



Financial support for grandparents and other relative carers

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Also available at www.ocsc.vic.gov.au or phone the Office of the Child Safety Commissioner on 03 8601 5884.

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Cover: Child Safety Commissioner, Bernie Geary, with one of his nine grandchildren.

Foreword



Throughout Australia, an increasing number of grandparents are taking on the responsibility of raising their grandchildren. Other relatives such as aunts, sisters and brothers are also caring for children in their extended families.

The reasons for this are many and complex. These carers might be trying to prevent the child from going into protective care, or wanting to relieve family stress. In other cases, there may have been the death of a parent, illness or separation.

Whatever the reasons, many of these relatives will be experiencing financial stress. Children need food, clothing, schooling, dental and medical treatment, not to mention the increasing number of recreational activities that children are now involved in. The costs of fulfilling these needs are increasing.

This booklet is designed to help grandparents and other relative carers decide on the government assistance for which they may be eligible.

I trust this will be seen as a useful resource and commend it to all relative carers and the many people who support them.

A blue rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in blue ink. The signature is cursive and appears to read "Bernie Geary".

Bernie Geary OAM

Child Safety Commissioner

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Introduction

As a grandparent or relative carer of a child, you may be eligible for benefits from the Commonwealth Government to help you meet the extra demands that come with caring for your child.

The information in this booklet will outline what financial assistance you may be eligible for.

These benefits come from the Family Assistance Office, Centrelink and Medicare. Your first contact point should be Centrelink. Centrelink staff will help you to find out about the benefits that may be available and they will also verify whether you are eligible for particular benefits.

What financial assistance can you get from the Commonwealth Government?

If you are a grandparent or relative carer, you are eligible for payments included in the arrangements for 'foster care'.

The term 'foster care' covers:

- ◆ formal care: where the change of care is legally approved and involves a change in legal responsibility for a child in care. (When this happens you become the 'approved' carer)
- ◆ informal care: where you take on the care of a child in a voluntary or private arrangement. This is the most common form of grandparent and relative care.

There are two strands to the support offered by the Commonwealth Government – support for children and support for carers.

Support for children includes:

- ◆ access to concession cards
- ◆ provision of Youth Allowance to eligible young people
- ◆ assistance for some young people in their transition to independent living through the Transition to Independent Living Allowance (TILA).

Support for grandparent and relative carers includes:

- ◆ providing eligible carers with payments such as Family Tax Benefit, Parenting Payment and Child Care Benefit
- ◆ treating state carer allowances as outside the definition of taxable income for Family Tax Benefit and Child Care Benefit purposes.

Commonwealth Government payments for grandparent and relative carers are now described in more detail.

Family Assistance payments may be available to help you with the costs of raising your grandchildren.

Family assistance payments

Can you get help with childcare?

What health and medical benefits could you be entitled to?

Is there extra assistance for a child with a disability or who needs extra care

What other assistance can you get?

Is there any other assistance available for the child in your care?

Victorian Government Assistance



Family assistance payments

Family assistance payments are available to assist with the costs of raising children. If you have day-to-day care and responsibility for a child or children, you may be eligible for family assistance. However, you may not be eligible if the parent of the child lives in the same household.

To get family assistance, you will need to meet the eligibility requirements. These include income tests, checks of your Australian residency status and whether you care for a dependent child or children. You will also need to complete the appropriate claim form.

Family assistance payments include:

- ◆ Family Tax Benefit A
- ◆ Family Tax Benefit B
- ◆ Baby Bonus
- ◆ Maternity Immunisation Allowance
- ◆ Double Orphan Pension
- ◆ Child Care Benefit
- ◆ Large family supplement.

Family Tax Benefit Part A

This is the most common payment to help families with the cost of raising children. It is worked out on the family's combined annual income and the ages and number of dependent children in the family. It is paid per child.

Family Tax Benefit Part B

This payment gives extra assistance to families with one main income. It is based on the annual income of the lower earner as well as the age of the youngest child. It is paid per family.

Eligibility for Family Tax Benefits

You do not have to go through an asset test to get the Family Tax Benefit. It may be paid fortnightly or you may prefer to receive it in a lump sum at the end of the financial year. To receive the benefit as a lump sum payment, you would need to lodge a tax return.

As a carer, there are a number of factors that have to be taken into account to decide whether you are entitled to Family Tax Benefit Part A and Part B. These factors include your family's income and whether the care is 'formal' or a private arrangement.

Carer subsidies and allowances are not counted in the income test for Family Tax Benefit. Also, the Australian Taxation Office does not consider these allowances as assessable income for tax purposes.

For formal care arrangements, you need to provide proof to Centrelink Family Assistance Office of your formal carer status.

