

Help when you're **working**

A guide for people who are
working, or starting work



Work and Income
Te Hiranga Tangata

A service of the Ministry of Social Development

Support and advice

We want to do everything we can to help make your work a success. If you need support and advice, call us. We can help with all sorts of things, like giving advice on the best ways to manage your time at work, or telling you about other people who could help.

If you need budgeting advice, we can point you to people who can give the right advice. You can also pick up our brochure *Managing your money* from any Work and Income service centre.

If you have questions about things like your Employment Agreement or your rights, or anything about being an employee, you can call the Department of Labour's Employment Relations Infoline **0800 800 863**.

Help with work costs

Transition to Work Grant

To get the Transition to Work Grant you need to be looking for work, have a job interview or a job offer. Some of the things we can help with include:

- clothing and transport to look for a job or go to a job interview
- helping with your finances until you get your first pay.

To get the Transition to Work Grant your income and assets must be less than a certain amount, talk to us about this.

Working for Families Tax Credits

If you have dependent children aged 18 years or younger, you may qualify for **Working for Families Tax Credits** from Inland Revenue. Working for Families Tax Credits are entitlements for families with children. There are four types of payments and you may qualify for one or more, depending on your personal situation.

Family tax credit

This is ongoing financial support for families with children, and is paid by Work and Income when you receive a benefit and Inland Revenue when you're working. How much you get depends on a number of things such as, your level of income, the number of children you have, their ages and your shared custody arrangements.

If your oldest child is	Your weekly payment will be up to
aged 16, 17 or 18 years	\$99.96
aged 15 years or younger	\$86.29
For each other child who is	Your weekly payment will be up to
aged 16, 17 or 18 years	\$89.44
aged 13, 14 or 15 years	\$68.40
aged 12 years or younger	\$59.98

Rates at 1 April 2009

In-work tax credit

In-work tax credit pays up to \$60 a week per family with 3 children, and up to an extra \$15 a week for each other child.

To get in-work tax credit:

- if you're a sole parent family, you need to normally work at least 20 hours a week *or*
- if you're a two-parent family, you and/or your partner need to normally work at least 30 hours a week between you.

You can get in-work tax credit if you're self employed. It's not available to families receiving an income-tested benefit or student allowance.

Minimum family tax credit

If your family's income is \$20,540 a year or less (after tax), you may be able to get a minimum family tax credit to top up your families income to at least \$395 a week after tax (rates as at 1 April 2009). To get this payment, at least one parent must be working for salary or wages and:

- if you're a sole-parent family, you need to work at least 20 hours a week *or*
- if you're a two-parent family, you and/or your partner need to work at least 30 hours a week between you.

Parental tax credit

This payment helps with the costs of a new baby – for 8 weeks after the baby is born. You could get up to \$1,200, depending on your family income. But if you receive weekly accident compensation payments, an income-tested benefit, the Student Allowance or New Zealand Superannuation during the first 8 weeks after the child is born, your entitlement could be affected.

How to apply

When your benefit stops, you may still qualify for family tax credit as well as other payments from Inland Revenue. We'll tell Inland Revenue that your benefit has stopped so you don't have to, and they'll be in touch about your payments.

To find out more about Working for Families Tax Credits call Inland Revenue on **0800 227 773** or visit **www.ird.govt.nz**



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Accommodation costs

You may be able to get the **Accommodation Supplement** to help with your rent, board or the cost of owning a home.

To qualify for the Accommodation Supplement, your accommodation costs must be more than a certain amount, and your income and assets must be under certain limits.

By income we mean any income you or your partner get from any source – such as work, ACC, investments, business, private pensions, or rent.

Other assistance

We can grant you financial assistance from the date you first contact us, if you complete your application within 20 working days of that date.

Your weekly income before tax must be under these limits...

If you are...	and live in Area 1	or Area 2	or Area 3	or Area 4
Single with no children	\$932.00	\$752.00	\$612.00	\$532.00
Married, civil union or de facto couple with no children	\$1,174.00	\$1,034.00	\$834.00	\$754.00
A sole parent with 1 child	\$1,110.00	\$970.00	\$770.00	\$690.00
A sole parent with more than 1 child	\$1,370.00	\$1,130.00	\$950.00	\$770.00
Married, civil union or de facto couple with children	\$1,434.00	\$1,194.00	\$1,014.00	\$834.00

Your weekly accommodation costs must be over a certain limit...

