



Centrelink Part 2 – Making an application when caring for an ill child

Where and how do I apply for Centrelink benefits?

Before applying for Centrelink benefits you will need to make sure both you and your child meet all the eligibility requirements. To be eligible for most payments you must be providing constant care in the home over an extended period of time, be an Australian resident and meet Centrelink's income and asset tests. Your child will also need to pass a medical eligibility test.

For Carer Allowance and/or Carer Payment you must submit an intention to claim request with Centrelink. This can be done through the Department of Human Services website by following the prompts under the Carer tab. Once you have lodged an intention to claim one of these types of payments you have fourteen days to submit your full application. Other types of payments can be applied for directly.

Applications for Centrelink benefits must be made on the correct form. Forms can be downloaded from the Centrelink section of the Department of Human Services website, or collected from your local Centrelink office, or obtained by calling Centrelink on 132 717.

Whether or not your child's medical condition appears on the Centrelink qualifying medical conditions list, you will need to request a medical professional to complete a medical report on your child's illness. Medical reports are not an application for benefits, but assess your child's medical eligibility for benefits so you can claim them. Medical report forms can be downloaded from the Department of Human Services website or on request from Centrelink.

Claim forms and all supporting documentation, including medical reports, can be submitted at your local Centrelink office. Centrelink will advise you of the outcome of your application in writing. This process may take several weeks.

What if I need money now?

Benefits can take up to 12 weeks to be approved and for payments to come through. While the wait time can be significant, the payments and the date on your health care card or pension card will be backdated to the initial date of your application. This means that when you do receive your first payment it can be a large lump sum including back pay. You will also be able to claim some Health Care Card discounts and benefits retrospectively.

If you have little or no household income, you can ask your hospital social worker or financial counsellor to telephone Centrelink on your behalf to try and have the payment(s) expedited.

If Centrelink rejects my application, what do I do?

It is not unusual for families to be refused a Carer Payment on medical grounds the first time they apply. This is often due to the unsuitability of the medical record assessment questions for young children. It is a good idea to persevere and make another application, as families are often successful on the second or even third attempt, and will still be back paid to the original



date of application. Ask your health professional or hospital social worker for assistance, or contact Centrelink directly on 132 717 for further advice.

If you are refused a Carer Payment on financial grounds, you are able to then apply for the Carer Adjustment instead.

Where do I get help with understanding Centrelink eligibility and applications?

The Commonwealth Department of Human Services website has lots of information to explain eligibility criteria, the application process and carer benefits and entitlements. Go to www.humanservices.gov.au and click on the carers tab. Follow the links to find the information you need.

Alternatively speak to your hospital social worker or call WeCare toll free from anywhere in Australia on 1800 545 366. Or you can email WeCare at wecare@kildonan.org.au

A professional will speak to you about what you need and work out the next steps in order to assist you.