



Teenage Education Payment Guidelines

For Non-Government Service Providers and Department of Communities and Justice
(DCJ) Districts



Document approval

The revised Teenage Education Payment (TEP) Guidelines has been endorsed and approved by:

Craig Layton

Executive Director, Child and Family

Approved:

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1 Introduction

Education is important for every young person to reach their full potential. Positive learning experiences and engagement in education can act as a powerful protector of lifelong wellbeing, directly linked to employment and life opportunities.

Carers have a crucial role in supporting young people in their care to engage in learning and improve educational outcomes. The Teenage Education Payment (TEP) supports carers and guardians of young people aged 16-18 years in out-of-home care (OOHC) to remain engaged in education. Eligible carers and guardians can receive up to \$12,000, over two years to support young people in their care to be engaged in school or other education or training by providing education-related assistance such as supplies and uniforms.

2 Purpose

The TEP provides financial assistance to eligible foster, relative and kinship carers and guardians to support young people in their care aged 16 to 18 years to remain engaged in school or other education and training.

These guidelines provide information for DCJ District and NGO OOHC providers, caseworkers, carers and young persons on eligibility requirements, the application process, and the requirements for providers in administering payments.

2.1 Key documents

- [Application forms](#) - also available from caseworkers, DCJ Community Services Centres (CSCs) and NGO service providers
- [Teenage Education Payment Carer Questions and Answers for carers.](#)
- [Teenage Education Payment NGO Service Provider Payment Process Guide 2020.](#)
- [Teenage Education Payment - NGO Service Provider Quarterly Payment Template.](#)
- [Service Provider Checklist for submitting TEP Quarterly Report.](#)
- [Term dates and Public school calendars.](#)

3 Definitions

The table below is a list of terms, keywords and/or abbreviations used throughout this document.

Term	Definition
Carer	Eligible authorised foster, relative and kinship carers from both DCJ and non-government (NGO) service providers, and providing both statutory and supported out-of-home care placements.
CFDU	Child and Family District Units (CFDUs) have been established in all DCJ districts to coordinate referrals from DCJ to service providers. These units undertake a number of functions.
Centrelink	Agency of the Australian Government's Department of Human Services that provides access to social, health and other payments and services such as Youth Allowance and Family Tax Benefit A.
DCJ	NSW Department of Communities and Justice.
Full-Time Study	15 hours or more per week and can take place at a high school, TAFE or equivalent setting.
Family Tax Benefit A	Family Tax Benefit Part A paid by the Australian Government.
Guardian	Eligible guardians with a guardianship order from the NSW Children's Court who are receiving other financial support from DCJ.
Leaving and Aftercare Financial Plans	Leaving Care Plans only relate to children and young people in OOHC (Statutory or supported). Children and young people under a Guardianship Order are not legally in OOHC.
Service Provider	Designated NGO service provider contracted by DCJ to provide out-of-home care
OOHC	Out-of-home care (statutory or supported)
Part-Time Study	Study that is less than 15 hours a week. See Appendix 2
Training / vocational education	Training has specific goals of improving a person's capability, capacity, productivity and performance that is through a vocational education setting. It is education that prepares people to work as a technician or to take up employment in a skilled craft or trade as a tradesperson or artisan. A vocational school is a type of educational institution specifically designed to provide vocational education. See Appendix 2 for approved training.
Year 12 equivalent	For the purposes of the TEP, studies to complete Year 12 or equivalent are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher School Certificate (HSC) or interstate equivalent • HSC via school-based apprenticeship or traineeship • HSC via Vocational Education and Training (VET) NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) endorsed courses • TAFE NSW Certificate IV in Tertiary Preparation • International Baccalaureate, diploma level. See Appendix 2 for more information.

