



Australian Government

Department of Families,
Housing, Community Services
and Indigenous Affairs

Child Support Scheme Reforms

Fact sheet Five: Extension of time to apply for child support

From 1 January 2007, changes to family assistance give separating parents more time to work out the best arrangements for their family, including child support payments, before their Family Tax Benefit (FTB) Part A payments are affected.

What are the changes?

Previously, a parent had 28 days in which to apply for child support from their former partner or to make other appropriate arrangements before their FTB Part A payments were affected. This time limit has been extended to 13 weeks.

Why the change?

28 days did not allow time for parents to seek information, advice, counselling or support on family relationship matters to work out the best arrangements for the family following separation. This could cause conflict between the parents, undermining their ability to reach agreement on parenting arrangements or even to reconcile.

Now parents have more time after separation to seek appropriate information or support and work out parenting arrangements for their children.

A range of support services is available to help and support separating parents to work together to resolve issues. These include the Family Relationship Advice Line and Family Relationship Centres.

When was the change implemented?

This change started on 1 January 2007.

Do I have to wait 13 weeks before I make a claim for child support payment?

No. Parents can apply for child support anytime after separation. However, child support assessments will still start from the date of application and FTB Part A payments will generally be affected from that date.

How will the extra time affect my Family Tax Benefit payments?

Separated parents will continue to receive FTB Part A payments throughout the extended 13-week period.

However, where parents have not applied for child support or made appropriate arrangements within this period, FTB Part A payments will be reduced to the base rate of payment.

Where do I find more information?

For information on the Family Relationship Advice Line and Family Relationship Centres visit **www.familyrelationships.gov.au** or call **1800 050 321** Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm, and Saturday from 10am to 4pm.

For information on Family Tax Benefit, shared care and child support, visit **www.familyassist.gov.au**

Please note this fact sheet is for general guidance only. It should not be treated as a complete or authoritative legal statement.

More details about these changes can be found in other fact sheets and on the Child Support Agency website **www.csa.gov.au**

If you would like to read more information on the Taskforce and how the reforms started, visit the website of the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs **www.fahcsia.gov.au**