

Help with childcare costs



Work and Income
Te Hiranga Tangata

A service of the Ministry of Social Development

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Parents and caregivers with dependent children

Work and Income may be able to help with assistance towards childcare costs if:

- you're the main caregiver of the child, *and*
- your family is on a low or middle income, *and*
- you're a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident, *and*
- your child has at least three hours of care a week.

There are different conditions and requirements that apply before assistance can be given.

What childcare assistance is available to you will depend on your individual situation and the type of childcare your child is enrolled in.

Please talk to us.

Childcare assistance

> *Childcare Subsidy*

The Childcare Subsidy is for pre-school children aged under five years (or under six years if you get the Child Disability Allowance for them) attending an approved early childhood programme.

You could get help with up to nine hours of childcare a week if you're not working, studying or training, and up to 50 hours a week if you're:

- working, studying or on an approved training course, *or*
- involved in an activity that Work and Income has asked you to do, *or*
- a shift worker who works nights, *or*
- seriously ill or disabled, *or*
- caring for a child in hospital or for a child you get the Child Disability Allowance for.

In most cases you can't get the Childcare Subsidy for more than nine hours a week if the child's other parent or caregiver can care for them.

All payments are automatically stopped when the programme you use closes for Christmas holidays and are restarted when the centre reopens.

> *OSCAR Subsidy*

The OSCAR (Out of School Care and Recreation) Subsidy is for children aged five to 13 years (or up to 18 years if they receive the Child Disability Allowance). It helps towards the costs of before-school and after-school care for up to 20 hours a week, and school holiday programmes for up to 50 hours a week.

You may be able to get this subsidy if you're:

- working, studying or on an approved training course, *or*
- involved in an activity that Work and Income has asked you to do, *or*
- a shift worker who works nights, *or*
- seriously ill or disabled, *or*
- caring for a child in hospital or for a child you get the Child Disability Allowance for.

In most cases you can't get the OSCAR Subsidy if the child's other parent or caregiver can take care of the child.

If you don't know how many hours of care you'll need each week (because you're a casual or on-call worker for instance), we'll talk with you about your options when you apply for a subsidy.

If you get the OSCAR Subsidy during the year, we'll send you a form before the end of each school term to ask about your childcare needs for the school holidays and the next term. We can pay for more hours during the holidays.

If you need the OSCAR Subsidy just for the school holidays, you must apply before each holiday.

> **Guaranteed Childcare Assistance Payment (GCAP)**

This payment is for young parents who are in education, training or work-based learning to assist with the cost of childcare in an approved early childhood programme for children under five.

You may be able to get GCAP if you're:

- receiving a Young Parent Payment (or 16 to 18 years old and included as a partner in a main benefit), *and*
- in full-time education, training or work-based learning, *or*
- working part-time (for up to 15 hours a week), *and*
- the main caregiver for a child under the age of five.

or, if you are not on a benefit, and you're:

- under 18, *and*
- attending secondary school full-time, *and*
- the main caregiver for a child under the age of five.

If you have a partner, to receive GCAP there needs to be a good reason why your partner can't provide childcare. For example, your partner is studying, working or actively seeking work.

GCAP covers the actual childcare service costs for up to 50 hours a week for each child.

Neither GCAP nor the Childcare or OSCAR Subsidy can be paid for an informal carer.

You can't get both GCAP and the Childcare Subsidy for the same child.

> **Early Learning Payment**

For clients enrolled in Family Start or Early Start programmes

If you're enrolled in a Family Start or Early Start programme and your child is aged from 18 months to three years, you may be able to get Early Learning Payment for your child to attend an approved early childhood programme for between 15 and 20 hours a week depending on the age of your child.

Families getting Childcare Subsidy or GCAP can't get Early Learning Payment for the same hours.

> **20 Hours ECE**

Government funds up to 20 hours a week of Early Childhood Education (ECE) for children aged three to four years attending an approved ECE programme.

Families getting *20 Hours ECE* can't get GCAP or the Childcare Subsidy for the same hours.

Please tell us straight away if you're getting either GCAP or the Childcare Subsidy and *20 Hours ECE* as we may need to adjust your GCAP or Childcare Subsidy. We can then make sure you don't miss out on any payments or end up getting too much and have a debt to pay back.

Childcare services

> Services for pre-schoolers

Approved programmes include:

- early childhood education and care services such as:
 - kindergartens and preschools
 - childcare centres and creches
 - playcentres and playgroups
 - Kohanga Reo, Punanga Reo, Aoga and other programmes with a language and culture focus
- approved home-based care.

> Services for school-age children

Approved OSCAR programmes such as:

- before school
- after school
- holiday programmes and camps.

Payments

How much you can get depends on the size of your family, your income, and how many hours a week your child goes to the childcare provider.

Childcare assistance starts from the date the care starts (or from the date you apply if you apply after it starts). All subsidies are paid directly to the childcare provider.

Number of children	Gross weekly income*	Childcare Subsidy (per hour, per child)
1	Less than \$1,200.00	\$3.98
	\$1,200.00 to \$1,299.99	\$2.78
	\$1,300.00 to \$1,399.99	\$1.54
	\$1,400.00 or more	nil
2	Less than \$1,380.00	\$3.98
	\$1,380.00 to \$1,489.99	\$2.78
	\$1,490.00 to \$1,599.99	\$1.54
	\$1,600.00 or more	nil
3 or more	Less than \$1,540.00	\$3.98
	\$1,540.00 to \$1,669.99	\$2.78
	\$1,670.00 to \$1,799.99	\$1.54
	\$1,800.00 or more	nil

Rates as at 1 April 2014

* If you received Childcare Assistance between 28 September 2009 and 26 September 2010, these rates may be different. For more information visit our website www.workandincome.govt.nz

Applying for a subsidy

If you're a Youth Service client, please talk to your Youth Service provider.

Otherwise you can calculate your childcare assistance by using our online application form. This is available on the Working for Families website **www.workingforfamilies.govt.nz**.

To apply you can visit **www.workandincome.govt.nz** or call us on **0800 559 009** and we'll send you a form to fill in.

As part of the form has to be filled in by your childcare provider, we suggest you apply at least three to four weeks before you need your subsidy to start.

> Reviews

Childcare assistance is reviewed every year. It also usually stops or is reviewed:

- the day after your job or course ends
- after 12 weeks if you stop work because you have a health condition or are injured
- when your child reaches the age limit for the subsidy
- when your child leaves the pre-school facility or OSCAR programme
- if the child leaves your care.

Tell us about changes

You must tell us straight away about any changes in your circumstances that could affect your payments.

For example:

- if you or your partner's income changes
- if your child stops going or moves to another early childhood programme or OSCAR programme
- if there's a change in your child's attendance
- if the number of hours you (or your partner) work or study each week changes
- if the reason why you get a subsidy changes, for instance your health improves or your child leaves hospital
- your child starts or stops receiving *20 Hours ECE*.



For more information visit

Work and Income website

www.workandincome.govt.nz

Working for Families website

www.workingforfamilies.govt.nz



If you have any questions

call us on **0800 559 009** from 7am to 6pm

Monday to Friday or 8am to 1pm Saturday,

or contact your nearest service centre



***If you're deaf, hearing-impaired or
find it hard to communicate by phone,***

you can contact us on:

Deaf Link free-fax 0800 621 621

Telephone typewriter (TTY) 0800 111 113

Text 029 286 7170

Email MSD_Deaf_Services@msd.govt.nz

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