You may have to provide the following documents:

- ◆ an original letter on the official letterhead of the child welfare authority which provides details of the child's placement with you and the approved dates of placement; or
- ◆ the relevant court orders, if available. If the court orders do not name you as the carer, you may need a separate letter from the child welfare authority.

If you have a private care arrangement, you can receive Family Tax Benefit payments, depending on whether the care is temporary and short-term, or ongoing. The parent may continue to get the Family Tax Benefit when the care is temporary and short-term and the intention is that the child will shortly return to the parent. However, the total time away from the child's parent should not be more than four weeks. After this, you should get the Family Tax Benefit as you are the actual carer of the child.

When it is clear that the child will be in ongoing care with you, Family Tax Benefit payment begins from the date the child enters your care.

Shared Care

If you share custody of the child with another person, Family Tax Benefit may be split between the carers, depending on the agreed number of hours the child is with each person. Centrelink will provide further information and assistance in shared care arrangements. One of the carers must care for the child at least 10 per cent of the time to be eligible for a share of Family Tax Benefit. If the care of the child is in dispute, evidence from both parties will need to be provided. A Family Assistance Customer Service Adviser or Centrelink social worker will help you to sort out these matters.

Large Family Supplement

If you receive Family Tax Benefit for three or more children, you will automatically receive an extra amount for each child after the second child. The Large Family Supplement is on top of your Family Tax Benefit Part A.

Baby Bonus

This is a non-income tested, lump sum payment paid to the baby's primary carer to help with the extra costs associated with the birth or adoption of a baby.

You could qualify for a proportion of the Baby Bonus if you have care of a newborn baby within 13 weeks of the baby's birth and are likely to continue to have care of the baby for at least 13 weeks.

Baby Bonus claims must be made within 26 weeks of the baby's birth. This is because the purpose of the payment is to assist with costs around the time of the birth.

Maternity Immunisation Allowance

This is a non-income tested, one-off payment to encourage immunisation in children. You are eligible for Maternity Immunisation Allowance if:

- ◆ the child in your care has turned 18 months and is fully immunised
- ◆ you make the claim for your child before he or she turns two.

Only one carer can qualify for Maternity Immunisation Allowance, except in shared care situations. Where this is the case, the payment can be split according to the percentage of care each person provides.

Double Orphan Pension

This is a non-income or assets tested payment given in the following circumstances:

- ◆ both parents of the child have died; or
- ◆ one parent has died and the whereabouts of the other is unknown; or
- ◆ one parent has died and the other is serving a prison sentence of at least 10 years, or is held on remand and charged with an offence that may be punishable by imprisonment for a term of at least 10 years; or
- ◆ one parent has died and the other parent is a patient of a psychiatric hospital or nursing home indefinitely; or
- ◆ your child is a refugee who has not lived in Australia previously and both parents are outside Australia or their location is unknown.

However, your child must be aged under 16 or a full-time dependent student aged 16-21 who is not receiving Youth Allowance.

How do you apply for tax benefit payments?

The Family Assistance Office will provide the information you need, including claim forms.

You can visit their offices which are located in Medicare Offices, Centrelink Customer Centres and Tax Office shopfronts.

Alternatively, you can phone the Family Assistance Office on **13 6150 (TTY 1800 810 586)** or Multilingual Services on **13 1202** or visit the website at **www.familyassist.gov.au**

The best approach is to seek advice from your nearest Centrelink office.

Go to Reception; explain what you want to talk about. You can either wait or make an appointment for a future time.

A Centrelink Customer Service Adviser will give the advice you need and, if necessary, will refer you on to a Centrelink social worker.

If visiting a Centrelink office is too difficult for you, you can ring them on **13 6150**.

You may like to read the booklet called *Are you a parent or guardian?* This is available from Centrelink offices or you can visit the publications section of their website: **www.centrelink.gov.au**



Can you get help with childcare?

There are times when grandparents and relative carers need to access occasional childcare. There are a number of options and sources of information available to you.

If your child is young, you may want to discuss options with your Maternal and Child Health Nurse at your local council or Community Health Centre. Telephone help lines, such as the Maternal & Child Help Line (13 2229) or Parentline (13 2289), can help you to work out a child care plan.

If your child is school age, you could contact their school to find out if they offer an Out of School Hours program on the school site.

The Office of the Child Safety Commissioner has produced a publication called *Information for Parents: Things to look at when selecting child-safe activities or services for your child*. This booklet raises issues that will help you in your selection of good quality childcare.

Another resource produced by the Office of the Child Safety Commissioner, *Proper Care When You're Not There*, provides information on key things to think about when deciding how appropriate a person may be to babysit your child. It also gives helpful suggestions - such as ensuring you have left your contact details and have provided clear information about what the baby sitter can and can't do when looking after your child.

