

CARER SUBSIDY GUIDE 2021/22

UPDATED JANUARY 2022

These guides will assist foster carers, kinship carers and workers to understand payments associated with the care of children and young people under A Step Up For Our Kids – One Step Can Make a Lifetime of Difference.

For more information contact your child's caseworker or carer support.

For subsidy rates for children in care from 1 July 2015 where grandfathered arrangements have been applied, please contact your ACT Together carer support worker.

ACT Together is a consortium of:

- Barnardos Australia
- Australian Childhood Foundation
- Oz Child

Initiative of



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

Subsidy Payments for Foster and Kinship Carers

A Subsidy payment is provided to foster and kinship carers who have a child/ren or young person/s under the care of the Director-General in their care.

Under *A Step Up for Our Kids*, Carer Subsidy Guidelines ensure the fairest and best use of resources across the whole cohort of children and young people in care in the ACT. The Subsidy is based on the age of the child or young person and is intended to contribute to the cost of living for a child or young person regardless of their complexity of need. This includes things such as food, clothing, recreational activities and haircuts.

2021-22 Foster and Kinship Care Rates

Subsidy Type	Age Groups	Weekly Rate	Who is Eligible? What is the Subsidy expected to cover?
Foster and Kinship Care, and Enduring Parental Responsibility (EPR) Rate	0-4 5-14 15-17	\$289.82 \$324.98 \$436.55	<p>Approved kinship and foster carers caring for a child for whom the Director-General has parental responsibility, or who are under an EPR order.</p> <p>This subsidy is intended to contribute towards the daily costs of caring for a child. For example: food, household provisions, household costs, clothing, footwear, school wear, education, daily travel, suitable car restraints, general medical, pharmaceuticals, general communication costs, gifts, pocket money, holidays, hobbies, activities.</p> <p>No further costs/contingency payments can be claimed under an EPR.</p>
Extended Continuum of Care	18-20	\$277.46	<p>Subject to an application, approval and review process. This extension is determined on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>This subsidy is an extension of the Carer Subsidy and intended to contribute to the living costs of a child who remains in care after turning 18 years old.</p> <p>Approved kinship and foster carers caring for a child aged 18 – 20 (inclusive) whose Transition Plan states they will continue to live with their carer in order to be best supported may be eligible to receive this payment.</p>

			Contact your child or young person's caseworker if you would like to discuss the application process.
Emergency Care Subsidy	0-17	\$480.20	<p>Provided to approved kinship and foster carers when emergency action sees a child needing to come into care with less than 24 hours' notice.</p> <p>This subsidy is intended to contribute to the daily care costs and establishment of the placement for the child and is paid for a maximum of 21 days while a longer-term arrangement is being organised.</p>
Respite Care Subsidy	0-17	\$387.97	<p>This rate is provided to an approved carer when they provide respite for a child on an overnight basis.</p> <p>This Subsidy is intended to cover the costs of the child/young person for a short period and is set in isolation to the needs of the usual care arrangements. The Subsidy is calculated pro-rata on a daily basis.</p>
After-Hours Rate		\$100	ACT Together pays an After-Hours Rate for new entries into Out of Home Care. \$100 a day will be paid for children placed with carers outside of business hours (after 5pm and before 9am) for a period of 7 days. After the 7 days the emergency care subsidy will be paid for each child for the next 14 days. After the 14 day period the basic subsidy will be provided for each child.

Notes:

- Rates are current as a 1 July 2021.
- Payments to carers are made fortnightly in arrears.
- Subsidies are tax free, not means-tested and are not affected by Australian Government Benefits that you or the child/young people may be receiving (eg youth allowance), with the exception of the Extended Continuum of Care subsidy.
- A statement of earnings may be issued for payments made outside of these rates.
- Payments under these guidelines end when the placement ends. Please contact your caseworker immediately if you think that there has been an overpayment.

A range of other financial assistance is available from the ACT and Commonwealth Government for children in care and their carers. 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 a 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
Child Care Subsidy	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. 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 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
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 Carers who have a young person remain in their care post 18 years, may be eligible for further supports such as the Carer Payment or Carer Allowance.
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

	<p>are also entitled to assistance under the Scheme if their name appears on the card.</p> <p>For more information and application forms go to https://www.revenue.act.gov.au/community-assistance/spectacles-subsidy-scheme</p>
TILA – Transition to Independent Living Allowance	<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>
Respite Care	<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>
ACT Government School Fees	<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>

Supports for Foster Carers and Kinship Carers

ACT Together – Foster and Kinship Support

One of the key features of ACT Together is the support we seek to provide to carers.

Children in care have a caseworker, foster and kinship carers caring through ACT Together will have access to support through the Carer Support Program.

The caseworker for the child is involved in aspects of the child's care and supports the placement in a general way. This includes requests for contingencies, arranging contact, home visits, supporting carers in behaviour management, organising Reviews meeting etc.

Carer Support is there for you and your family. The Carer Support Team has a range of experience in foster and kinship care, case management and providing support to caring families.

The role of carer support includes debriefing, advocacy, referral to other services, annual reviews and compliance checks.

The Carer Support team regularly organises carer coffee and support groups, playgroups and special events, as a way building carer support networks.

In addition, we offer training on a regular basis. Training is developed based on feedback from carers.

Phone: (02) 6110 2200 Email: carersupport@acttogether.org.au

More information, forms and resources can be found at www.acttogether.org.au

Other Supports:

Carer Liaison Officer

Situated in the Business Support Unit - Child and Youth Protection Services.

Provides support and advocacy for foster and kinship carers.

Phone: (02) 6205 8357 Email: carerliaisonofficer@act.gov.au

Carers ACT – Kinship & Foster Carers Advocacy Service

Situated at 2/80 Beaurepaire Crescent HOLT ACT 2615.

Carers ACT are an independent service and can help to:

- Communicate effectively with foster carer agency or CYPS
- Link you into the supports and information you need
- Have your voice heard and acknowledged
- Develop your self-advocacy skills
- Support you in writing correspondence, phone calls, attending meetings, tribunals and as court support

Phone: 1800 242 636 Email: kinshipfostercare@carersact.org.au

www.carersact.org.au