If you are...	Your rent or 62% of your boarding costs must be over...	If you own your own home, your costs must be over...
Single with no children	\$48.00	\$57.00
Married, civil union or de facto couple with no children	\$79.00	\$95.00
Sole parent	\$90.00	\$108.00
Married, civil union or de facto couple with children	\$101.00	\$121.00

Rates at 1 April 2009

Areas 1: North/Central Auckland

2: West/South Auckland, Tauranga, Wellington, Nelson, Queenstown and other locations

3: Whangarei, Hamilton, New Plymouth, Napier, Hastings, Palmerston North, Porirua, Upper/Lower Hutt, Christchurch, Dunedin and other locations

4: All areas not covered by Areas 1-3

This is not a complete list. The area that applies to you depends on exactly where you live. For more details, visit: www.workingforfamilies.govt.nz

Rates at 1 April 2009

Payments

You can calculate an estimate of the amount of Accommodation Supplement or Childcare Assistance you may be entitled to by using our online calculator. This calculator is for working families not currently receiving a main benefit or NZ Superannuation from Work and Income. The calculator is available on the Working for Families website www.workingforfamilies.govt.nz

You won't qualify for the Accommodation Supplement if your assets are over the top limit. The top limits are \$8,100 for a single person and \$16,200 for a couple or sole parent.

By assets we mean anything you or your partner own that you can earn income from – such as Bonus Bonds, savings, shares, stocks, debentures, and loans to others.

You must also be a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident and normally live here. You won't qualify if you or your partner have a tenancy agreement with Housing New Zealand – you'll qualify for income-related rent instead. For more details on income-related rent contact your local Housing New Zealand neighbourhood unit.

How to apply

You can apply for your Accommodation Supplement and/or Childcare Assistance by using our online application form. This is available on the Working for Families website www.workingforfamilies.govt.nz

You can call us on **0800 559 009** or visit your local service centre.

Health costs

The **Community Services Card** can help with the costs of visiting your doctor and getting prescriptions. It is a family card so you can use it for dependent children aged under 18 years.

If you already have a card you can keep using it – and when it runs out you can apply for another one.

To qualify your yearly income must be under a certain limit – depending on your personal situation. To find out if you qualify, call our Community Services Card national centre on **0800 999 999**.

You may also qualify for the **Pharmaceutical Subsidy Card** if you or your children need a lot of prescriptions each year. To find out more about this card, talk to your pharmacist.

If you don't qualify for the Community Services Card you may be able to get the **High Use Health Card** if you visit the doctor often for an on-going medical condition. You can't use it for other family members. Ask your doctor about this card.

Childcare costs

The **Childcare Subsidy** helps pay childcare costs for children aged under 5 years (or under 6 years if you get the **Child Disability Allowance** for them). You could get up to 9 hours of childcare a week and in some cases you could get up to 50 hours a week if you are working, on an approved training course or ill. The payment is made directly to the early childhood centre – the amount is shown on the next page.

The **OSCAR Subsidy** (Out of School Care and Recreational Subsidy) is for children aged 5-13 years. It helps towards the costs of before and after school care (up to 20 hours a week) and care during the school holidays (up to 50 hours a week). To get this subsidy you must be working, training or doing a work-related activity. The payment is made directly to the OSCAR service.

Your child has to attend the OSCAR service at least three hours a week. You won't qualify if your partner can take care of your child.

Payments

You can calculate an estimate of the amount of Childcare Assistance or Accommodation Supplement you may be entitled to by using our online calculator. This calculator is for working families not currently receiving a main benefit or NZ Superannuation from Work and Income. The calculator is available on the Working for Families website www.workingforfamilies.govt.nz

Here's what you may be able to get for the Childcare or OSCAR Subsidy for each child per hour, depending on your family income.