4 Eligibility - who can get the payment?

A carer (statutory or supported), or guardian is eligible for the TEP if they meet **all** of the following eligibility requirements:

Eligibility:

1	<p>Authorised carers or guardians caring for a young person aged 16 to 18 years who is in full time or part-time (subject to approval) education and/or training.</p> <p>See Appendix 2 for a more information on part-time and approved education and training.</p>
2	<p>Authorised carers or guardians who have been caring for a young person since the young person was 15 years old, and they receive the Family Tax Benefit A or equivalent income (approximately \$56,137 or less).</p> <p><i>Note: a pension card can be provided if there is no Family Tax Benefit A documentation available.</i></p> <p><i>This requirement does not apply if the young person came into their care when the young person was 16 years or older.</i></p>
3	<p>Authorised carers or guardians who have been caring for the young person for more than 3 months.</p>
4	<p>Authorised NSW carer who is caring for a young person aged 16 to 18 years with a current NSW Care Order (Statutory or Supported) who resides in NSW or interstate.</p>
5	<p>Authorised NSW guardian where DCJ placed the child or young person with a guardian who resides outside NSW, or has supported an authorised carer to move with the child interstate prior to seeking a guardianship order.</p>
6	<p>Authorised NSW carer or guardian who is caring for a young person aged 16 to 18 years who resides in NSW but the young person must attend education or training outside NSW.</p>

Professional carers: note that professional carers who support young people with complex needs and receive a salary rather than a carer allowance will be eligible if:

- they are employed through a professional carer program (as of publication of this resource this includes the Professional Individualised Care program or Treatment Foster Care Oregon, others may be added in future)

- they care for and live with the young person full-time (aside from respite)
- they live with the young person full-time in a home environment.

Not eligible:

1	Respite carers cannot receive the payment.
2	Service providers managing young people in residential care settings and Intensive Therapeutic Care (ITC) services are not eligible to apply for this payment
3	In accord with the Guardianship Financial Guidelines, NSW Guardians who reside interstate for more than 3 months.

5 Application Process

Service providers and DCJ Districts must:

1. Send relevant carers a letter or email about the TEP and [application form](#) when the young person is 15 and a half. You can do this as part of a [Leaving Care Planning process](#).
2. Ensure carers complete the application process and return it to you, providing you with necessary evidence to determine their eligibility.

Carers need to provide evidence of:

- the Family Tax Benefit A such as income statement from Centrelink, end of financial year reconciliation letter or a photocopy of both sides of their pension card if the young person was in their care before turning 16, and
- Young person's attendance at school.

Remember to include a return address on the application form.

3. Once you receive the completed application form and evidence, determine if the carer meets the [eligibility criteria](#).

If the carer has not provided enough information to meet the evidence requirements, follow up with the carer to discuss and ask them to provide more information.

- ✗ If the carer does not meet the eligibility criteria, send them a letter to inform them why they are not eligible.

- ✓ If the carer is eligible, advise them in writing and let them know they will need to confirm every six-months that the young person is attending school or training. See [Appendix 1](#).

If a carer disagrees with the assessment of their eligibility for TEP, discuss the reasons and advise them to raise this within your organisation's complaints or appeals process if they remain unsatisfied.

6 How payments to carers work?

Practice tip: Give carers enough time to complete the application process and get it back to you so you can process it before the school term commences. This will ensure the carer receives payment on time.

It may be useful to run monthly reports to see which children are turning 16 in the next six months. You can then send application forms to these carers.

Service providers and DCJ Districts:

Once you have determined that a carer is eligible and you have sent a letter of advice:

- Find out which school term the young person will turn 16 years old and organise for the carer to be paid before that term commences.
- If the young person's birthday is in the school holidays, the first payment is made in the term before their birthday. The school term dates can be found [here](#).
- Check in with the carer or guardian every six months to confirm the young person is participating in education and/or training, see [Appendix 1](#).
- An authorised carer can continue to receive the TEP payment after the young person turns 18 if they are completing Year 12 or equivalent full-time or subject to approval, part-time (the types of studies are listed in [Appendix 2](#)).
- TEP can only be paid after the young person turns 18 if it is included in their Leaving Care Plan.
- If the carer or guardian is late to apply for TEP, the payment can be back dated for one term.
- If there has been an administrative delay in processing the payment, it is possible to back date this payment for more than 1 term, subject to approval. Service providers must inform their contract manager in writing if this is the case.

