FAMILY ASSISTANCE

The FaCS output group Family Assistance contributes to stronger families by:

- helping support families through income supplements to assist with the cost of children and at the birth of a child;
- helping support and strengthen families through services to enhance family relationships and lower the incidence of family breakdown, including parent education to prevent child abuse.

FaCS provides services for families, including:

- family relationship services;
- parenting education programs;
- early intervention services to young people and families experiencing conflict;
- support for young adolescents and their families where the young people are at risk of destructive or self-destructive behaviours;
- financial assistance for families with children:
  - Family Tax Benefit Part A
  - Family Tax Benefit Part B
  - Maternity Allowance
  - Maternity Immunisation Allowance
  - Double Orphan Pension
- policy advice, research and service management related to providing services for families.

As part of the Government’s New Tax System package, families receive extra assistance and the structure and delivery of family assistance has been simplified with the twelve forms of family assistance, previously available under the tax and social security systems, now reduced to three. See Tax Reform for more information.

For information about Government expenditure on financial assistance for families with children for 2001-2002 see Estimates of Expenditure and Numbers Assisted.
Service delivery

Since September 1997, the delivery of payments, services and customer information provision has been subcontracted to Centrelink.

From 1 July 2000 the Family Assistance Office was set up to administer Family Tax Benefit and Child Care Benefit.

The Family Assistance Office also administers the families portal, www.families.gov.au. This internet site provides a simple way for people, especially families with children, to access information on Commonwealth payments, parenting relationships and related topics.

Responsible Branches

Family Relationships Branch
Family and Children Branch

Further information

· Stronger Families and Communities Strategy
· Parenting, Early Childhood Intervention and Child Abuse Prevention
· Family Relationships Services Program (FRSP)
· Family Relationships Education
· Men and Family Relationships
· Men’s Line Australia
· Children’s Contact Services
· Commonwealth Financial Counselling Program (CFCP)
· Other Activities
· Work and Family
· Family Relationships and Family and Children Publications
Fact Sheet: Family Tax Benefit Part A

*Family Tax Benefit Part A* helps families with the cost of raising children. It is paid for dependent children up to and including the age of 20 years, and for dependent full-time students up to the age of 24 years (who are not getting Youth Allowance or similar payments like ABSTUDY or Veterans' Children Education Supplement).

**Key Changes**

- *From 1 July 2000, Family Tax Benefit Part A* replaced:
  - Minimum Family Allowance;
  - Family Allowance;
  - Family Tax Payment Part A; and
  - Family Tax Assistance Part A.

**Maximum Rates of Payment***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For each child</th>
<th>Per fortnight</th>
<th>Per year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 13 yrs</td>
<td>$122.92</td>
<td>$3,204.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-15 years</td>
<td>$155.82</td>
<td>$4,062.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-17 years</td>
<td>$39.48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24 years</td>
<td>$53.06</td>
<td>$1,383.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Maximum rate is paid up to a family income of $29,857 and is reduced by 30 cents for every extra dollar of income.

**Base Rates of Payment***
For each child

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Per fortnight</th>
<th>Per year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 18 yrs</td>
<td>$39.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$1,029.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24 years</td>
<td>$53.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$1,383.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part-payment at the base rate is available up to a family income of $77,234 (plus an additional $3,139 for each dependent child after the first child).

Income Thresholds for Family Tax Benefit

For maximum rate: Family income can be $29,857 a year before payment is affected.

For part rate: If your income is more than $29,857 a year, payments will reduce by 30 cents for each dollar above $29,857 until the base rate is reached. It is paid at this level until family income reaches $77,234 a year (plus an additional $3,139 for each dependent child after the first). Payments will then reduce by 30 cents for every dollar over that amount until the payment reaches nil.

To receive some Family Tax Benefit Part A, the maximum income levels are:

- $80,665 a year for a family with one dependent child under 18; and
- $81,846 a year for a family with one dependent 18-24 year old.

These thresholds are lifted by:

- $6,570 for each additional dependent child under 18; and
- $7,750 for each additional dependent 18-24 year old.

