

# Child Support



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Are you separated? Are you the parent/legal guardian of a child? If so, are you receiving child support payments?

## Child support scheme

Parents who do not live together (including same sex parents) have a duty to provide a **proper level** of financial support for their children. Usually **this means the payment of child support from one parent to another**. How much should be paid depends on the:

- Financial circumstances of each parent.
- Costs of children (based on Australian research).
- Level of care each parent provides, and whether either parent supports other children who they have a legal duty to support.
- Parents' income.

## The child support agency

The Child Support Agency (CSA) administers the Child Support Scheme. The CSA can assess how much child support should be paid and can collect and distribute the payments. The child support assessment can be based on:

- A mathematical formula, or
- A child support agreement made by the parents. (Noting you should always obtain legal advice before signing a child support agreement).

Note: It is important to notify the CSA of any changes in care arrangements as soon as possible. Examples include the birth of a relevant dependent child, or if a child dies, marries or enters into a de facto relationship.

## Changing your assessment in special circumstances

If you are dissatisfied with the level of child support you receive, you can raise your concerns with the CSA. An assessment can be changed for the following reasons:

- High costs of contact.
- Agreed education costs.
- Income or property provided for the child.
- Special self-support expenses.
- Income, earning capacity, or property of either parent is not accurately reflected in the assessment.
- Special needs of the child.
- Income or property of the child.
- High child care costs.
- Legal duty to support another person.
- Responsibility to maintain other resident children (e.g. step children).

## Collection and enforcement of child support payments

If necessary, the CSA can collect payments of child support from payers, and transfer it to payees. The CSA has a range of powers to **enforce collection of child support** debts if they are not paid voluntarily. These powers include:

- The ability to collect payments directly from a payer's employer.
- To intercept tax refunds.
- To withdraw funds from a payer's bank account (where it can be identified).

**For further information about your rights and responsibilities, contact the Adelaide Legal Outreach Service on (08) 8118 5200 or email us at [alos@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:alos@adelaide.edu.au) to arrange an interview.**

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