Child Care Benefit

Every Australian family is entitled to apply for Child Care Benefit (CCB). It can provide up to 24 hours approved care per child per week.

Certain eligibility conditions apply, including the carer participating in work, training or studying. The Family Assistance Office is responsible for registration and approval of CCB eligible hours.

Grandparent Child Care Benefit is available to grandparents who:

- ◆ meet the existing CCB eligibility requirements; **and**
- ◆ are receiving an income support payment from Centrelink or the Department of Veterans' Affairs; **and**
- ◆ are the sole or major provider of the ongoing daily care for the grandchild and have the responsibility for the day-to-day decisions about the grandchild's care, welfare and development.

Grandparent Child Care Benefit covers the *full* cost of the total fee charged for CCB eligible hours, up to 50 hours in approved care each week.

For information about approved child care services and vacancies in your area, phone the Child Care Access Hotline on 1800 670 305 (TTY 1800 639 327).

Child Care Benefit

The Customer Service Adviser at Centrelink will give you information about eligibility for Child Care Benefit and Grandparent Child Care Benefit. Or you can phone the Family Assistance Office on **13 6150 (TTY 1800 810 586)**, Multilingual Services on **13 1202** or visit the website at **www.familyassist.gov.au**

Resources produced by the Office of the Child Safety Commissioner can be obtained by downloading or ordering hard copies by visiting **www.ocsc.vic.gov.au** or by calling **03 8601 5884**.





What health and medical benefits could you be entitled to?

You may be entitled to a Health Care or other concession card to help with costs such as prescription medicines.

Health Care Card

A Health Care Card entitles you to reduced-cost medicines as well as a limited number of other concessions.

If you're already receiving a pension or benefit (such as Age Pension or Parenting Payment) you will already have a Pensioner Concession Card which, like the Health Care Card, provides reduced cost medicines and other concessions. If you're also eligible for Family Tax Benefit for the children in your care, the child or children can be added to this card. They will then receive the benefits of the card (such as prescription medicines) at the concession rate.

If you don't receive a pension or benefit but are eligible for Family Tax Benefit Part A at the maximum rate, you'll automatically be issued with a Health Care Card and this will include the children on the card.

If you're not automatically entitled to a Health Care Card, you may be entitled to a Low Income Health Care Card and you should test your eligibility by lodging a claim. You can get more information by visiting Centrelink or by calling the Family Assistance Office on 13 6150.

Foster Child Health Care Card

Another option is to claim a separate 'Foster Child Health Care Card' for your child. This card is available to grandparents and relatives who are caring for a child through either an informal or formal arrangement. This card can be claimed by you, but is issued in the child's name. It can only be used for benefits (such as concession rate prescription medicines) for your child and not for any other members of the family. You don't have to meet an income or assets test to get this card. The foster child Health Care Card can be claimed through your local Family Assistance Office.

Note: if you urgently need the concession card, ask for an interim card to assist you until the actual card arrives.

Access to Medicare benefits

As a grandparent or relative carer, you are able to claim Medicare benefits for medical expenses incurred on behalf of the child you are caring for. You don't need the child's name on your Medicare card and you don't need to have the child's Medicare card. Make sure the receipt is in your name, making you the 'claimant' for the Medicare benefit.