- If there is a placement change in the first six weeks of a school term, the new carer or guardian is eligible for a TEP payment instalment for that term, even if a TEP payment was made to the previous carer or guardian for that term. For placements that occur after Week 6, TEP will commence in the next school term. For more information on placement changes, see [Teenage Education Payment Service Provider Payment Process Guide 2020](#).

7 How do payments to providers work?

7.1 If you are a service provider:

- Access the [Teenage Education Payment - NGO Service Provider Quarterly Payment Template](#). This is for you to record the names of all eligible carers and details of young person in the one spreadsheet.
 - Check the young person and carer's details are correct, and placement details are current.
 - Check the date of birth.
 - Note which school terms are being claimed.
- For those in OOHC (statutory or supported) check that the TEP is included in the young person's Leaving Care Plan **and approved** before submitting the quarterly report.
- For young people who have turned 18, leaving OOHC (statutory or supported) and TEP is a part of their DCJ approved Leaving Care Plan, complete a separate quarterly report on the same quarterly report template. This is because the assessment is more complex and DCJ may need to take more time to review over 18s.
- Complete the [Service Provider checklist](#) as part of the quarterly reporting process. See the [TEP Service Provider Payment Process Guide 2020](#) for more information.

Additional information:

- Young people who turn 18, leaving OOHC (statutory or supported) the Leaving Care Plan outlines the supports and costs of a young person when they are leaving care and afterwards, and the planning process commences when the young person is 15. It is important that you include the TEP in this plan.
- Service providers do not need to provide DCJ with any applications or supporting evidence, only the completed TEP NGO Service Provider Quarterly Payment Template. For auditing purposes, save applications and supporting evidence in accordance with your record keeping procedures.

- Before submitting the [completed template](#), check if the caseworker has been advised of any significant changes that may affect TEP eligibility.
- Submit this spreadsheet to the relevant [CFDU](#) that the young person is allocated to **at least 3 weeks before the start of each school term**. Include the tax invoice, with 10% GST added to the cost of the TEP (include invoice number in the spreadsheet rather than the reference number).
- Make individual payments to approved carers once you have determined they are eligible – this should be prior to the beginning of the new school term. We recommend that you do not wait for reimbursement from DCJ to make these payments to carers.
- DCJ will provide a reimbursement payment covering carers on the spreadsheet. This process should take no more than 10 working days.

Practice Tip: allow a minimum of two weeks processing time. We recommend submitting your documents the week before the school holidays prior to the school term you are claiming; this will allow payments to occur at the start of the school term.

7.2 If you are a DCJ district:

- A Manager Casework reviews the TEP payments scheduled for each term and confirms:
 - the young person’s name, date of birth, and placement details are correct and current
 - the carer’s name is correct
 - if the caseworker has been advised of any significant changes that may affect TEP eligibility.
- Make individual payments to approved eligible carers - prior to or at the beginning of the new school term.

8 How can the payment be used?

Carers can use this funding for a range of education and training programs and related costs that best meet the young person’s learning needs and educational goals. Study can be full time or part-time (subject to approval - see [Appendix 2](#)).

Funding can be used for school based education programs, alternate education programs (Year 12 or equivalent, see [Appendix 2](#)), post-school training programs, employment-related programs, or independent living skills training.

It can also be used for costs such as supplies and uniforms, as well as activities to improve opportunities for the young person to stay in education or training. It may include driving lessons, tutoring, school camps and excursions, school holiday programs, sport and recreation camps, team building, leadership or social skills programs (such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award, Outward Bound, Scouts or Girls Guides), behavioural programs, music tuition, swimming lessons or training, sport registration fees, dance lessons, pre-employment training or access to respite, where other government services are not freely available.

9 Payment when the young person turns 18

Guardians will cease receiving TEP payments when the young person turns 18.

