



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Social Services**

MC15-006676

Dear

Thank you for your email of 18 May 2015 to the Minister for Social Services, the Hon Scott Morrison MP, about immunisation and family payments. The Minister has asked the department to reply to you on his behalf.

The Australian Government considers that immunisation is an important health measure for children and their families as it is the safest and most effective way of providing protection against diseases.

On 12 April 2015, the Prime Minister, the Hon Tony Abbott MP, and the Minister for Social Services, the Hon Scott Morrison MP, jointly announced that the Government is reinforcing the importance of immunisation and protecting public health by strengthening immunisation requirements for children.

The changes affect Child Care Benefit (CCB), the Child Care Rebate (CCR), and the Family Tax Benefit (FTB) Part A end-of-year supplement.

While the vast majority of families meet the current immunisation requirement at relevant age points, there is still a growing number of children in the community who are not vaccinated because their parents are vaccine objectors.

Currently, parents can be exempt from having their children meet the immunisation requirements if they declare they have a conscientious objection to vaccination. The changes mean that from 1 January 2016 objection to vaccination will no longer be a valid exemption category, therefore parents who do not immunise their children will cease to be eligible for CCB, CCR and the FTB Part A supplement.

In addition, the immunisation requirements will be extended to children and adolescents up to and including the age of 19.

It is important to note that children with medical contraindications or natural immunity (certified by an immunisation provider) will continue to be exempt from the requirements.

Admission of children at a child care service will continue to be at the discretion of the service, and in accordance with the state or territory legislation regarding immunisation and access to child care. From 1 January 2016, parents that have children that are not immunised and therefore not eligible for child care payments will be liable for the full costs of care.

Legislation for this measure will be accompanied by a Statement of Compatibility with Human Rights, in accordance with the Government's normal process.

For more information about this measure go to [www.dss.gov.au](http://www.dss.gov.au). For more information about childhood immunisation in Australia go to [www.immunise.health.gov.au](http://www.immunise.health.gov.au).

Thank you again for writing.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. W.' with a horizontal line underneath.

**Family and Student Payments Policy Branch**

2 June 2015