Medicare card

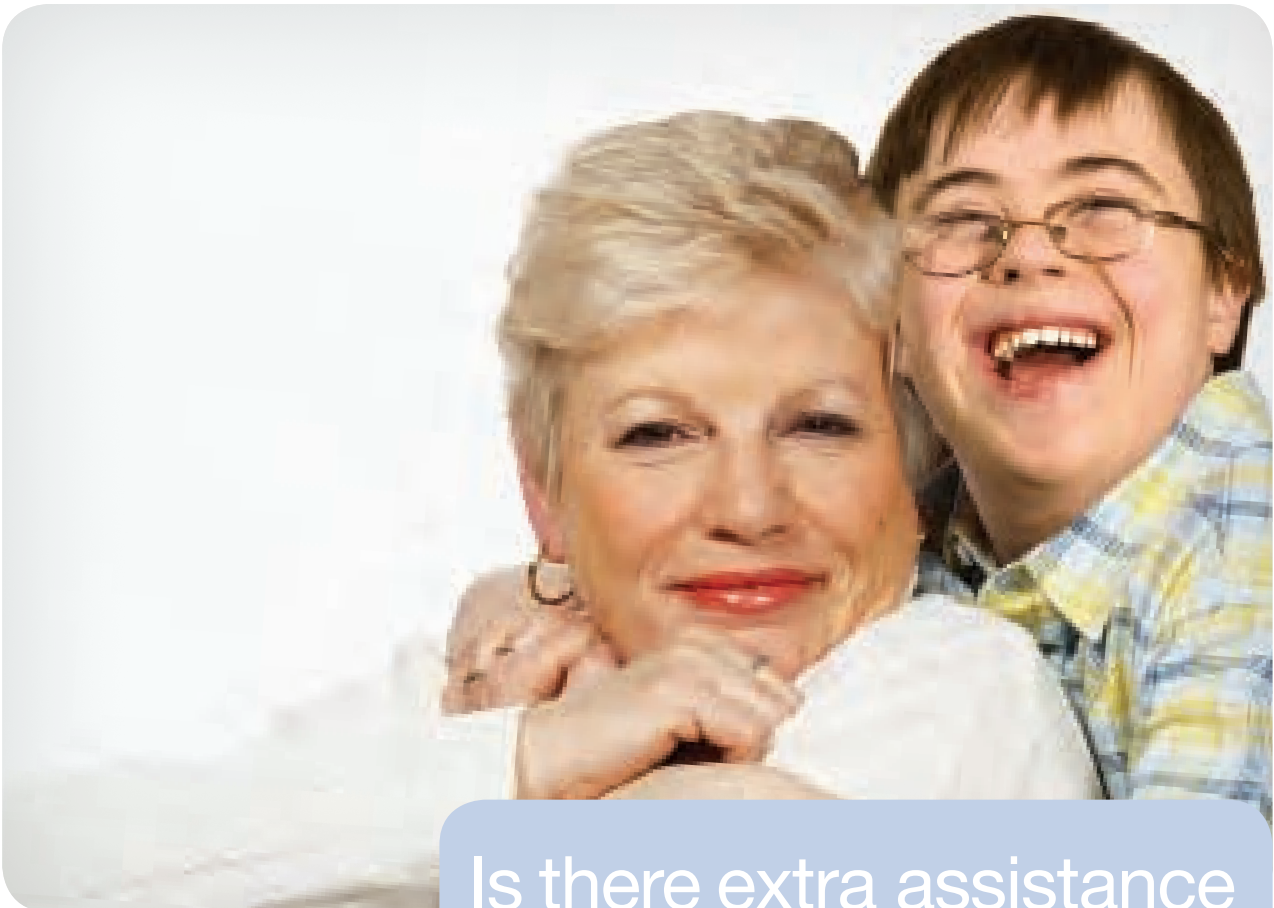
Arrangements can often be made to have the child copied on to your Medicare card or a Medicare card can be issued for the child with you as the registered cardholder. This is regardless of the circumstances under which the child is in your care.

For more information about medical benefits

Contact Medicare on 13 2011.



*Are you eligible for the
Medicare Safety Net?
Ask at your local Medicare
office, or go online at
www.medicareaustralia.gov.au
or phone 13 2011.*



Is there extra assistance for a child with a disability or who needs extra care?

If your child is under 16 and has a physical, intellectual or psychiatric disability that is permanent or likely to continue for an extended period, you may be able to access a number of benefits, such as:

Carer Allowance

This Allowance is not income or assets tested. If the child's disability does not qualify you for payment of Carer Allowance, you may be able to get a ...

Carer Allowance Health Care Card

This card would be for your child. You can receive one of these if the child requires extra care and attention on a daily basis amounting to at least 14 hours per week. This extra care must be provided by you or your partner.

Carer Payment (child)

You may be able to access this in addition to Carer Allowance. Carer Payment is an income support payment for people who, because of the demands of their caring role, are unable to support themselves through substantial workforce participation. Carer

Payment has an income and assets test and is paid at the same rate as other social security pensions. You cannot receive Carer Payment and another income support payment, such as Age Pension, at the same time.

To claim Carer Allowance and/or Carer Payment, you'll need to complete a 'Claim for Carer Payment and/or Carer Allowance – Caring for a child – under 16 years' form. A 'Treating Doctor's Report' will also need to be completed by the child's doctor.

Carer Allowance and Carer Payment may also be paid to the carer of a young person over 16 years of age; however there are different eligibility criteria.

For more information about disability support

Contact your Centrelink Customer Service Adviser call 13 2717.





What other assistance can you get?

Parenting Payment

Parenting Payment is an income support payment designed specifically for people, either single or partnered, who have principal care of a child. In general terms, to qualify for Parenting Payment, you must:

- ◆ have principal care of a qualifying child (under 6 if you are partnered, under 8 if you are single, under 16 if you were receiving the payment prior to 1 July 2006);
- ◆ have income and assets below certain limits; and
- ◆ meet the residence requirements.