Carers can continue to receive TEP payments throughout the school year (which is usually a calendar year) that the young person turns 18, if the young person is continuing year 12 studies or equivalent on a full-time basis, or part time (subject to approval) in that year. For example, if the young person turns 18 in June and remains at school to complete year 12, the carer will continue to receive the TEP until the end of that school year.

The TEP also needs to be part of the [Leaving Care Plan](#).

There may be circumstances when a young person is completing a year 12 equivalent course that ends the year after the school year that the young person turned 18. For example, a young person who turns 18 in September, enrolls in a course at an educational institution (such as TAFE) as an alternative to year 12, which starts in July but finished June the following year. Payment of the TEP in these circumstances is subject to approval on a case by case basis – with consideration given to if the course is an approved course as per Appendix 2, and if the intent of the payment is to support the young person to complete the course.

For DCJ Districts, approval should be sought in writing (can be email) from the Manager casework. For NGO Service Providers, approval should be sought in writing from the DCJ contract manager.

10 Reasons why the payment will stop

The TEP will stop when the:

- A young person is 18 years old and has completed or discontinued year 12 or equivalent (see [Appendix 2](#) for the year 12 equivalent definition). Carers should speak to their caseworker if the young person

stops their education. Carers will continue to receive the payment if they are supporting the young person to re-engage in education.

- Young person is no longer engaged in education. This may mean that you were not able to confirm that the young person is participating in education and / or training, and their enrolment is not able to be confirmed by the school or carer.
- A young person leaves OOHC or TEP is not part of their [Leaving or After Care plan](#). Refer to information about [Leaving and After Care](#).
- 3 months after a DCJ approval of a guardian moving interstate.
- Guardian moves interstate after the Order is made without DCJ approval.
- Transfer of a NSW Care Order (Statutory or Supported) to another State or Territory (including New Zealand).

11 More information for carers

If a carer is concerned about the young person's engagement in school or training, they should speak to their caseworker and the school about what strategies can be put in place to help the young person to support their re-engagement.

The [Personalised Learning and Support Planning Process](#) (PLaSP) is a collaborative and ongoing process that involves carers, caseworkers and schools to identify the young person's learning goals and support needs. The PLaSP process enables carers and caseworkers to collaborate with schools to address concerns around a young person's learning progress, attendance, engagement, and level of support. Find more information [here](#).

See the following for more information for carers on:

- [Financial assistance](#)
- [Leaving care and after care – post care education financial support allowance](#)
- [AbSec](#)
- [My Forever Family NSW](#)

12 List of CFDUs

Note this list is current as of February 2022. See list of [CFDUs](#) to check updated details.

Child and Family District Unit	Email Address	Phone No.	Covering CSCs
Hunter and Central Coast	HCC.NGOsupport@facsw.nsw.gov.au	02 4321 7500	Cessnock, Charlestown, Edgeworth, Gosford, Lakes, Maitland, Mayfield, Muswellbrook, Peninsula, Raymond Terrace, Tamworth, Wyong
New England	NewEngland.CFDU@facsw.nsw.gov.au	02 6773 0800	Armidale, Glen Innes, Inverell, Moree, Muswellbrook, Narrabri, Tamworth
Illawarra Shoalhaven	IllawarraShoalhaven.CFDU@facsw.nsw.gov.au	02 4222 8600 02 4255 6666	Nowra, Shellharbour, Ulladulla, Wollongong
Metro Central	CFDU.metrocentral@facsw.nsw.gov.au	02 8303 7644	Chatswood, Pennant Hills, Lakemba, Burwood, Central Sydney, Eastern Sydney, St George, Sutherland.
South Western Sydney	CFDU.SouthWesternSydney@facsw.nsw.gov.au	02 9825 7800	Bankstown, Bowral, Macarthur, Fairfield, Ingleburn, Liverpool, SWS OOHC Hub Liverpool, SWS OOHC Hub Macarthur.
Metro West	CFDUWS&NBM@facsw.nsw.gov.au	02 9354 1800	Auburn, Parramatta, Blacktown, Hawkesbury, Blue Mountains, Lithgow, Mount Druitt, Penrith and St Marys.
Mid North Coast	CFDU.midnorthcoast@facsw.nsw.gov.au	02 5525 1200	Coffs Harbour, Kempsey, Port Macquarie
Murrumbidgee and Far Western NSW	CFDUMurrumbidgeeFarWest@facsw.nsw.gov.au	02 6937 9400	Albury, Cootamundra, Deniliquin, Griffith, Leeton, Tumut, Wagga Wagga, Wilcannia
Northern NSW	NNSW.CFDU@facsw.nsw.gov.au	02 6686 1990	Ballina, Clarence Valley, Lismore, Tweed Heads
Southern NSW	SouthernNSW.CFDU@facsw.nsw.gov.au	02 6229 7200	Batemans Bay, Bega, Cooma, Goulburn, Queanbeyan, Yass
Western NSW	WesternNSW.CFDU@facsw.nsw.gov.au	02 6361 6990	Bathurst, Bourke, Brewarrina, Cobar, Condobolin, Coonamble, Cowra, Dubbo, Mudgee, Orange, Parkes, Walgett. Also Broken hill & Dareton.

