

REMOVE BARRIERS FOR FAMILIES TO ACCESS BIRTH CERTIFICATES



Birth certificates are required by Early Childhood Education and Care services before a child can enrol into early learning. This is a significant barrier for many families living in disadvantage due to the cost, paperwork, lack of identification documents and lack of technology access required for applications and we believe that there should be fee exemptions and additional support for families who need it in order to obtain a birth certificate and access early education & care for their children.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BIRTH CERTIFICATES

Access to birth registration is recognised as a fundamental human right internationally (UN 1989), and when partnered with a birth certificate, it unlocks access to education, employment, other identification documents, or government support services.

Without a birth certificate, an individual's ability to participate in society is limited, and a child is unable to enter early education which is a known evidence informed strategy for supporting children to thrive.

THE PROBLEM

Due to various complexities such as domestic violence, moving house, or damage, families may find themselves without birth certificates, or perhaps never registered their child at birth for an original certificate.

Families may not have access to technology to apply for a birth certificate, have the necessary supporting identification documents themselves to complete an application, have the finances to pay for the birth certificate or have complex caring arrangements that complicate the application process.

A fee waiver process does exist, however this is not well known, requires additional supporting documents and can be difficult for families to apply for if they are already facing other barriers. Additionally, this prolongs the process of accessing a birth certificate, further delaying a child's chance for education.

Various programs exist to support birth registration, particularly with First Nations People or rural communities, however, there remains little in person support for low-income families or those experiencing other complexities to help them overcome practical barriers in completing an application for a birth certificate and get this vital document for their children.



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THE HIVE'S DATA & ADVOCACY

The Hive Mt Druitt have an Early Learning Linker (ELL) who since 2018 has practically, emotionally and financially supported families in Mt Druitt to overcome barriers to access early education. A key barrier to accessing early education is the absence of a birth certificate which is required before enrollment.

The Hive's Early Learning Linker: (as at February 2026)

- Has supported 103 children to apply for a birth certificate as a barrier to accessing early education.
- Of those children, 47 have required brokerage support to pay for a birth certificate (*until Dec 2024 where The Hive accessed a fee-free partnership with NSW BDM*)
- Additionally of the total children, 15 have required support with a late birth registration
- The total of the brokerage for birth certificates spent by The Hive has been \$3671.

In 2025 The Hive partnered with NSW Births, Deaths & Marriages' (BDM) to utilise a portal which allows for The Hive to support families to complete fee-free applications, with reduced identification requirements. This has opened the doors for many families, as it has reduced key barriers, and found an internal communications pathway with BDM to address complexities.

This approach benefits families known to The Hive, yet is not a sustainable or long-term solution for all families.

THE SOLUTIONS & IMPACT

- We recommend the **fee for birth certificates to be removed for all low-income individuals without the need for a fee-waiver application or reliance on a community organisation.**
- We recommend an **increase in staffing for community outreach teams** within BDM to provide support to families and address complex barriers faced when completing applications.
- We recommend **streamlining applications for birth registration and certification at a child's birth**, with key registration paperwork completed before they leave the hospital with a certificate immediately ordered.

When birth certificates are more accessible, more children will be able to access early education as well as increase social participation and employment opportunities.

CONTACT US

To learn more and to help us make this change please contact:
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