Parenting Payment (partnered) is only paid to one member of a couple and only one person can receive Parenting Payment in respect of a child. So as a grandparent or relative carer, you can't receive Parenting Payment for a child if the natural parent is receiving the payment for the same child.

Age Pension

Some grandparents and relative carers who are raising children may be paid an Age Pension. If you defer claiming an Age Pension, you may be able to register for the Pension Bonus Scheme, which will provide you with a one-off lump sum payment when you do eventually claim an Age Pension.

You will find more detailed information on Age Pension in the booklet *Are you planning for or needing help in retirement?* This is available from Centrelink offices or on the Centrelink website: www.centrelink.gov.au

Parenting Payment to Newstart

In 2005, the Federal Government passed welfare reform legislation commonly known as Welfare to Work. The Welfare to Work changes were implemented on 1 July 2006. Under these provisions, all people who apply for Parenting Payment after 1 July 2006 have to apply for Newstart Allowance or Youth Allowance once their youngest child turns six or eight (depending on whether the adults are partnered or single). Regardless of which payment they are on, once their youngest child turns six, they are then expected to look for, or obtain, paid work for a minimum of 15 hours a week.

Those people who were already receiving Parenting Payment on 1 July 2006 can stay on that payment until their youngest child turns 16 as long as their circumstances don't change. This group of people were required to look for, or obtain, paid work for a minimum of 15 hours per week from 1 July 2007, or when their youngest child turns seven, whichever is later.

Carers aged 55 and over are able to satisfy their participation requirements by doing at least 15 hours a week of voluntary work, paid work or a combination of both.

Exemptions from having to look for work

If you are on income support, you may be exempt from looking for work:

- ◆ if you are receiving Age Pension
- ◆ if the child you are caring for has been placed with you by the Department of Human Services through the Child Protection system, you may get a 12 month exemption that can be reviewed each year, until the youngest child turns 16 years old.

'Active and registered foster carers are also exempted from the Welfare to Work requirements. The definition of active and registered foster carers includes foster carers, grandparent and relative carers, and permanent carers. The maximum period of exemption from participation requirements is 12 months, but active and registered foster carers can apply for further periods of exemption. Carers require a letter from their Community Service Organisation or the Department of Human Services advising Centrelink they are an active and registered carer'.

What if you are not an active and registered foster carer?

Grandparents and other relatives who are caring for children who have not been involved with the Child Protection system may be eligible for exemption. Centrelink decides this on a case-by-case basis. The Department of Human Services may have agreed that you should care for the child, as an alternative to the child being placed on a Child Protection Order and being placed into the formal foster care system.

So you may be able to obtain an exemption by showing Centrelink a document stating that the placement of the child has been negotiated with the Department of Human Services and that the child's parents have agreed to the placement. The document should also say that caring for the child will affect your ability to work, or search for work. The exemption is for up to 16 weeks and can be reviewed and renewed.

Principal carers of dependent children (including grandparents and relatives who are assessed as principal carers of a dependent child) may be eligible for inclusion in a range of other special family circumstances where a temporary exemption will be considered on a case-by-case basis for up to 16 weeks.

These include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ if you are caring for a dependent child with a disability
- ◆ where an order has been made under the Family Law Act 1975, stating that a child or children should live with a relative who is not a parent of the child
- ◆ if you are being subjected to domestic violence
- ◆ if you are experiencing extremely high stress due to recent relationship breakdown
- ◆ if there has been a death of an immediate family member
- ◆ if you are caring for a dependent child with a temporary illness or injury requiring full-time care
- ◆ if you are caring for a frail aged or disabled adult family member
- ◆ if you are caring for a youngest child aged six but who has not yet commenced school.

If you are a principal carer of a child with a disability and are receiving Carer Payment, you are exempt from looking for work. Even if you are not eligible for Carer Payment and are receiving Newstart or Parenting Payment, you may still be eligible for a maximum 12 months' exemption on a case-by-case basis. You can apply for further exemptions of a maximum 12 months at a time.

The policy reference you can quote to Centrelink is: SS Guide 3.5.1.260 Participation Requirements Exemption in Special Family Circumstances – Overview (PP).

For more information about Newstart Allowance

Contact Your Centrelink Customer Adviser who will give you more information about Newstart Allowance, or you can phone Centrelink on **13 1021** or Multilingual Services on **13 1202**.



Child Support Scheme

The Child Support Scheme aims to make sure that children of separated parents are adequately supported.

This scheme is administered through the Child Support Agency (CSA) which supports separated parents to transfer payments for the benefit of their children.

If you care for a grandchild or grandchildren under 18 years of age for 128 nights or more a year (35% or more care), you can apply to the CSA for child support.

