



The latest information from  
the Child Support Agency

Issue 21 | October - December 2011

## Do you have dependent teenagers?

If you have a dependent teenager receiving Youth Allowance for full-time secondary study, some changes may apply to your family. From 1 January 2012, your teenager can either choose to continue receiving Youth Allowance or change arrangements so you receive Family Tax Benefit (FTB) Part A instead.

FTB Part A payments will increase for dependent 16 to 19 year olds in full-time secondary study. This might be more than your child receives with Youth Allowance and may be a better option for your family.

To help you decide which payment is best for your family, use the new Family Assistance-Youth Allowance Comparison Estimator at [www.centrelink.gov.au](http://www.centrelink.gov.au) or call **136 150\***.

### FTB and child support

If your child is 16 to 18 years old and from a previous relationship, and you want to receive more than the base rate of FTB Part A payments, you must apply for child support. If your child will be in full-time secondary study in the year they turn 18, you must also apply to extend the child support assessment to the last day of the school year. Call **131 272\*** for more information about child support or visit [www.csa.gov.au](http://www.csa.gov.au)

\*Call charges apply

† Please note: your call may be recorded





## New account statements have arrived!

In the last issue of *Child Support Matters*, we told you about the new and improved account statement that we've been developing with your help. We've finished re-designing it and the new look statement is being sent to CSA collect paying parents from November.

When you receive your statement, you'll see that it looks more like the utility company and bank statements you're probably familiar with. You'll find it's now easier to read and follow — at a quick glance you'll easily be able to find important information about your account including:

- payments
- overdue amounts
- credit or debit adjustments
- other charges
- amount to pay before the next statement is issued.

### What else is new?

The other changes we've made include:

- boxes that show the balances of your account and how the amounts are worked out

- simpler language
- an easy to read due date that's bold and in colour
- simpler explanations of third-party payments, multiple case situations and employer deductions
- a tailored message relevant to your situation, for example if you have employer deductions, a payment arrangement or overdue child support.

The back page of your statement lists details of the transactions and dates on your account including payments received, account adjustments, the amount for the current period, third party payments or payments to more than one parent. There's also information on your payment options and to help you manage your child support.

When you first receive a new monthly statement (from next month) a useful factsheet will be provided to help you understand the statement. Refer to the factsheet for more detailed information about the new features or view an interactive sample of the statement online at [www.csa.gov.au](http://www.csa.gov.au)

## Make sure you lodge your tax return each year

If you don't lodge your tax return on time each year and we can't work out your adjustable taxable income from other information, we'll use a provisional income to assess your child support. We do this by indexing your most recent Australian Tax Office (ATO) assessed income in line with wages growth. More information about provisional income is available at [www.csa.gov.au](http://www.csa.gov.au)

We may not be able to back-date any changes to your assessment if you lodge your tax return late and your ATO

income is lower than the income we've used to work out your child support. The best way to ensure your assessment is correct is by lodging your tax return on time. In most cases, when you or the other parent lodges a tax return, we'll calculate a new child support amount if you have a formula assessment and you'll receive a new assessment notice.

It's important that you check the details of your assessment notice. If your details aren't right or you believe your assessment isn't correct, call **131 272\***.



## CSA's service over the holiday break

The CSA will be offering a limited phone enquiry service over the holiday period, so make sure you check our website [www.csa.gov.au](http://www.csa.gov.au) for opening times. If you have an urgent child support issue you can still contact us on **131 272\***.

You'll be able to get your latest payment information by calling the automated Child Support Information Service on **131 107\***. You can also enrol for CSAonline at [www.csa.gov.au](http://www.csa.gov.au)

Christmas can be a tough time of the year for separated families, both emotionally and financially. Other services which are also available include:

- **Lifeline** connects people with care by providing services in Suicide Prevention, Crisis Support and Mental Health Support — **13 11 14\***
- **MensLine Australia** is a telephone and online support, information and referral service, helping men to deal with relationship problems — **1300 789 978\***

- **Kids Helpline** is a counselling service for Australian children and young people aged between five and 25 years — **1800 55 1800\***
- **1800 RESPECT** is a free confidential service for people experiencing or who have experienced domestic or family violence and/or sexual assault — **1800 737 732\***
- **The Family Relationship Advice Line** is a national telephone service that assists families affected by relationship or separation issues — **1800 020 321\***.

Visit our website for more information and a range of family support products.

