



## Special Child Care Benefit for children at risk - Fact sheet for approved child care services

### What is Special Child Care Benefit (SCCB)

Special Child Care Benefit (SCCB) is a component of the Child Care Benefit (CCB) and can be used to subsidise or cover the costs of approved child care for eligible children.

There are two types of SCCB:

- SCCB rate and additional hours for children at risk of serious abuse or neglect
- [SCCB rate for families experiencing hardship](#).

**This fact sheet is about SCCB to support children at risk.**

### When can SCCB be approved to support a child at risk?

SCCB rate and additional hours of CCB can be used to help a **child who is at risk of serious abuse or neglect** to maintain or increase attendance at approved child care. Where the cost of care is a barrier, SCCB can also be used to help a child at risk to enter approved child care.

Using SCCB for a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect is designed to support ongoing or increased attendance at child care, so that:

- the amount of time the child spends in the risk environment is reduced
- the amount of time the child spends in a stable and developmentally beneficial environment is maintained or increased
- the child remains 'visible' in the community and opportunities to link the family with other appropriate services are increased
- the parent/carer has an opportunity for respite or to seek assistance from other agencies such as health and family support services.

### How do I identify an eligible child?

Chapter 14 of the [Child Care Service Handbook](#) provides guidance to help you identify if a child is at risk of serious abuse or neglect and if SCCB is an appropriate response.

The agency responsible for child protection in your state or territory can also assist you with identifying children at risk. Links to [state and territory child protection agencies](#) are at the end of this fact sheet.

### Can a child care service provider approve SCCB for a child at risk?

An approved child care service provider can approve up to 13 weeks of SCCB rate each financial year for an individual conditionally eligible for CCB in respect of the child at risk. This is a combined total (not 13 weeks of SCCB for at risk and 13 weeks for hardship). The SCCB rate can be up to the full amount of the usual fee charged by your service.

You can also approve an increase in the weekly limit of CCB hours for an initial period of up to 13 weeks for a child at risk.



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### What evidence and documentation do I need to approve the initial period of SCCB for a child at risk?

To certify approval of SCCB for a child at risk for an initial period, you need to complete a *SCCB Claim for Special Child Care Benefit and/or increased weekly limit of CCB hours* form (FA023.0907). The form must be signed by the director or operator of your service. It does not need to be signed by the family.

Independent supporting documentation is **not** required to approve SCCB for a child at risk for the initial 13 week period. However, where possible you should obtain supporting documentation, as it may help you in your decision and be useful if you apply to the Family Assistance Office (FAO) for further periods of SCCB. Supporting documentation could include letters of referral from other agencies where appropriate. The family is **not** required to supply any documentation.

### Can I send applications for approval for the initial period of SCCB to the Family Assistance Office (FAO)?

No - only the child care service provider can approve the first 13 weeks of SCCB in a financial year.

The only exception is when a service has reached its 18 per cent approval limit and does not have approval for a higher limit. In this case, initial approvals can be sent to the FAO, along with requests for further periods of SCCB. For further information see question [‘Are there limits to the overall amount of SCCB a service provider can approve?’](#)

### What if the child needs more than 13 weeks of SCCB in a financial year?

More than 13 weeks of SCCB rate or increased weekly limit of CCB hours can be provided for a child at risk if required. All applications for further periods of SCCB must be sent to the FAO.

You need to re-apply to the FAO for each further period required. You should only request approval of SCCB for the number of weeks required to improve the child’s situation. Applications are assessed by the FAO on a case by case basis. The FAO is able to approve further periods (generally up to an additional 13 weeks per application).

There is no maximum limit on the total length of time that SCCB can be provided for a child at risk.

### What evidence and documentation will the FAO need to assess and approve further periods of SCCB?

You need to apply to the FAO using the *SCCB Claim for Special Child Care Benefit and/or increased weekly limit of CCB hours* form (FA023.0907).

For a child at risk, the form needs to be signed by the director or operator of your service. The statement of reasons should contain all relevant details to assist the FAO in making an informed assessment. Providing documentary evidence such as letters of referral from relevant agencies is necessary to assist the FAO in their assessment of the application. The family does **not** need to sign the form or supply any of the supporting documentation.



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### If I approve the initial 13 weeks, how do I know that the FAO will approve any further periods of SCCB?

The FAO considers applications for further periods of SCCB on a case by case basis. While there is no guarantee that an application will be approved, it will help to provide as much information as possible about the child's circumstances. You can contact the FAO Special Child Care Assessment team to discuss your application form and obtain further guidance on how to apply. [Contact details](#) are provided at the end of this fact sheet.

### What can I do if a child is at risk and no one is conditionally eligible for CCB by fee reduction for that child?

As the service provider, you can make your service eligible to receive SCCB on behalf of a child who is at risk and has no one conditionally eligible to receive CCB by fee reduction. This allows a service to respond immediately to a child at risk where cost and eligibility for CCB by fee reductions may otherwise prevent them from attending child care.