Since 1 July 2008, when significant changes to the Child Support Scheme were introduced, non-parent carers (including grandparents) must apply against both parents except where a child's parent is not an Australian resident, is deceased, or where the CSA is satisfied there are special circumstances. These may include:

- ◆ fear of violence
- ◆ harmful or disruptive effect on the child
- ◆ parent unknown
- ◆ non-parent's case commenced before 1 July 2008.

You may be able to receive child support even if the child's parents don't consent to the child being in your care.

It may not be in the child's best interests to live at home due to family breakdown or the risk of physical or emotional abuse.

Your income will not be taken into account when the child support assessment is made. However, the percentage of your care for the child will be taken into account and is based on the number of nights you have care of the child.

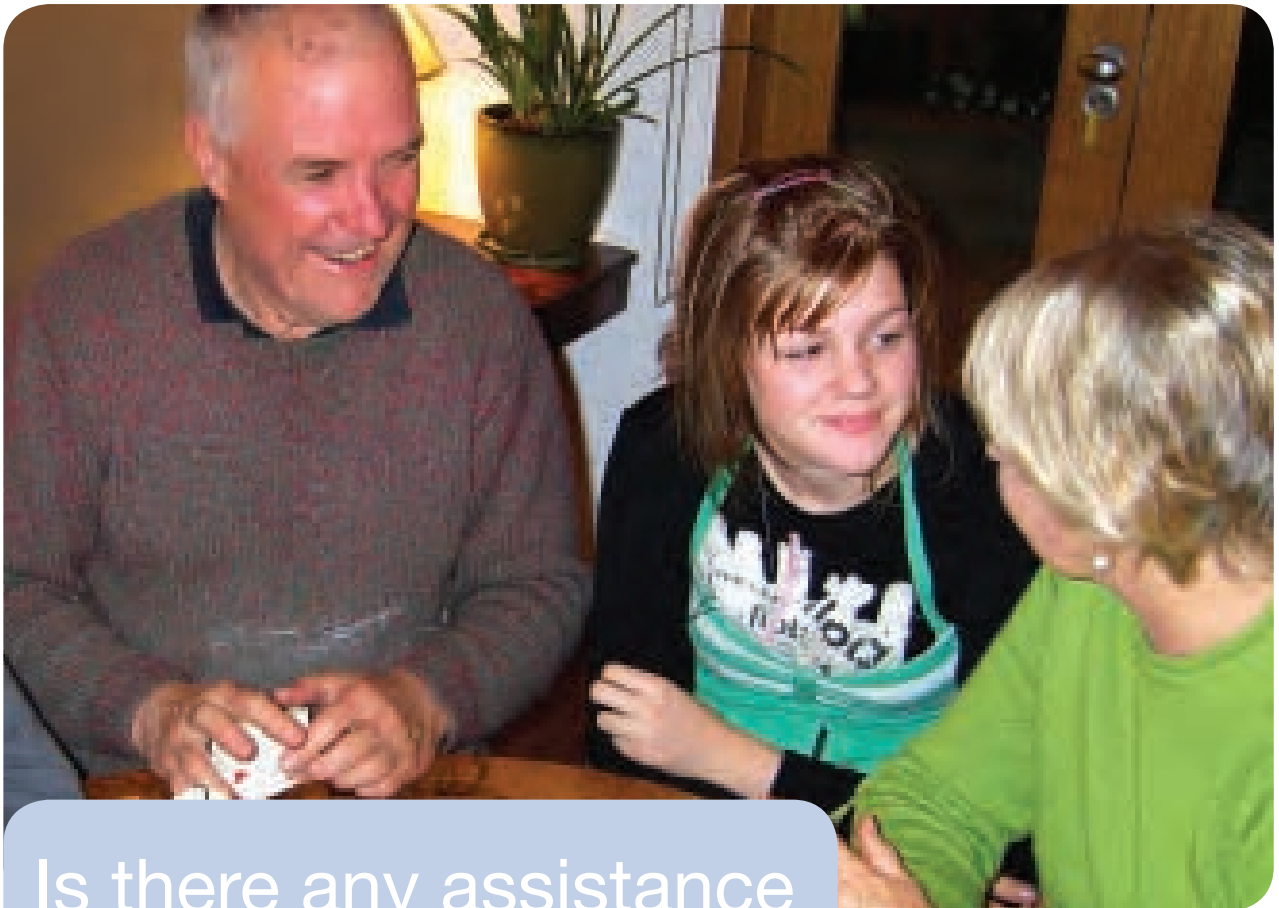
If you are a grandparent or relative carer with significant regular day time caring responsibilities and no night time responsibilities, the CSA recommends you and the parent(s) make a written agreement and provide a copy to the CSA. The agreement, which should outline how much time the child will be in your care and your care percentage, will assist the CSA to decide if your application for child support can be accepted.

