



Child support responsibilities when you enter prison

This kit aims to make it easier for you to meet your child support responsibilities when you enter prison.

When you enter prison you must tell the Child Support Agency (CSA):

1. **your new address details**
2. **when your income changes**
3. **changes in employment**
4. **if the care arrangements for your children have changed**
5. **if you appoint someone else to deal with CSA for you.**

Included in this kit:

- **Fact sheets**
 - 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

Why should I tell CSA I am in prison?

So we can make sure your child support assessment is always right. When you enter prison a number of things will change which CSA needs to know about.

- **Your address:** CSA may need to write to you, even when you are in prison.
- **Your income:** your income may change when you enter prison and this means your child support assessment will change. If your income drops by more than 15% we can re-assess your child support payments and you may be able to pay less.
You also need to tell CSA about any income and allowances you earn in prison (including Centrelink allowances and investments or income outside of prison), to ensure you are paying the right amount.
- **Your children's care:** If you cared for your children (full-time or part-time) before going into prison your assessment will need to change.



How can I get in contact with CSA while I am in prison?

- You can call CSA on **131 272**.
- You can write to CSA at PO Box 9815 in your capital city. Generally we will try and reply within 28 days.
- You can appoint a representative to deal with CSA on your behalf.

If you want another person to act on your behalf you can fill out and sign the 'Representative's authority form'. They will then be able to talk to the CSA for you. They will also be able to do things like handing in forms, asking about payments and providing updated information.

Your representative cannot negotiate for you.

This form is included in this kit and contains all the information you need including who you can nominate to act on your behalf.

What if I don't tell you about entering prison?

If you do not let CSA know you have gone to prison you may build up a child support debt based on wrong details. You might also end up paying too much child support. In most cases CSA can only change your assessment from the date we are told of your change in circumstances. There are limits on how far back CSA can review once you make your application. The sooner you let CSA know, the better it is for you.

What if I owe child support?

If you owe child support then you will still have to pay that money. It is better if you talk to us about a way to pay so you can clear any overdue payments. This agreement (payment arrangement) will take into account your current situation. If you don't make an arrangement, CSA will take further action to recover any outstanding amounts.

There is more information about dealing with this in the fact sheet '*Overdue Child Support*' included in this kit.

Does my ex have to know I'm in prison?

The CSA will not tell your ex-partner you are in prison. CSA must advise them if your child support payment is reduced or you have made a successful application to reduce your assessment to nil, but we will not provide specific information about why this has happened.

What are my options for payments?

There are a number of ways that you, or your representative, can pay your child support. These include:

- Mail Pay—cheque payment
- CSA Bill Pay— Post Office Payment
- Direct Credit— transfer from your bank account to CSA's account.

There is more information about these options in the Fact Sheet '*Making payments to CSA*' included in this kit.



How much child support do I have to pay when I am in prison?

Child support assessments are worked out using the child support formula. The formula takes into account what you and your ex-partner earn, care arrangements of your children and the number of dependent children from other relationships.

Your income for the previous financial year is used when your assessment is made. If your income has reduced by more than 15% you can give us an estimate of what you will earn for the remainder of the child support period based on your new circumstances.

The minimum child support payment amount for most parents on a low income for 2007 is \$333[†] per year or just over \$6 a week.

If your yearly income is less than \$333[†] then you should apply to have your child support assessment (for that period) reduced to nil. See the following question for more details.

There is more information about this in the fact sheet '*What you should know about minimum assessments*' included in this kit.

What if I don't even earn that much money?

If your child support payment is already the minimum amount you can apply for your payments to be reduced to nothing. To do this you must show that your total income will be less than the minimum assessment amount (\$333[†]) for the twelve months after the start of the child support period.

If you apply to have the minimum assessment reduced to nil you need to include all your sources of income. CSA will consider your taxable income as well as any other money you have received. Your basic living allowance is not considered income.

You may be asked to provide evidence that you have no income and this may mean providing evidence you are in prison.

When a new child support period starts, a new assessment must be made and you will need to make a new application to reduce it to nil.

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

An 'Application to reduce minimum payment to nil' form is included in this kit.

[†]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.

What if I get back with my ex-partner?

If you and your partner get back together you **must notify both Centrelink and CSA immediately.**

It is important to contact Centrelink immediately so they can make sure you are getting your correct entitlements. If you owe child support and you get back together with your partner, CSA will ask them if they want CSA to continue to collect the outstanding amount. They should check with Centrelink to find out if this decision will have any impact on their entitlements.

Are you a Centrelink customer?

You also need to let Centrelink know about any changes. You can contact Centrelink on **136 150*** (call charges apply).

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 الإنجليزية والحجت إلى مساعدة من Child Support Agency اتصل بخدمة الترجمة الخطبة والشفهية (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 បើលោកអ្នកមិននិយាយភាសាអង់គ្លេសទេ បើលោកអ្នកត្រូវការជំនួយពី Child Support Agency សូមទូរស័ព្ទទៅអ្នកបកប្រែភាសា (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 għajnuna 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.