You will need to make a claim to the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) to make your service eligible for CCB by fee reduction. You need to do this to be paid fee reductions and approve SCCB for the child at risk for an initial period of up to 13 weeks in a financial year. You can also determine the weekly limit of hours of care for the child.

If more than 13 weeks in a financial year of SCCB is needed in these circumstances, you will need to apply to DEEWR via the CCMS Help Desk. Further periods can be approved by DEEWR. [Contact details](#) are provided at the end of this fact sheet.

### Are there limits to the overall amount of SCCB a service provider can approve?

The total amount of SCCB a child care service provider can approve in one quarter is limited to 18 per cent of the CCB paid to the service in the quarter before last.

However, if you reach the 18 per cent limit and need to approve a new 13 week SCCB period, you should apply to DEEWR for a higher limit. If a higher limit is approved, your service can then continue to approve initial 13 week periods in the quarter, up to the higher limit.

If a higher limit is not approved you are able to instead send these applications directly to the FAO for the remainder of the quarter.

(Note: a quarter refers to the three month periods Jan – March, April – June, July – September and October-December)

### What else do I need to consider when approving or applying for SCCB for a child at risk?

Whenever you have concerns that a child is at risk you need to consider the mandatory reporting requirements and obligations in your state or territory to report suspected or actual cases of abuse and/or neglect. Please contact the relevant child protection authority in your state or territory for further information on mandatory reporting and the services and resources available to support children at risk and you as a service provider. Links to [state and territory child protection agencies](#) are at the end of this fact sheet.



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### Where can I go for further information?

Detailed information can be found in the *Child Care Service Handbook* available online at [Child Care Service Handbook](#).

You should also be aware of your obligations under the *Privacy Act 1988* in handling personal information. Please refer to Chapter 4 of the handbook for details of the National Privacy Principles.

For questions about applying for further periods of SCCB please contact:

FAO Special Childcare Assessment Team

Phone: 1800 050 021

Fax: 1800 700 533

For questions about:

- making your service eligible for CCB by fee reduction for a child at risk when no one is eligible
- applying for further periods of SCCB for a child at risk in these circumstances or
- about applying for a higher approval limit if you will exceed the 18 per cent limit

please contact the Child Care Management System (CCMS) Helpdesk, by calling 1300 667 276.

### Forms

To approve or apply for Special Child Care Benefit and/or increased weekly limit of CCB hours you can access the *Claim for Special Child Care Benefit and/or increased eligible hours* form (FAO23.0907) at [centrelink.gov.au](http://centrelink.gov.au).

To apply for SCCB for a child at risk when no one is receiving child care benefit you can access the *Special Child Care Benefit for a child at risk when no one is receiving Child Care Benefit* form (DEEWR 08-311) at [Child Care Service Handbook](#).

To apply for a service approval limit higher than 18 per cent you can access the *Approving Special Child Care Benefit – Application for a higher approval limit where 18 per cent has been reached* form (DEEWR 08-310) at [Child Care Service Handbook](#).

To help monitor the value of SCCB approvals made by your service in a quarter to see if you need to apply to DEEWR for a higher limit, you can access the *Approving the Special Child Care Benefit – Will my service exceed the 18 per cent limit* form (DEEWR08-309) at [Child Care Service Handbook](#).

To visit the website in your state or territory of the department responsible for children, youth and families click on the relevant link below:

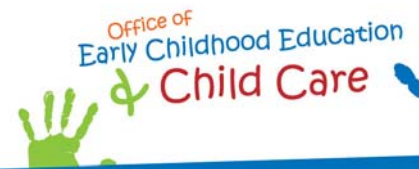
NSW Department of Community Services (DoCS) - [www.community.nsw.gov.au](http://www.community.nsw.gov.au)

Victorian Department of Human Services (DHS) - [www.cyf.vic.gov.au](http://www.cyf.vic.gov.au)



Australian Government

Department of Education, Employment  
and Workplace Relations



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Queensland Department of Communities, Child Safety Services - [www.childsafety.qld.gov.au](http://www.childsafety.qld.gov.au)

WA Department for Communities for Communities - [www.community.wa.gov.au/DFC](http://www.community.wa.gov.au/DFC) and

WA Department for Child Protection - [www.childprotection.wa.gov.au](http://www.childprotection.wa.gov.au)

SA Department for Families and Communities - [www.dfc.sa.gov.au](http://www.dfc.sa.gov.au) and [www.families.sa.gov.au](http://www.families.sa.gov.au)

Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services - <http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/dcyfs>

ACT Office for Children, Youth and Family Support - <http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/ocyfs>

NT Department of Health and Families - <http://www.nt.gov.au/health/>