

Out-of-school hours care and school holiday programs



Out-of-school hours care (OSHC) and school holiday programs are beneficial for both you and your child. Understanding the various choices and services available, as well as what to expect, is a helpful starting point.

It's important to know that OSHC services and school holiday programs are not allowed to discriminate against children with disability, as mandated by the Disability Discrimination Act (1992).

This means that OSHC providers must make reasonable adjustments to accommodate children with disability or additional needs.

Care options

Out-of-school hours care (OSHC)

OSHC gives children a place to play and socialise with their peers in a supervised and safe setting. When choosing an OSHC program for your child, it's a good idea to think about options, including the days and hours you might need.

Usually, OSHC services are for children aged 5 to 12 years. They run before and after school, as well as during school holidays.

The goal of OSHC activities is to be welcoming and make sure that all children, including those with support needs, can join in and use all the services alongside their peers who don't have such needs.

School holiday programs

School holiday programs provide activities and childcare during school breaks. These programs are designed for primary school children, typically aged 5 to 12 years.

Family Day Care

Family Day Care is where children are looked after and educated in the home of a childcare provider in small groups. This service is available for children from birth to 12 years. It can also be an alternative to out-of-school hours care.

In Home Care (IHC)

IHC is when your child receives care in your own home. This option is available for families when no other standard childcare options are suitable or available during the times needed by the child.

To qualify for IHC, a family must show that they are eligible for the Child Care Subsidy, have challenging or complex needs within the home, and that the child's needs cannot be met in another approved care setting.

To find out if you are eligible for IHC you should contact an IHC support agency. You can discuss your needs with the agency, which will then match you with the most appropriate service.

When possible, the IHC support agency will ensure that families have a choice of IHC services and will negotiate with the services to make sure the preferred caregiver is available to provide care.

NDIS-funded supports

If your child has core support in their NDIS plan, you can choose to use this to fund support workers who can support your child before or after school.

There are also service providers that offer group recreational activities, particularly during school holidays.

NDIS-funded services do not qualify for the Inclusion Support Program or the Child Care Subsidy.

Support for your child to participate

Inclusion Support Program

The Inclusion Support Program is an Australian Government program that provides training for staff, equipment, and additional educators in OSHC and school holiday programs. Your service will apply on behalf of your child. You may need to provide copies of assessments or reports as evidence.

Financial support

Child Care Subsidy

Child Care Subsidy can help with the cost of approved OSHC, school holiday programs and in-home care. You need to apply to Services Australia who work out your subsidy depending on your income. If you are eligible for your child, Services Australia will pay the subsidy directly to the approved care provider to reduce the fees you pay.

The Child Care Subsidy can be used to support children with disability aged 14 to 18.

Questions to ask when selecting OSHC and school holiday programs

You can organise a tour with local services to find out what might suit your child's social, learning, and emotional needs. Some questions to consider:

- How many hours of care do I need for my child?
- What experience and skills do the staff have?
- What type of care setting am I looking for?
- What is the ratio of qualified staff to children?
- What strategies do they have to promote social skills and peer interactions?
- What ages do they care for?
- How will the service communicate how your child is doing?
- Can the service apply for additional funding to provide extra inclusion support for my child?
- What are the quality ratings of the options you're interested in?

Useful links

IncludED@OSHC

<https://www.schools.vic.gov.au/includedoshc>

Inclusion Support Program

<https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/inclusion-support-program>

Child Care Subsidy

<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/child-care-subsidy>

In Home Care Handbook

<https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/resources/home-care-handbook>

Your first step into early childhood education and outside school hours care

<https://www.startingblocks.gov.au/>

Related topics

Getting started at child care and kindergarten

<https://www.acd.org.au/getting-started-at-child-care-and-kindergarten/>

Connecting with other families

<https://www.acd.org.au/connecting-with-other-families/>