

Medicare number processes for children and young people entering out-of-home care (OOHC): a guide for FACS workers and NGOs

To ensure that children and young people in OOHC are able to have their health needs met it is a requirement that they have a Medicare number to access services funded by Medicare.

The child or young person will often be linked to their birth parent's Medicare card number which the FACS worker can obtain.

It is important to understand when the child or young person's existing Medicare card number should be obtained and when to apply for a new card.

Medicare will only liaise with FACS on issues relating to Medicare numbers for children and young people in OOHC. This means that **only** FACS workers can apply to obtain an existing Medicare number or brand new Medicare number and card.

Who should the Medicare number be provided to?

- The child or young person's carer.
- A Non Government Organisation (NGO) – if the child or young person's placement is not being managed by FACS.
- A pharmacist in order to confirm that the child or young person is eligible to receive the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.
- The OOHC Health Coordinator via inclusion on the Health Referral Form which enables the child or young person to commence the OOHC Health Pathway.

The existing Medicare card number should be provided to the child or young person's carer in the following circumstances:

- When the child or young person enters the care responsibility of the Secretary. This could include a child or young person in a temporary care arrangement.

In some circumstances a child or young person in the care responsibility of the Secretary will not have an existing Medicare number. This is often the case for new born babies who have not been linked to their birth parent's card.

In these circumstances the FACS worker should engage with the birth parents to ensure that they have enrolled their child for Medicare. When the Medicare number becomes available it should be provided to the carer as soon as possible.

A FACS worker should apply to Medicare for a new card for the child or young person and provide to their carer in the following circumstances:

- When the Children's Court makes an order (interim or final) placing the child or young person under the parental responsibility of the Minister.

Process to obtain an existing Medicare number for the child or young person:

- The FACS worker should try to obtain the Medicare number from the child or young person's birth parents when they enter OOHC.
- If the number cannot be obtained, then the FACS worker should contact the Medicare Provider Services Team on 1300 660 035 during business hours and follow the procedure outlined on casework practice – see [Information exchange with Commonwealth agencies](#). Young people 15 years and over should be with the FACS worker when they call to get their existing number as Medicare will only give the number to the young person.
- A doctor can also obtain the child or young person's existing Medicare number by calling the healthcare provider enquires line on 13 21 50.

Process to obtain a new Medicare number and physical card for the child or young person:

A new Medicare number and physical card can be obtained by following the enrolment procedure on Casework Practice see – [Medicare numbers and cards](#):

- Medicare can provide the number of the new card to the FACS worker if needed before the physical card is received. However the number will only be released over the phone if the FACS worker can provide the password and agency ID (see [Information exchange with Commonwealth agencies](#) for information about obtaining the password and ID).
- The FACS worker can also contact Medicare on 1300 660 035 or by email at co.medicare.public.eligibility@humanservices.gov.au to follow up on an enrolment application if required.
- When a young person turns 15 they can apply for their own Medicare card.

Enrolling an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child in Medicare:

[The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Medicare enrolment and amendment form](#) can be used to enrol an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child in Medicare if the worker does not have a copy of the child or young person's birth certificate. The FACS worker can act as a referee for the child and verify their identity on the form. It is not necessary to obtain the birth parent's signature to submit this form.

Process to follow if the Medicare card is lost or stolen:

A record should be kept of the child or young person's Medicare number. The FACS worker may choose to keep the card and provide the carer with the number only, or provide the card to the carer depending on the procedure of their Community Service Centre. If the card is lost or stolen a new card can be obtained by providing Medicare with the original number.

For more information or queries:

- Refer to the Australian Government Department of Human Services website at: <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/medicare-card>
- Email OOHC.Iniatives@facs.nsw.gov.au