

TEENAGE EDUCATION PAYMENT GUIDELINES

1. Introduction

Education and training are key pathways for every young person to succeed in life. For teenagers in out-of-home care, education and training is even more important to prevent disadvantage.

The Teenage Education Payment recognises the crucial role carers play in encouraging and supporting the young people in their care and the importance of education and training in preparing a young person for a positive future.

The NSW Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) introduced the Teenage Education Payment of \$6,000 per year to help foster, relative and kinship authorised carers keep young people in their care in school or training. The payment is paid in quarterly instalments of \$1500 at the beginning of each school or TAFE term.

2. Purpose

The Teenage Education Payment aims to help some of the most vulnerable teenagers in NSW to stay in school or training. The objectives of the project are to:

- Improve outcomes for teenagers in out-of-home care in NSW
- Help foster, relative and kinship carers with keeping young people in their care remain in education and training.

3. Target Group

The target group are 16 and 17 year olds in statutory and supported out of home care with foster, kinship and relative authorised carers within NSW.

4. Eligibility

The Teenage Education Payment is available to statutory and supported authorised carers resident in NSW and/or whose young person is engaged in full or part time education or training in NSW. To be eligible for the payment:

- Carers provide evidence that they received Family Tax Benefit Part A when the young person in their care was 15 years old (This is a one-off check; it is not repeated annually).
- After that, evidence will need to be provided every six months that the young person is participating in education and/or training (including apprenticeships) or a combination of both.

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 assist the young person. This will assist Family and Community Services to identify and help those young people who need extra support to stay in school or training.

Non-attendance or partial participation does not prevent the Teenage Education Payment being made. Eligibility in these cases will be based on what action the carer has taken to assist the young person to resume their education. The caseworker will discuss this with the carer.

5. Eligible education and training activities may include:

- School education programs (whether based in school, or registered training organisation including TAFE NSW) or approved home schooling arrangement.

- Approved alternate education programs

Western Sydney Training and Education Centre	Minga Educational Program
Singleton Community College	PAL - Pathways Alternate Learning
Youth Connections Tuggerah	Green Central
Oasis Education Centres	Oasis Education Programs
WAYS Youth Services	WAYS Youth Training
The Exodus Foundation	Exodus Youth
Albury Wodonga Community College	Re-engage
Mission Australia	STAT - Support Training Assistance Transition program

- Post-school training programs
 - Access/pathways to learning programs for young people with complex needs, literacy, numeracy, study skills deficits
 - Vocational Education and Training, including TAFE NSW (including apprenticeship/pre-apprenticeship programs and traineeships)
 - 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. What is the Payment For?

The payment 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 are still able to seek extra financial support (formerly contingencies) for education related expenses.

7. Applying For the Payment

Carers complete an application form when young person in their care is 15 years old.

- All authorised foster, relative and kinship carers living in NSW will be sent an application form before the young person turns 16.
- Eligible carers complete and send the application form to the address on the form. Evidence of Family Tax Benefit Part A eligibility must be sent with the application form.
- Payments commence at the beginning of the term that the young person will turn 16. If the young person's birthday falls in the school holidays they will receive their first payment the term before their birthday.
- When a carer is late in applying they can be paid a back payment for the previous term if they were eligible for that term.

8. If a carer is assessed as not eligible

Where a carer submits an application form and is not considered eligible for the payment, a caseworker will contact the carer for further information to substantiate eligibility. Where eligibility is not substantiated, the carer will be advised in writing.

9. If the young person is not engaged in education and/or training

If the young person is not engaged in education and/or training the carer should contact the caseworker to discuss the strategies and assistance available to assist the young person. Under these circumstances, the Teenage Education Payment may be paid.

10. The Teenage Education Payment will cease:

- Where a carer refuses to engage in helping a young person to stay in school or training
- Where a FACS or NGO caseworker is unable to confirm the young person's enrolment
- When the young person leaves out of home care or leaves the placement.
- The carer moves interstate.

11. What if Difficulties Arise?

If a form has been submitted but payment has not been received, carers should contact their FACS or NGO caseworker.

FACS and NGO caseworkers are available to work with carers and provide help and advice or work with Department of Education and Communities staff to address issues including:

- Difficulties with learning
- Not attending school regularly
- Suspensions and expulsions
- Individual education plans
- Carer information and advice.

12. If the young person is 16 years old when the placement commences

Where the carer is not able to provide evidence of Family Tax Benefit Part A eligibility because the young person was not in their placement when they were 15 years old, the Teenage Education Payment will be paid to the carer on the basis of the young person's participation in education and/or training.

If the placement commenced in the first 6 weeks of the school term a payment can be made for that term.

13. If the placement is a short term or emergency placement

Teenage Education Payment can be paid if a young person stays in a short term or emergency placement for more than 3 months. Eligibility will be assessed from the date that the placement commenced in those cases. These carers should ask their caseworker for an application form or download one from www.community.nsw.gov.au. Respite carers are not eligible for the payment.

14. Carers with non government out-of-home care agencies

Authorised carers with non-government OOHC agencies can obtain an application form and assistance with education and training from their agency.

15. Young people in residential care settings

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 agency.

16. When the young person in care turns 18 years during the school year

When the young person remains in the placement and is studying full time to complete Year 12 (or equivalent) the Teenage Education Payment can be continued as part of an approved case plan. Carers should discuss this with the caseworker before the young person turns 18.

17. Carers who need more information

The first point of contact for carers should be their FACS or NGO caseworker. Foster Care Support (AbSec) and Connecting Carers also provide information about how to apply for Teenage Education Payment.

Carers can also visit www.community.nsw.gov.au or www.absec.org.au or www.connectingcarersnsw.com.au