



The Hon. Pru Goward MP

Minister for Family and Community Services

Minister for Women

MEDIA RELEASE

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BIRTH PARENTS NEED TO CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR CHILDREN'S LIFE

Minister Goward has today called on birth parents to step up and financially contribute to their children's lives.

"Thousands of grandparents and relatives care for children and young people in NSW in often tough financial circumstances," Ms Goward said.

"It is time for birth parents to step up and help cover the day-to-day expenses associated with caring for their children.

"This new initiative will require all authorised relative carers of children and young people in long term* out-of-home care for more than 12 months to apply to Child Support Agency for a child support assessment.

"Birth parents of children and young people will then be assessed and will start making a financial contribution to their child's life."

Ms Goward said up to 9,000 children in out-of-home-care (OOHC) could be better off as a result of this initiative.

"Birth parents should continue to take responsibility and contribute to their child's wellbeing in the same way as any other parent, whether they have relinquished the care of their child or had their child removed from their care as a result of child protection concerns," Ms Goward said.

"The care of a child is a shared responsibility and just as separated parents can apply for child support, relative carers of children are eligible to apply to the Federal Government's Child Support Agency (CSA)."

The CSA can collect payments on relative carers' behalf and deposit the payments into a nominated bank account. Any child support payments carers receive will not affect the care allowance paid by Community Services to care for the child in their care.

Ms Goward said this will help to strengthen birth parents' ongoing role in the life of their child which is important for a child's sense of identity.

"The amount of child support birth parents will be required to pay will vary depending upon income, the number and age of the children and their care arrangements."

Ms Goward said discussions with the Federal Government are also taking place regarding an amendment to the *Child Support (Assessment) Act 1989* to enable a further 6,700 children being cared for by non-relative foster carers to also benefit from this scheme.

"I am committed to improving outcomes for children and young people in out-of-home-care and this is just one of a number of initiatives in the out-of-home care (OOHC) sector."

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Background information

* **Long term out-of-home care** - when a final order has been granted through the Children's Court which places a child or young person in care until they attain the age of 18 years. In cases where there are no Family Court Orders or Children's Court Orders, a child or young person is considered to be in long term out-of-home care (for the purposes of this scheme) when they have been in the care of an authorised relative carer for more than 12 months and there are no plans to restore the child or young person to the care of their parents.

Please note that the following payment examples are approximate. Child support payments vary depending on the birth parents' income, the number of children, the age of the children and the care arrangements of the children

Example 1:

Sonja, aged 4 and Sarah, aged 2 are living with their paternal grandmother. Both birth parents receive a Newstart allowance from Centrelink. A child support assessment determines that the paternal grandmother would receive a total of **\$737.36** per year in child support payments.

Child support payments per fortnight – Parent 1	\$14.18 pf
Child support payments per fortnight – Parent 2	\$14.18 pf
Total child support payments	\$28.36 per fortnight (\$737.36 per year)

Example 2:

Chloe, aged 10 lives with her maternal aunt. Chloe's birth mother receives a Newstart allowance from Centrelink and her birth father has successfully applied to have child support payments reduced to nil as he is currently in prison. A child support assessment determines that the maternal aunt would receive a total of **\$368.68** per year in child support payments.

Child support payments per fortnight – Parent 1	\$14.18 pf
Child support payments per fortnight – Parent 2	\$0 pf
Total child support payments	\$14.18 pf (\$368.68 per year)

Example 3:

Todd, aged 13, Crystal, aged 11 and Rose, aged 9 live with their paternal grandparents. The children's birth mother receives a Newstart allowance from Centrelink and their birth father is currently working and earns \$45,000 per year. A child support assessment determines that the paternal grandparents would receive a total of **\$7,568.68** per year in child support payments.

Child support payments per fortnight – Parent 1	\$14.18 pf
Child support payments per fortnight – Parent 2	\$276 pf
Total child support payments	\$290.18 pf (\$7,568.68 per year)

Example 4:

Jack earns \$60,000pa and Marie earns \$35,000pa and they have two children aged 8 and 10 who both live with their maternal grandmother full-time. Jack and Marie have no other children. A child support assessment determines that the grandmother would receive a total of **\$12,792** per year in child support payments.

Child support payments – Parent 1 (Jack)	\$360 pf
Child support payments – Parent 2 (Marie)	\$132 pf
Total child support payments	\$492 pf (\$12,792 per year)