

# Child Support

**Update**
**Winter 2000**

## Phone, email or write to our community liaison officers

Do you know any community organisations, schools, employers or specialist groups that would like to know more about child support? We encourage anyone interested in finding out more about us to give our community liaison officers a ring, or alternatively call us on freephone 0800 221 221.

To increase public awareness, the officers go into communities and give talks about child support. They also assist individuals to understand their rights and obligations, and explain the importance of providing ongoing financial support for children.

name	office	phone	address	email
Lynley Ballentine	Invercargill and surrounding areas	(03) 214-7035 Ext 70835	PO Box 514 Invercargill	Lynley.ballentine@ird.govt.nz
Bruce Simpson	Dunedin and surrounding areas	(03) 467-7071 Ext 77071	PO Box 1247 Dunedin	Bruce.simpson@ird.govt.nz
Miriana Ware	Christchurch and surrounding areas	(03) 363-1011 Ext 74765	PO Box 2871 Christchurch	Miriana.ware@ird.govt.nz
Carol Wilson	Nelson and surrounding areas	(03) 546-1156 Ext 71156	PO Box 747 Nelson	Carol.wilson@ird.govt.nz
Nigel Birch	Wellington and surrounding areas	(04) 802-8081 Ext 50081	PO Box 895 Wellington	Nigel.birch@ird.govt.nz
Miranda Kelly	Palmerston North and surrounding areas	(06) 351-2044 Ext 52044	PO Box 1147 Palmerston North	Miranda.kelly@ird.govt.nz
Jo Damen	Napier and surrounding areas	(06) 834-2311 Ext 47452 (025) 402-198	PO Box 1144 Napier	Joanna.damen@ird.govt.nz
Wendy King	New Plymouth and surrounding areas	(06) 759-5038	PO Box 820 New Plymouth	Wendy.king@ird.govt.nz
Edward Nathan	Rotorua and surrounding areas	(07) 349-8810 Ext 43341	PO Box 2334 Rotorua	Edward.nathan@ird.govt.nz
Denise Skinner	Tauranga and surrounding areas	(07) 577-1277 Ext 42277	PO Box 2020 Tauranga	Denise.skinner@ird.govt.nz
Margaret Trevarthen	Hamilton and surrounding areas	(07) 834-7267 Ext 41267	PO Box 432 Hamilton	Margaret.trevarthen@ird.govt.nz
Mary Clark	Gisborne and surrounding areas	(06) 868-2020 Ext 44020	PO Box 1349 Gisborne	Mary.clark@ird.govt.nz
Lizz Jenkins	Manukau and surrounding areas	(09) 263-3081 Ext 36081	PO Box 76-198 Manukau	Elizabeth.jenkins@ird.govt.nz
Anne White	Takapuna and surrounding areas	(09) 488-1064 Ext 32064	PO Box 33-150 Takapuna	Anne.white@ird.govt.nz
Jocelyn Pindred	Whangarei and surrounding areas	(09) 430-6011 Ext 31152	PO Box 1649 Whangarei	Jocelyn.pindred@ird.govt.nz

## What is the difference between Child Support and Family Assistance?

### Child Support

Inland Revenue collects child support from one parent and passes it on to the other for the ongoing support of their children, whereas Family Assistance is money paid by Inland Revenue to help low to middle income working families.

Inland Revenue administers Child Support – a service that operates under the principle that just because parents separate, their financial obligations to their children do not end. Child Support uses a formula to work out how much child support a paying parent is liable to pay, and then regularly collects this money and passes it onto the custodial parent.

Either parent, or any caregiver of a child, can apply for child support – which means in the first instance it is a voluntary service. It is however compulsory for custodians to apply for child support if they receive a benefit paid by the Department of Work and Income.

### Family Assistance

Family Assistance is provided to low to middle income families with dependent children. Entitlement is based on the type and amount of combined family income and the number and age of the children. Family Assistance is made up of Family Support, which is the basic payment, and Family Plus, which consists of extra payments for working families who qualify.

Family Support is paid by Inland Revenue to low to middle income working families with dependent children aged 18 years or younger. We calculate the amount of assistance based on the family's estimated income for the year, and the number and age of the dependent children.

Family Plus is made up of three components: the Family Tax Credit, the Child Tax Credit and the Parental Tax Credit. The Family Tax Credit tops up a family's total income (after tax) to a minimum guaranteed level (at least one parent must work for salary or wages).

Child Tax Credit and Parental Tax Credit payments can be received when a family's income does not include:

- Income-tested benefits from the Department of Work and Income
- New Zealand superannuation
- Veteran's pension
- Accident insurance payments from ACC or private insurers for more than three months, or
- A student allowance.

For more information about these products, or to arrange for an officer to come and speak to your community group about Family Assistance, call freephone 0800 227 773.