To find out more, or to apply for a child support assessment, call the CSA on 13 1272. The CSA offers practical assistance in the form of a series of booklets that are designed to help parents ride the separation rollercoaster. They may also be of benefit to you in your roll as carer. Orders can be placed by ringing 1800 040 972 or by visiting the website www.csa.gov.au

For more information about the Child Support Scheme

Phone the Child Support Agency on **13 1272 (TTY 1800 631 187)** or visit the website at www.csa.gov.au . There is also a Telephone Interpreting Service on **13 1450**.





Is there any assistance available for the child in your care?

Depending on your child's age, circumstances and background, the child in your care may be eligible for:

- ◆ Youth Allowance
- ◆ Special benefit
- ◆ Abstudy
- ◆ Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme
- ◆ Transition to Independent Living Allowance.

Youth Allowance

If your child is between 16 and 24 years old and is studying full-time, undertaking a full-time Australian apprenticeship, or aged between 16 and 20 years and undertaking training and/or looking for work, they may qualify for Youth Allowance. This payment encourages young people to further their education or training to improve their future employment chances. Please note that the school leaving age in Victoria increased to 16 years of age from 1 July 2007.

The amount of payment for dependent Youth Allowance recipients varies, according to a means test of the parents. For Youth Allowance purposes, parents include adoptive parents, foster parents, step-parents or any other person who may have assumed responsibility for the child, such as grandparents or other relatives.

However, if the child you are caring for has been subject to Child Protection involvement, they may be assessed as independent. If your child is between 16 and 24 years old and qualifies for independence, there does not have to be a means test before the child can receive Youth Allowance.

A young person is independent if they are not living with a parent and:

- ◆ they are in the guardianship, care or custody of a court, a Minister or a Government Department
- ◆ there is a current direction from such a court, Minister or Department placing the person in the guardianship, care or custody of someone who is not the person's parent.

For further information about Youth Allowance, phone the Youth and Students Line on 13 2490, ask your Centrelink Customer Service Adviser or visit the Centrelink website at www.centrelink.gov.au

Special Benefit

Young people under the age of 16 years may be eligible for Special Benefit. Eligibility criteria are very strict.

Your child is eligible if they are:

- ◆ in financial hardship and unable to earn a sufficient livelihood for themselves and dependents due to reasons beyond their control
- ◆ not able to get any other income support payment.

For a short-term payment, your child can't receive more than the applicable fortnightly Newstart or Youth Allowance rate.

A long-term payment is no more than \$5,000. Go to Centrelink at www.centrelink.gov.au or contact the Centrelink social worker for more information.

ABSTUDY

ABSTUDY provides a living allowance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary and tertiary students and New Apprentices. This is similar to Youth Allowance but provides additional assistance to support study. If your child is a primary school student, he or she may also be eligible for ABSTUDY if they are aged 14 years or older on 1 January in the year of study.

For further information, contact the ABSTUDY contact line on 13 2317.

Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme

If your child is unable to attend an 'appropriate' government school on a daily basis, primarily because of geographic isolation, you may be helped by the Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme.

An 'appropriate' government school is one that offers the level of study your child requires. If your child has special health-related or educational needs, an appropriate school may provide the facilities and programs to meet those needs.

'Geographic isolation' is based on the student's principal family home.

For more information about this allowance, phone Centrelink on 13 2318 (TTY 1800 810 586), Multilingual Services on 13 1202 or visit the website at www.centrelink.gov.au

Transition to Independent Living Allowance

The Transition to Independent Living Allowance (TILA) is a one-off support payment of up to \$1,000 designed to assist young people aged between 15 and 25 years who are making the transition to independent living for the first time. TILA is available to young people who have been in a formal or informal care environment and who satisfy the eligibility criteria.

To find out if your child may be eligible for TILA, please contact the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA).

**Department of Families, Community Services
and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA)
TILA Helpline: 1300 653 227
TILA Helpdesk: helpdesk.TILA@facsia.gov.au
or visit their website: www.facsia.gov.au**



Victorian Government Assistance

Caregiver Reimbursements for Statutory Kinship Care

Grandparents and relatives who care for a child placed with them by the statutory Child Protection service (also called 'statutory kinship care') are eligible for a caregiver reimbursement. This is a fortnightly payment to assist in the care of the child and is normally arranged by Child Protection when the child is placed with you. The payment may be time-limited depending on circumstances.

Queries about statutory kinship care and caregiver reimbursement should be made to the Community Service Organisation that provides your support or to the Child Protection section of the Department of Human Services office in your region. Carers who receive caregiver reimbursement may also be eligible for occasional extra assistance for one-off costs. Enquiries about other assistance should be made to your child's caseworker or Child Protection worker.

