



## What child care services are available in regional, remote and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities?

The Australian Government directly funds early childhood education and care services in some regional, remote and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. These services are referred to by the Government as Non Mainstream Services.

Non Mainstream Services are funded by the Government to:

- Provide access to early learning and care services where the market would otherwise fail to deliver, including in rural, regional and remote locations, and;
- To provide access to culturally competent services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families including those in urban and regional communities.

The common objectives of all Non Mainstream Services are to provide:

- quality child care and early childhood education that:
  - enhances the children's cultural, physical, social, emotional, language and learning development of all children;
- flexible early childhood education and child care services that meet the needs of all families in the community; and
- developmentally and culturally appropriate play and learning experiences which foster individual children's strengths, abilities and interests.

Non Mainstream Services are generally not approved for the purposes of administering Child Care Benefit (CCB) so families using these services are not eligible to claim CCB or the Child Care Rebate (CCR). The cost to families in using these services, however, is usually minimal as the Australian Government meets the majority of the costs involved in providing these services.

### Who is eligible to use Non Mainstream Services?

While the majority of Non Mainstream services are designed to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, Indigenous focused BBF services are open to all children in the relevant community and must be tailored to the needs of the whole community.

### What services are available?

#### Flexible/innovative services

A flexible/innovative child care service may include Outside School Hours Care, Long Day Care, Occasional Care, mobile multi-purpose services, on-farm care, multi-sited child care, and overnight care.

Innovative services assist families and communities where conventional mainstream services do not meet their particular needs.

### Mobile child care services

Mobile child care services visit rural and remote areas and may provide flexible children's sessions, including playgroups, vacation care, on-farm care, parenting support, toy and video lending libraries, and parent resource library services. Some mobile services also provide regular LDC sessions in community venues, visiting small rural communities each week.

### Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Services

Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Services (MACS) are community-based services funded to meet the educational, social and developmental needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Long day care is provided for below school age children with each MACS providing at least one other form of child care or activity such as outside school hours care, playgroups, nutrition programs and/or parenting programs.

### Indigenous playgroups

Indigenous playgroups provide children not yet attending school with a wide range of culturally-appropriate developmental, educational and socialisation activities that are relevant to the local community. The social and educational development aims to prepare children for preschool, school and relationships within the wider community. Playgroups also provide an opportunity for families to support each other and share common experiences.

### Indigenous outside school hours care and enrichment programs

Indigenous outside school hours care and enrichment programs provide care for school aged children. Enrichment programs may operate from a community venue and may provide supervised care, organised activities, homework centres and nutrition services.

### Crèches (including JET crèches)

The crèche model provides a flexible form of child care where other forms of child care are not available. Crèches are centre-based and operate for flexible hours.

Crèches offer culturally-appropriate child care programs and provide families with an introduction to early learning and child care opportunities. These services aim to foster individual children's strengths, abilities and interests by providing developmentally and culturally-appropriate play and learning experiences.

Crèches established before 2008 are known as 'JET crèches' which were set up to assist eligible unemployed parents wanting to undertake study, work or job search activities to help them enter or re-enter the workforce. New services are known as 'crèches' as they will offer child care services to a broader group of clients.

### Mainstream Services in regional, remote and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

Mainstream services also operate in some regional, remote and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities. These include:

- Family Day Care which provides care and learning and development activities in an educator's home.
- In Home Care which provides care and learning and development activities in a child's own home. In Home Care is available for families without access to a child care service or where child care services cannot meet their needs.
- You can search for Mainstream services in rural and regional locations by visiting [www.mychild.gov.au](http://www.mychild.gov.au).

## How can I get more information?

For further information on child care services in regional, remote and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities:



visit [mychild.gov.au](http://mychild.gov.au)



call 13 36 84, identify the state or territory office that you wish to speak to and ask for 'Child Care Support'

### Useful resources

For news and information on child care visit the mychild website available at [www.mychild.gov.au](http://www.mychild.gov.au)

Access the Child Care Estimator at [www.humanservices.gov.au/estimators](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/estimators)

Family assistance payment rates fact sheet, available at [www.humanservices.gov.au](http://www.humanservices.gov.au)