Extra Payments Available

Families receiving Family Tax Benefit Part A may also be eligible for extra payments:

- Rent Assistance (if renting privately);
- Large Family Supplement (for fourth and each subsequent child); and
- Multiple Birth Allowance (for three or more children born during the same birth who are aged under 6).

*Rates in this Fact Sheet are current as at 1 July 2001.*
Fact Sheet: Family Tax Benefit Part B

*Family Tax Benefit Part B* gives extra assistance to single income families including sole parents - particularly families with children under 5 years of age.

Key Changes

- *From 1 July 2000, Family Tax Benefit Part B* replaced:
  - Basic Parenting Payment;
  - Guardian Allowance;
  - Family Tax Payment Part B;
  - Family Tax Assistance Part B;
  - Dependent Spouse Rebate (with children); and
  - Sole Parent Rebate.

Maximum Rates of Payment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of youngest child</th>
<th>Per fortnight</th>
<th>Per year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 5 years</td>
<td>$105.56</td>
<td>$2,752.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-16 years</td>
<td>$73.64</td>
<td>$1,919.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(or 16-18 if full time student)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Income Test

- Sole parents:
  - no income test.

- Couples:
  - primary earner’s income not taken into account;
  - Secondary earner’s income is taken into account. If income is above $1,679 a year, payments are reduced by 30 cents for every extra dollar of income.

Parents will receive some *Family Tax Benefit Part B* if the secondary earner’s income is below:
• $10,853 a year if the youngest child is under 5 years of age; or
• $8,079 a year if the youngest child is between 5 and 18 years of age.

Extra Payments Available

Families receiving Family Tax Benefit may also be eligible for extra payments:

• Rent Assistance if renting privately;
• A Large Family Supplement for four or more children; and
• Multiple Birth Allowance (for three or more children born during the same birth who are aged under 6).

*Rates in this Fact Sheet are current as at 1 July 2001.*

Last Published: 29/06/2001
Other Assistance

Maternity Allowance

Maternity Immunisation Allowance

Large Family Supplement

Multiple Birth Allowance

Rent Assistance

Health Care Cards

Assistance from Centrelink

Maternity Allowance

Extra help for families with babies

Maternity Allowance is money to help with the extra costs of a new baby (including stillborn babies and babies who die shortly after birth).

You can get Maternity Allowance if:

- you have a newborn child or have care of a newborn child within 13 weeks after the birth; and
- you were eligible for Family Tax Benefit Part A within 13 weeks of the baby’s birth (or would have qualified if the baby had lived); and
- you claim within 26 weeks of the child’s birth.

As an adoptive parent you can also get Maternity Allowance if you qualify for Family Tax Benefit Part A within 13 weeks of the child being entrusted to your care and the child being under 26 weeks of age at the date of placement.

If you are eligible for Maternity Allowance you will get a one-off payment of $789.36.
You cannot claim Maternity Allowance through the tax system. You can claim it only as a direct payment which will be paid into your bank or credit union account with your Family Tax Benefit.

Maternity Immunisation Allowance

Maternity Immunisation Allowance is a separate payment for children who have been fully immunised at 18 months old or have an approved exemption from immunisation.

You can get Maternity Immunisation Allowance if:

• you received Maternity Allowance at the time of your baby’s birth or are receiving Family Tax Benefit Part A when your child is aged 18 months; and
• your child is fully immunised at 18 months, or is on a recognised catch-up schedule.

You may receive an exemption from immunising your child if you have a conscientious objection to immunisation or if there are medical reasons your child should not be immunised. Talk to the Family Assistance Office if this applies to you.

If you are eligible you will get a one-off payment of $208 which will be paid to you in your child’s 19th month.

You can lodge your form any time before your child turns two years old.

You cannot claim Maternity Immunisation Allowance through the tax system. You can claim it only as a direct payment which will be paid into your bank or credit union account with your Family Tax Benefit.

For more information about these payments call the Family Assistance Office on 136150*.

