



Being an advocate for a prisoner who pays child support

If you are an advocate, representative or delegate for a prisoner and who is paying child support, the following may help you support them to meet their financial responsibilities to their children.

Included in this kit:

■ Fact sheets

- Child support Responsibilities when you leave prison
- Child support Responsibilities when you enter prison
- Making payments to CSA
- What you should know about minimum assessments

■ Forms

- Application to Reduce Minimum Assessment to Nil
- Estimate of Income for use in Child Support Assessment
- Representative's Authority

Am I able to contact the CSA on the prisoner's behalf?

You can if the CSA customer has appointed you to be their authorised representative. As a representative you can act on the customer's behalf in matters that do not involve negotiations, such as simple enquiries and actions like lodging forms signed by the CSA customer, making enquiries about payments and providing updated information.

As a representative you will fall into one of the following groups:

- Friend/relative — You will have the same powers to enquire about the case as the parent can. You cannot sign or lodge forms over the telephone for them.
- Solicitor — Unless otherwise indicated, as a Solicitor you are taken to be acting for the parent in a legal capacity. You will have access to their case details and will be able to discuss issues concerning the case.
- Accountant — Normally as an accountant you would not be given any information about the case unless you have been nominated as the representative.
- Other — This may include and is not limited to, counsellors, medical practitioners, social workers, member of an interest group, legal guardian.



For someone to become a representative the customer must fill out and sign a representative's authority form. This form is included in this kit or can be obtained by calling the CSA on **131 272** or by visiting our website **www.csa.gov.au**

Do I have to inform the CSA that the parent has gone to prison?

If you are the parent's representative you should inform the CSA of any change of residential/postal address and of any change of income for the customer. For information or to contact the CSA call **131 272** or visit **www.csa.gov.au**

What if the person I am representing owes child support when they go to prison?

If the person you are representing has outstanding child support then they will still be required to pay that money. CSA will continue to collect the arrears so it is better if we are able to negotiate a payment arrangement to clear any outstanding payments. The payment arrangement will take into account the CSA customer's financial circumstances including their current situation. If an acceptable arrangement is not made then CSA may take further action.

Is it true that people don't have to pay child support when they go to prison because they don't have any income?

Child support assessments are worked out according to a child support formula. If the annual rate calculated under the formula assessment is less than \$333[†], then the child support assessment (for the child support period) will usually be \$333[†] per year.

If however the parent's child support payment is assessed at the minimum amount they can apply for CSA to reduce their assessment to nil. This is possible where they can show their total income will be less than the minimum assessment amount for the twelve months after the start of the child support period.

The CSA does not deem a prisoner's basic living allowance as income. However if they earn any other income through work or study in the prison or through investments or income outside of prison, then this would be considered.

As part of this application process prisoners may be asked to provide evidence of the period of their incarceration.

A nil assessment only applies to the specific child support period that is applied for. When a new child support period starts, a new assessment must be made and the parent will need to make a fresh application to reduce it to nil, if appropriate.

If CSA accepts the application and reduces the assessment to nil both parents will receive a new assessment notice for that child support period.

[†]This amount is indexed to increase each year in line with inflation



What is a child support period?

A child support period is a period of time to which a child support assessment applies. The date of the start of the child support period determines which financial year of income CSA uses to make the assessment. A child support period is a flexible period of time, which cannot be more than 15 months.

Do I have any obligations to pay if the person that I am representing doesn't?

No, it is the parent's responsibility to pay support for their children. There are a number of ways that the CSA can ensure this payment is made for the benefit of the children involved.

Useful contacts:*

CSA Complaints Service

132 919 or free fax 1800 062 610

Change of Assessment

131 141

Free self-help booklets

1800 040 972

Family Relationship Advice Line

1800 050 321

CSA Info Service

131 107

(Automated service for your account enquiries)

Commonwealth Ombudsman

1300 362 072

CSA Fraud Prevention Team

1800 004 352

Teletypewriter

(for hearing impaired people)

1800 631 187

National Relay Service

(for hearing impaired people)

133 677 and quote 131 272

Are you ringing from overseas?

+61 131 272

General enquiries

+61 3 6216 0864

Overseas cases team

0800 440 953

Freecall from NZ

* Calls to '13' numbers from fixed lines can be made within Australia for not more than the cost of a local call (call charges may vary depending on the phone service provider). Calls to '1800' numbers from fixed lines are free. Calls to 13 and 1800 numbers from mobiles may be charged at a higher rate.



For further information and help

Call CSA on **131 272**[†]

Call the Telephone Interpreting Service on **131 450**

Visit the CSA website **www.csa.gov.au**

Ask your representative to assist.

Support Services

Family Relationship Advice Line

Phone: **1800 050 321**

www.familyrelationships.gov.au

8am–8pm weekdays, 10am–4pm Sat. (public holidays excluded)

Assists people from families affected by relationship or separation issues.