## Helping parents pay their debt

One of the most important things for community organisations to do is to encourage paying parents to contact us on our freephone if they are having difficulty making payments – before they incur debt – so we can negotiate some repayment terms to suit them. As long as they repay their debt within an agreed time-frame, no incremental penalties will be charged from the date an arrangement is made. Overdue payments attract a 10% penalty after the first month, and a further 2% incremental penalty is charged to an outstanding balance.

Almost any type of arrangement suggested by a paying parent would be accepted if it meant the debt would be paid within six months.

### Message from Martin Scott

We have 15 community liaison officers who spend their time talking to and educating communities all over New Zealand about Child Support and how it works.

They undertake a variety of tasks aimed at educating the general public and helping those who pay child support to comply with their responsibilities.

The officers also try to build relationships with those who have an interest in child support issues, like specialist groups.

I encourage you to contact the officer in your region to come and speak to your community organisation, school, workplace, government department, youth or specialist group about child support. Alternatively, you can ring them and ask questions or discuss your concerns. A list of their contact details is included on the cover of this month's *Update*.



## *Hello, I'm Anne White...*

I am the community liaison officer for our Takapuna office located in North Auckland. Which means I cover the areas west of Auckland from Blockhouse Bay to Helensville and the North Shore through to Wellsford.

I am married, have two children and three grandchildren. I really like public speaking and in my spare time I enjoy photography.

My aim as a community liaison officer is to educate as many people as possible so they can learn about, and understand, Child Support's place in their community. I also think it is important to assist our paying and custodial parents when they are having difficulties with the specifics of their child support case.

I look forward to meeting you and your friends.

## *Hi, my name is Lizz Jenkins...*

I am the community liaison officer for our Manukau office in South Auckland. I was born and raised in Christchurch but I have not lived there for 17 years – after living in several parts of New Zealand I finally settled in Auckland in late 1994.

I joined Inland Revenue Child Support in 1991 in our Palmerston North office, and have since worked in all areas of Child Support.

I believe that my role is to supply accurate information, and to assist people with using this information so they receive or pay the correct amount of child support. I explain people's rights and obligations to them, something that I also did during my time in the banking industry and while working in the social welfare area. I also continue to encourage the people that I educate to take an active role in any situation they may find themselves dealing with.

I think that I bring the following skills to my job: logic, common sense, a willingness to help others and a wicked sense of humour. My motto is: why not, but how about trying it this way? I am lucky to be employed by an organisation that encourages individuals to think beyond the square.

My children and my husband are a great support to me. My children take after me in my interest in crafts. While I am not as involved in sport as I should be, I am becoming a vocal sideline supporter at junior soccer! Time out for me means spending time with the family or creating something like children's wear, crafts or cake designs for children.

To those of you I have already met, thank you for giving me your time. To those that I have not yet had the pleasure to meet – hope to see you soon.



Some of Child Support's community liaison officers, from top left: Denise Skinner, Barbara Kelly, Lizz Jenkins, Lynley Ballentine, Jo Damen, Bruce Simpson, Lynne Hutchins, Anne White, Miranda Kelly, Ngaire Solomon and Mary Clark.

## *Keep us informed*

It is important that custodians and paying parents keep Child Support informed of any changes to their personal circumstances as it can affect the amount of child support they pay or receive. If custodians do not keep us informed, they may not receive their full entitlement or they might receive too much, which means they would have to pay it back. Custodians should advise us if their address changes, they go on or off a benefit, a child starts living with them or leaves their care or if they enter into a shared custody arrangement.

Paying parents should advise us if their address changes, a child starts living with them or leaves their care, they enter into a shared custody arrangement or they start living with the person they are paying child support to.



The reciprocal agreement between New Zealand and Australia was signed on 12 April 2000. It was given effect in New Zealand by an Order in Council on 29 May, which means the agreement can now take effect from 1 July 2000.

Here is an example of how the reciprocal agreement will work: New Zealand could send a request to Australia about a paying parent owing child support for their children in New Zealand. Australia would collect and pass the money to Child Support in New Zealand, who would then distribute the money to the custodial parent – and vice versa.

If you have any suggestions for future editions of *Update*, or your mailing details are incorrect, or, you know of an organisation who would like to be added to our mailing list, please write or email us at:

Inland Revenue Child Support  
PO Box 2198  
Wellington  
Attn: The Editor, *Child Support Update* newsletter  
email: [clu@ird.govt.nz](mailto:clu@ird.govt.nz)

Need any of our forms or publications? You can now order these directly through our website at [www.ird.govt.nz/childsupport](http://www.ird.govt.nz/childsupport) Alternatively you can still order them by calling INFOexpress on 0800 257 773.

We have also updated our site to include a variety of new links to child support agencies around the world, and community groups and organisations within New Zealand.