Large Family Supplement

If you get Family Tax Benefit for four or more children, you will get a Large Family Supplement of $8.40 a fortnight for each child after the third. This is paid on top of your Family Tax Benefit.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of children</th>
<th>Extra each fortnight</th>
<th>Extra each year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>$8.40</td>
<td>$219.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>$16.80</td>
<td>$438.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>$25.20</td>
<td>$657.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>$33.60</td>
<td>$876.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Multiple Birth Allowance

If you have three or more children born during the same birth, a Multiple Birth Allowance can be added to your Family Tax Benefit and will be paid until the children turn six years old.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of children</th>
<th>Extra each fortnight</th>
<th>Extra each year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Triplets</td>
<td>$102.76</td>
<td>$2,679.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quadruplets or more</td>
<td>$137.20</td>
<td>$3,577.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rent Assistance

Who can get rent assistance?

How do I claim?

Rent Assistance rates

Who can get rent assistance?

Rent Assistance gives extra help to people who pay rent to private landlords. You may also be able to get help if you pay:

- lodging, or board and lodging;
- site fees for a caravan, tent or mobile home;
- mooring fees for a boat or vessel that you live in;
- fees for accommodation in a retirement village or hostel (if you are not considered a home owner).

Rent Assistance is generally not paid to people who:
• pay rent to a government housing authority (such as a Housing Commission);
• own or are buying the home in which they live;
• are getting Incentive Allowance
• Live in an approved Commonwealth funded nursing home;
or
• pay less than the threshold amount of rent.

Rent Assistance is generally not payable during any period of absence from Australia unless the customer is receiving Family Tax Benefit Part A at greater than the Family Tax Benefit child rate during a temporary absence from Australia of up to 26 weeks.

If you receive Rent Assistance, you should ask to get Family Tax Benefit as fortnightly payments because Rent Assistance cannot be paid through the tax system.

How do I claim?

To claim Rent Assistance you can give the Family Assistance Office a copy of your current written lease or tenancy agreement. If you don’t have a written lease or tenancy agreement you can obtain a Rent Certificate from the Family Assistance Office or by ringing 136150. Complete the Rent Certificate form and be sure to give all the details of how much you pay in rent and who you pay it to. You need to have your landlord sign the Rent Certificate.

Rent Assistance Rates (20 September 2001 to 19 March 2002)

Rent Assistance is paid at the rate of 75 cents for each dollar of rent paid above the rent threshold, up to specified maximum rates. The rate of Rent Assistance depends on things like how many children you have, and whether you are partnered or single.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Type</th>
<th>Maximum rate of RA</th>
<th>Rent threshold (at which payment of RA commences)</th>
<th>Rent at which maximum rate of RA is payable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single, 1-2 children</td>
<td>$105.00</td>
<td>$104.58</td>
<td>$244.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single, 3 or more children</td>
<td>$118.72</td>
<td>$104.58</td>
<td>$262.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple, 1-2 children</td>
<td>$105.00</td>
<td>$154.84</td>
<td>$294.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple, 3 or more children</td>
<td>$118.72</td>
<td>$154.84</td>
<td>$313.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporarily Separated Couple; 1-2 children; Partner in gaol, illness separated couple, respite care couple, 1-2 children</td>
<td>$105.00</td>
<td>$104.58</td>
<td>$244.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporarily Separated Couple; 3 or more children Partner in gaol, illness separated couple, respite care couple, 3 or more children</td>
<td>$118.72</td>
<td>$104.58</td>
<td>$262.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Health Care Cards**

You may get a Health Care Card automatically issued with your maximum rate Family Tax Benefit Part A if you ask to get Family Tax Benefit Part A as fortnightly payments.

To get a Health Care Card automatically with maximum rate Family Tax Benefit Part A, you must
• be paid by fortnightly instalments; and
• have family income in 2001/2002 less than $29,857
  (excluding any child support you get).

If you want to claim Family Tax Benefit through the tax system,
you may be able to get a low income Health Care Card by
lodging a claim with Centrelink.

You may get a low income Health Care Card if you meet the
income test on average gross weekly income in the eight
weeks immediately before a claim is lodged. For a couple with
one child that weekly limit is currently $558 plus $34 for each
additional child.

Assistance from Centrelink

Centrelink may be able to assist families further. For information
on assistance such as Parenting Payment, the Jobs Education and
Training (JET) program, low income Health Care Cards and
other Families assistance, ring 136150 or visit the Centrelink

Last Published: 20/09/2001