Other CSA resources:

Getting Started—information about child support for separated parents.

Me and My series of self-help booklets (available in a range of languages and as audio downloads).

Dealing with Separation interactive CD Rom.

Family Separation: a guide for teens—helping young people cope with family separation and change.

CSAonline—this is a secure online service where you can view and update your child support information when it suits you. Go to **www.csa.gov.au** to enrol.

To order any free CSA publication or more fact sheets visit **www.csa.gov.au** or freecall **1800 040 972** (charges apply to mobile and public phones).

Your privacy

CSA collects information about you and your family for child support purposes. We understand that some information is sensitive, and we place great importance on protecting your privacy. For more information see the *Privacy* fact sheet.

The Australian Government Services Fraud tip-off line

The Australian Government Services Fraud tip-off line provides people with a place to report suspected fraud against Centrelink, Medicare, the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme or the Child Support Agency. If you have information about someone who is mis-using government services, call **131 524**.

*Call charges may apply to the telephone numbers listed.

[†]Please note: your call may be recorded.

Do you need interpreting help?

If you don't speak English and need help from CSA, ring the Telephone Interpreting Service on **131 450**.

ARABIC إذا كنت لا تتحدث اللغة الإنكليزية والحجت إلى مساعدة من Child Support Agency، اتصل بخدمة الترجمة الهاتفية (TIS) على الرقم 13 14 50.

CHINESE 如果您不說英語，但需要Child Support Agency的協助，請致電翻譯及傳譯服務處(TIS)，電話13 14 50。

CROATIAN Ako ne govorite engleski i trebate pomoć Child Support Agency, nazovite Službu prevoditelja i tumača (TIS) na 13 14 50.

FARSI اگر انگلیسی نمی‌دانید و به کمک Child Support Agency نیاز دارید به سرویس ترجمه کتبی و شفاهی (TIS)، شماره 13 14 50 تلفن کنید.

GREEK Αν δεν μιλάτε Αγγλικά και χρειάζεστε βοήθεια από το Child Support Agency, τηλεφωνήστε στη Μεταφραστική και Τηλεφωνική Υπηρεσία (TIS) στο 13 14 50.

INDONESIAN Jika Anda tidak berbahasa Inggris dan memerlukan bantuan dari Child Support Agency, silakan menelepon Jasa Penerjemahan dan Juru Bahasa (TIS) pada nomor 13 14 50.

ITALIAN Se non parli inglese e ti serve assistenza da parte della Child Support Agency, chiama il Servizio traduzioni e interpreti (TIS) al 13 14 50.

KHMER បើលោកអ្នកមិននិយាយអង់គ្លេសទេ បើលោកអ្នកត្រូវការជំនួយពី Child Support Agency សូមទូរស័ព្ទទៅអ្នកប្រកាសសេវាស្រុកស្រាវជ្រាវ (TIS) តាមលេខ 13 14 50 ។

KOREAN 당신이 영어를 못하고 Child Support Agency의 도움이 필요하시면 전화통역 서비스(TIS) 13 14 50 으로 전화하십시오.

MACEDONIAN Ако не зборувате англиски јазик и ви треба помош од Child Support Agency, телефонирајте во Службата за преведување и толкување (TIS) на 13 14 50.

MALTESE Jekk inti ma titkellimx bi-Ingliż, u trid għajnjuna miċ-Child Support Agency, cempel lis-Servizz ta' Interpreti bit-Telefon (TIS) fuq 13 14 50.

POLISH Jeśli nie mówisz po angielsku a potrzebujesz pomocy Child Support Agency, zadzwoń do Biura Tłumaczy (TIS) pod numer 13 14 50.

PORTUGUESE Se não fala inglês e precisa da ajuda da Child Support Agency, ligue para o Serviço de Tradutores e Intérpretes (TIS) no 13 14 50.

RUSSIAN Если вы не говорите по-английски и нуждаетесь в помощи Child Support Agency, звоните в Службу устного и письменного перевода (TIS) по телефону 13 14 50.

SERBIAN Ако не говорите енглески и треба вам помоћ од Child Support Agency назовите Службу преводилаца и тумача (TIS) на 13 14 50.

SPANISH Si no habla inglés y desea ayuda de Child Support Agency, llame al Servicio de Traducción e Interpretación (TIS) al 13 14 50.

TURKISH Eğer Child Support Agency'den yardım istiyorsanız ve İngilizce konuşamıyorsanız 13 14 50'den Yazılı ve Sözlü Tercümanlık Servisi'ni (TIS) arayınız.

VIETNAMESE Nếu không nói được tiếng Anh, mà cần Child Support Agency giúp, xin gọi điện thoại cho Dịch Vụ Thông Phiên Dịch (TIS), số 13 14 50.