Planning on visiting a Centrelink or Medicare office over the holiday period? Check [www.centrelink.gov.au](http://www.centrelink.gov.au) and [www.medicareaustralia.gov.au](http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au) for their opening times.

## Heading overseas for Christmas ?

The holiday season is getting closer. If you're planning an overseas trip during this time, make sure your child support payments are up to date before you go.

The CSA can use a Departure Prohibition Order (DPO) to prevent customers with outstanding payments from leaving the country.

If a DPO is issued, we'll:

- write to you to let you know
- make every effort to contact you to talk about your situation

- explain how to apply to have a DPO revoked, as well as other appeal options
- lift the DPO if you pay in full or negotiate a satisfactory payment arrangement with us.

Get in touch with us if you're not up to date with your child support payments and still need to travel for work or personal reasons (such as family illness) during this time. We'll consider all the details of your personal circumstances and help you work out a suitable payment arrangement.

Don't risk being stopped at the airport. If you have overdue payments or are having trouble paying, call **131 272\***. You can also visit [www.csa.gov.au](http://www.csa.gov.au) for more information.

## Travelling overseas with prescription medicines

Are you travelling overseas with children? To help you travel safely with prescription medicines there are a few things you should know:

- contact the embassy of the country you're visiting to make sure the medicine is legal there
- only take enough medicine to cover the length of your trip
- carry a letter from your doctor detailing what the medicine is, how much you'll be taking and stating the medicine is for your personal use or the personal use of someone with you (for example, a child)
- leave the medicine in its original packaging.

If you're sending prescription medicines overseas, you need to:

- Attach a completed *Customs declaration* form to their parcel, stating the package contains prescription medicine for personal use. This form is available from any post office.

Rules apply to the amount of Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) medicines that can be taken out of the country. The Australian Customs and Border Protection Service may take away extra amounts of PBS medicines. It's also illegal to take or send PBS medicine out of Australia unless it's for your personal use, or the personal use of someone travelling with you.

The consequences of breaking these rules are serious — if you're caught you may face fines of up to \$5000 and/or imprisonment for two years.

For more information about PBS medicines, call **1800 020 613\***, visit the 'Using medicine wisely' page on the Medicare website or email [pbs@humanservices.gov.au](mailto:pbs@humanservices.gov.au)

## We speak your language

The CSA aims to reduce language barriers, tailor information and make our processes easier for parents and carers with different backgrounds.

One way we're doing this is by offering support products and services in languages other than English.

*The Parents Guide to Child Support* and the *Introduction to Child Support* factsheets are available online in Vietnamese, Arabic, Turkish, Chinese and Spanish. Other CSA products, including the popular *Me and My* booklets, are also available in other languages. You can order them from [www.csa.gov.au](http://www.csa.gov.au) or the publications hotline **1800 040 972\***. The CSA website can also be translated into 28 different languages.

If you don't speak English and need help from the CSA, ring the Telephone Interpreting Service on **131 450\*** between 8.30am and 4.45pm (local time), Monday to Friday. Ask them to set up a three-way conversation between you, an interpreter and a CSA Customer Service Officer.

## Are you a separated parent eligible for the Paid Parental Leave scheme?

If you're a working parent of a child born or adopted from 1 January 2011, you may be eligible to receive up to 18 weeks of government funded Parental Leave Pay, currently \$589.40 per week before tax.

For more information about the Paid Parental Leave scheme, visit [www.familyassist.gov.au](http://www.familyassist.gov.au) or call the Family Assistance Office on **136 150\***.

\*Call charges may apply

## CSAonline is changing...

We're making some major changes to CSAonline over the next few months. There's never been a better time to enrol or re-visit [www.csaonline.gov.au](http://www.csaonline.gov.au) to check out the new features.

There's now an updated menu and personalised home page showing all of your key account information. Other handy functions include:

### For paying parents

- View the due date and amount of the next payment.

### For receiving parents

- View the amount of the next expected payment
- View details of the previous payment.

### For all CSAonline customers

- Check any outstanding child support
- Track sent messages
- View and print letters.

These changes are just the beginning of an improved online service for you, with more exciting features to be added over the coming months. It's about ensuring a more convenient, quicker way of doing business with us — giving you more choices and saving you time on the phone.

Visit our website to enrol or login to your account at [australia.gov.au](http://australia.gov.au). When you register for an [australia.gov.au](http://australia.gov.au) account, you'll be able to link your Centrelink, CSA and Medicare Australia accounts. This means you'll be able to access your accounts with just one user ID and password.