA is a one-off practical support from the Australian Government of \$1,500, to assist some young people aged between 15 and 25 years who are making the transition from formal and informal care to Independent Living. TILA is also for young people who continue to live with their foster carers after their care order expires.</p> <p>Examples include: connection to utilities, appliances, white goods, education and consumables. Case managers can assist in making an application. Eligibility criteria, forms and more information can be found at www.dss.gov.au The Community Adolescent Program at ACT Together can assist with a TILA application, please discuss with your caseworker.</p>
<p>Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS)</p>	<p>If you have a child in your care accessing child care (long day care, before and after school care, vacation care) you are eligible for ACCS (child wellbeing). In most cases it will cover the full cost of your child care.</p> <p>You MUST</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • apply to Centrelink for Child Care Subsidy (CCS), as you need to be granted Child Care Subsidy eligibility (it does not matter if the entitlement is zero due to the activity test requirements because once ACCS is granted, the carer is exempt from this requirement). You can claim the subsidy using your Centrelink online account through myGov, alternatively contact Dalia Bahgat from Centrelink - details below. Your child's immunizations must be up to date. • Complete a Complying Written Arrangement (CWA) enrolment with the child care provider and accept liability for the child care fees. The enrolment must be in your name for subsidies to be applied. • Provide a copy of the court order and the child's CRN to the child care provider. • Advise your case manager of the child's enrolment in a child care service, ACT Together will provide a letter to the child care provider to support the application for ACCS.
<p>Respite Care</p>	<p>Respite care is planned, regular or one-off time-limited breaks with an approved carer for the primary carers of children and young people in care. Contact your caseworker to discuss respite care.</p>
<p>ACT Government School Fees</p>	<p>ACT Government Schools and Preschools do not charge school fees. If any problems or issues arise as a result of not paying Voluntary School fees, please contact Families & Students, Complaints & Feedback on 6205 5429.</p>