

Teenage Education Payment guidelines

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1. Introduction

Education is important for every young person to succeed in life.

The Teenage Education Payment is a payment made to carers and guardians, to assist them to keep 16 and 17 year olds in their care in education and training, including apprenticeships.

The Teenage Education Payment is \$6,000 per year. It is paid by the NSW Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) in quarterly instalments of \$1,500 at the beginning of each term.

2. 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 FACS and non-government agencies, and providing both statutory and supported out-of-home care placements.
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.
Education and training	See Part 5
FACS	NSW Department of Family and Community Services
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 FACS
Non-government agency	Designated non-government agency contracted by FACS to provide out-of-home care
TEP	Teenage Education Payment

3. Who can get the payment

The payment is made to statutory and supported carers and guardians who:

- have a 16 or 17 year old in their care who is in full or part-time education and/ or training

- received the Family Tax Benefit Part A when the young person in their care was 15 years old, and
- live in NSW or care for a young person undertaking education in NSW.

Carers and guardians will then need to show, every six months, that the young person is participating in education and / or training.

Carers providing short term or emergency placements, of more than 3 months, can receive the payment.

Respite carers cannot receive the payment.

4. How to apply

Application forms are available from caseworkers, FACS Community Services Centres and non-government agencies, or can be downloaded from www.community.nsw.gov.au.

- FACS carers and guardians will:
 - receive an application form in the mail when the young person is 15 years old
 - be required 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)
 - need to return the application, together with the above evidence, to the address listed on the form before the young person turns 16
 - be advised in writing if they are not eligible because appropriate evidence to substantiate eligibility was not provided with the application. Caseworkers will follow up with carers in this instance.
- Carers with a non-government agency will need to apply for the payment through their agency.

If the out-of-home care placement started when the young person was 16 years or older the carer will not have to provide evidence of Family Tax Benefit A on the application form. If the placement commenced in the first six weeks of the school term a payment can be made for that term.

5. Education and training programs

Education and training can be full or part-time. Approved programs include:

- School education programs conducted in:
 - public and private schools
 - registered training organisations including TAFE NSW
 - approved home schooling arrangements.
- Approved alternate education programs:
 - 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 juvenile justice involvement
 - continued education or training programs for young girls in care who are pregnant or young people in care with parenting responsibilities.

6. When payments are made

The Teenage Education Payment is \$6,000 per year. It is paid to carers and guardians in four instalments of \$1,500 at the beginning of each term.

The payment starts at the beginning of the term in which the young person turns 16 years old. If their birthday is in school holidays the first payment is made in the term before their birthday.

If the carer or guardian is late to apply for the Teenage Education Payment the payment can be back paid for one term.

If payment has not been received carers should contact their caseworker. Guardians should contact their local Community Services Centre.

7. Reasons why the payment will stop

Carers should speak to their caseworker if the young person stops their education or training. Carers may still get the payment if they continue to assist the young person to resume their education.

The Teenage Education Payment will stop when the:

- carer does not help a young person to stay in school or training
- evidence that the young person is participating in education and / or training is not provided
- young person's enrolment is not able to be confirmed by a caseworker
- young person leaves out-of-home care or leaves the placement
- carer or guardian moves interstate, if the young person's education is not in NSW.

8. What the payment is for

The payment is to provide education-related assistance to carers and guardians. It is for costs such as supplies and uniforms, as well as activities to improve opportunities for the young person to stay in education or training.

These could include but are not limited to: driving lessons, tutoring, school camps and excursions, school holiday programs, sport and recreation camps, team building, leadership or social skills programs (such as 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.

Authorised carers who receive the Teenage Education Payment may still be able to get extra financial support for education related expenses.

9. Turning 18 during the school year

A carer may continue to receive the payment after the young person turns 18 if they are studying Year 12 or equivalent on a full-time basis. Carers should discuss this with their caseworker before the young person turns 18.

10. Young people in residential care settings

Non-government agencies managing young people in residential care settings are not eligible to apply for this payment. Education and training assistance for the young person is covered under the FACS contract with the non-government agency.

11. More information for carers

Carers should first speak to their caseworker to get more information about the Teenage Education Payment.

Where a young person is not in school or training, carers should talk to the caseworker or the young person's school about how to help the young person. This will assist to identify and help those young people who need extra support to stay in or resume school or training. Caseworkers can speak to carers or work with the Department of Education and Communities on issues including:

- difficulties with learning
- not attending school regularly
- suspensions and expulsions
- individual education plans
- carer information and advice.

Carers can also contact:

- Department of Family and Community Services www.community.nsw.gov.au
- Foster Care Support (AbSec) www.absec.org.au
- Connecting Carers www.connectingcarersnsw.com.au.