Department of Human Services Regional Offices

Eastern Metropolitan	9843 6000	Gippsland	5177 2500
Southern Metropolitan	9213 2111	Grampians	5333 6530
North & West Metropolitan	9412 5333	Hume	5722 0555
Barwon-South Western	5226 4540	Loddon Mallee	5434 5555

Other useful contacts

The following organisations may also be able to help you with information and support:

Parentline **13 2289**

Maternal and Child Health line **13 2229**
(up to 6 years of age)

Nurse on Call **1300 606 024**
24 hour health advice and information from a registered nurse

The Mirabel Foundation **T: 9527 9422**
PO Box 1320 **F: 9527 9466**
St Kilda South VIC 3182
Email: mirabel@mirabelfoundation.org.au
Web: www.mirabelfoundation.org.au

Grandparents Victoria **9372 2422**
14 Youlden Street, Kensington VIC 3031
Email: director@grandparents.com.au

Foster Care Association of Victoria
48 High Street (PO Box 729) **T: 9489 9770**
Northcote VIC 3070 **F: 9489 9119**

Kindergarten Parents Victoria (KPV):
48 High Street
9489 3500
1300 730 119
(P.O. Box 520) Northcote Vic 3070
KPV provides a wide range of resources for members and non-members. Visit their website on www.kpv.org.au and click on the images to find information about the various resources on offer. *Transition to school 2008* and *Welcome to kindergarten 2008* may be particularly helpful.

Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA)

VACCA represents the interests of the Victorian Aboriginal community in policy, programs and service for the welfare of their children and families.

Head Office **9471 1855**
34 Wurruk Avenue, Preston Vic 3072
Email: vacca@vacca.org

Gippsland **5136 5116**
Morwell Aboriginal Co-op
7-9 Buckley Street
Morwell Vic 3840

Kurnai Hostel **5134 8774**
16 Hourigan Road
Morwell Vic 3840

Sunraysia **5033 0564**
St Luke's
51 McCallum Street
Swan Hill VIC 3585

Mildura Aboriginal Corporation **5023 0893**
120 Madden Avenue
Mildura VIC 3502
Email: macrecep@hotmail.net.au

Department of Human Services

Child Protection Referrals **- Regional Offices**

Eastern	1300 360 391
Southern	1300 655 795
North/West	1300 369 536
Barwon-South Western	1800 075 599
Gippsland	1800 020 202
Grampians	1800 000 551
Hume	1800 650 227
Loddon Mallee	1800 675 598

Child Protection

Child Protection After Hours **13 1278**

Office for Children

Head Office **1300 650 172**

Other government contacts

Office of the Child Safety

Commissioner **1300 782 978**
The Ombudsman **1800 806 314**

Financial counselling

Ring either of the following offices for contact details of a financial counselling agency or agencies in your area. All financial agencies funded by Consumer Affairs Victoria provide financial counselling services free of any charges.

Consumer Affairs Victoria 1300 558 181

Financial and Consumer Rights Council 1800 134 139

Telephone Counselling

Lifeline Melbourne 13 1114
24 hour telephone counselling, information and referral service

WIRE Women's Information
Provides free information, support and referrals to women across Victoria.

Telephone support 1300 134 130
9am to 5pm Monday to Friday

Walk In Centre
Ground Floor, Queen Victoria Women's Centre,
210 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne

Search
WIRE has a comprehensive database to help you find the support you need. See their website www.wire.org.au

Emergency Relief

Several welfare organisations provide emergency relief for people experiencing a severe financial crisis.

This may be in the form of food, clothing and household goods such as second-hand furniture and blankets.

The contact points for the larger emergency relief centres in Victoria are listed below:

Vic Relief and Foodbank 9362 8300
Unit 4/2 Somerville Road
Yarraville VIC 3013
Provides food and material aid to welfare agencies across Victoria.

St Vincent de Paul 1300 305 330
43-45 Prospect Street
Box Hill VIC 3128
Provides food vouchers, second-hand clothing and furniture. A volunteer from the organisation assesses people in their own homes. There are 76 St Vincent de Paul centres throughout Victoria.

Salvation Army Crisis Centre 1800 627 727
Crisis intervention, service assisting people with accommodation, material aid and counselling.

Brotherhood of St Laurence 9483 1183
67 Brunswick Street
Fitzroy VIC 3065

Wesley Support Service 9662 2355
(part of Wesley Central Mission)
148 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
Offers assistance for people and families in crisis. Material aid is limited to every three months per person. It includes food parcels and food vouchers, Met tickets, phone cards, blankets, pharmacy and travellers' aid (vouchers).

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