

Child Support talking points

What you need to know

- Child support helps parents who aren't in a relationship share the financial responsibility of raising their children.
- Child support can also be paid between a parent and a non-parent carer, such as a grandparent, legal guardian or other carer.
- Child support can help contribute to the cost of essentials such as food, clothing, housing, school expenses, health care and activities. The amount contributed may vary depending on factors such as the level of care provided by each parent.
- The amount of child support depends on each parent's circumstances, including income, care arrangements and the number of children.
- Customers may need help to understand what applies to their circumstances and what steps they can take.
- Some customers may not feel safe dealing directly with the other parent, especially where family and domestic violence, including financial abuse may be present.
- Customers do not need the other parent's agreement to ask Services Australia about collection options if private collection is not safe, reliable or working.

What you need to do

- Assist customers to seek official information about child support and how it applies to their situation before they make any decisions.
- Support customers to find out about other options that are available, especially when things aren't working or arrangements are not safe or reliable.
- If family and domestic violence, including financial abuse may be present, encourage the customer to contact Services Australia for information and specialist support. They don't need to negotiate directly with the other parent.

What customers need to do

- Customers must tell Services Australia as soon as possible within 28 days if their care arrangements or income change. This helps keep their assessment right and can help avoid debt.
- If child support is not being paid, customers can ask Services Australia about collection options if private collection is not safe, reliable or working. They don't need the other parent's agreement.
- Customers can use their Child Support online account to check payment details, letters and notify of changes.
- Child support customers should lodge their tax return each year. Parents who don't need to lodge a tax return need to lodge a Non-Lodgement Advice with the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) and confirm their income with child support so their assessment can stay accurate.
- Parents with a child support debt, should contact Service Australia for assistance to pay the debt and get back on track.

Where customers can get more information

- Customers can go to servicesaustralia.gov.au/childsupport to learn more about Child Support.
- For more information about Child Support Online Account, customers can check our [Child Support online help guides](#).
- Customers can call the Child Support enquiry line on **131 272**. They can let us know if they need an interpreter and we'll arrange one for free.
- They can use the Payment Service finder to find out more about payments and services. Go to servicesaustralia.gov.au/paymentfinder
- Services Australia's Financial Information Service (FIS) can help customers understand their new financial position. FIS Officers can provide information and education on the payments and support they may be eligible for. They can go to servicesaustralia.gov.au/fis
- They can go to servicesaustralia.gov.au/yourlanguage where you can read, listen to or watch videos in your language.
- They can talk to us in their language by calling our Centrelink multilingual phone service on **131 202** or our Indigenous Call Centre on **1800 136 380**.
- Customers can stay up to date with Services Australia's latest news by:
 - subscribing to the separated parents news channel at servicesaustralia.gov.au/news-for-separated-parents
 - following us on social media at servicesaustralia.gov.au/socialmedia

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