APPENDIX 1: Evidence

As outlined in the Teenage Education Payment Guidelines, confirmation of enrolment and attendance is required every six months. **This can be:**

- A letter or email confirming attendance from the school or other educational institution.
- A copy of the school report card or an extract of the report that shows attendance.
- A copy of a current academic transcript from another educational institution.
- A letter from the employer in the case of traineeships and apprenticeships.
- A record outlining the reason that a young person is not attending and a rationale about how the carer is appropriately supporting the young person to re-engage in education in cases where health, behavioural or other issues are preventing regular attendance at school.

APPENDIX 2: Approved Education and Training Programs

Young people can be participating in a range of education and training programs. For 16 and 17 years old, study needs to be full time.

In some instances part time study can be approved by DCJ Districts and NGO service providers on a case by case basis where the young person's circumstances prevent them from being able to engage in full time study. For example, part time study can be considered where a young person has parental responsibilities or health issues that prevent them from undertaking full-time studies.

Part-time study should also be approved for carers who are supporting young people who are on part exemptions (partial attendance), with a plan to return to school full time. Find more information [here](#).

Approved Education and Training Programs

- School education programs conducted in:
 - public and private schools
 - registered training organisations including TAFE NSW or interstate equivalent
 - approved home schooling arrangements.
- Organisations that provide approved alternative education programs including:
 - Coomealla High School
 - Denison College of Secondary Education
 - Mission Australia
 - Oasis Education Centres
 - Regenesis
 - Singleton Community College
 - Southern Youth and Family Services (Wollongong)
 - WAYS Youth Services
 - Western Region DEC (Dubbo)
 - Western Sydney Training and Education Centre
 - Youth Connections Tuggerah
 - Youth Directions (Coffs Harbour)
- Post-school training programs:
 - access/pathways to learning programs for young people with complex needs, literacy, numeracy and study skills deficits

- vocational education and training including apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeship programs and traineeships conducted by registered training organisations such as TAFE NSW
- accelerated entry tertiary education programs.
- Employment-related programs:
 - apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship programs and traineeships
 - pre-employment (employment skills) training
 - post-employment training including formal or informal on the job training.
- Other:
 - training programs related to developing independent living skills, as part of an approved case plan
 - rehabilitation and development programs for young people with experiences of trauma, complex needs, including drug or alcohol addiction or recent youth justice involvement
 - continued education or training programs for young girls in care who are pregnant or young people in care with parenting responsibilities.

Year 12 or equivalent

For the purposes of the TEP, studies to complete Year 12 or equivalent are:

- Higher School Certificate (HSC) or interstate equivalent
- HSC via [school-based apprenticeship or traineeship](#)
- HSC via Vocational Education and Training (VET) NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) endorsed courses
- TAFE NSW Certificate IV in Tertiary Preparation or interstate equivalent
- International Baccalaureate, diploma level.