Number of children	Gross weekly income	Childcare Subsidy (per hour, per child)
1	Less than \$1,274.00	\$3.63
	\$1,274.00 to \$1,379.99	\$2.52
	\$1,380.00 to \$1,485.99	\$1.40
	\$1,486.00 or more	nil
2	Less than \$1,465.00	\$3.63
	\$1,465.00 to \$1,580.99	\$2.52
	\$1,581.00 to \$1,697.99	\$1.40
	\$1,698.00 or more	nil
3 or more	Less than \$1,634.00	\$3.63
	\$1,634.00 to \$1,771.99	\$2.52
	\$1,772.00 to \$1,909.99	\$1.40
	\$1,910.00 or more	nil

Rates at 1 April 2009

How do I apply?

You can apply for your Childcare Assistance and/or Accommodation Supplement by using our online application form. This is available on the Working for Families website www.workingforfamilies.govt.nz

You can call us on **0800 559 009** or visit your local service centre.

Help for people with disabilities

If you or a child you are caring for has a disability, we may be able to help with one of our disability allowances.

The **Disability Allowance** helps with the extra costs you, your partner or child have because of a disability that is likely to last at least 6 months.

The amount you get depends on the costs of ongoing visits to the doctor, medicines, extra clothing and travel.

To qualify, your weekly income before tax must be under these limits...

If you are...	Your weekly income before tax must be under
Single aged 16-17 years with no children	\$470.03
Single aged 18 years or over with no dependent children	\$544.02
Married, civil union or de facto couple with or without children	\$791.53
Sole parent with 1 dependent child	\$655.54
Any other sole parent	\$690.65

Rates at 1 April 2009

The **Child Disability Allowance** can help if you are the main caregiver of a dependent child who has a serious physical or intellectual disability. It is not taxed and doesn't depend on your income or costs. The child must be aged under 18 years, and need constant care and attention for at least 12 months because of their disability.

You may be able to get both the Child Disability Allowance and the Disability Allowance for the same child.

We also have the **Modification Grant** that helps with the costs of special equipment you may need at work, or changes to your workplace so it's easier for you to work. To get this you must have a disability that's likely to last at least 6 months. You won't qualify if you receive weekly compensation from ACC.

Living costs away from home

If you have dependent children aged 16-17 years living away from home to go on a tertiary or training course, you may be able to get the **Away from Home Allowance** to help with their living costs.

To qualify you must be on a low income and eligible for **family tax credit** for the child – and your child must be attending an approved course. How much you get depends on your income, where the child lives and what their accommodation costs are.



If you have any questions,
you can call us free on
0800 559 009.

Help for parents

If you have dependent children, you may be able to get the **New Employment Transition Grant** to help with your costs if you lose income in your first 6 months of working. This grant can help if you were on a parent rate of income support before you started working and you miss out on income in your first 6 months of working because:

- you, your partner or child are sick *or*
- you have problems with your childcare arrangements.

Child support

It's important to get in touch with Inland Revenue to talk about child support when you're working. If you were paying child support from a benefit, you will now need to organise the payments yourself – please call Inland Revenue to discuss your options. If you were receiving child support, this will now be paid by Inland Revenue once it's been collected from the other parent.

For more details on child support, contact Inland Revenue child support on **0800 221 221** or visit **www.ird.govt.nz/childsupport**

Help for emergencies

If you're finding it hard to make ends meet, we may be able to help.

The **Special Needs Grant** is a one-off payment to help out with urgent things like food, bedding and emergency dental or medical treatment.

To qualify, you must be a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident who normally lives here, and:

- your income must be under a certain limit depending on your personal situation *and*
- your cash assets must be less than a certain amount (see table below). However if you need help to pay for food, you must have no cash assets *and*
- the things you need help with must be urgent or necessary *and*
- you must have no other way to meet these costs.

You won't usually have to pay back the Special Needs Grant.

Special Needs Grants or Temporary Additional Support

If you are ...	Cash assets must be less than
Single	\$952.21
Married, civil union or de facto couple with or without dependent children	\$1586.63
Sole parent with 1 dependent child	\$1250.28
Any other sole parent	\$1343.07

Rates at 1 April 2009

The **Temporary Additional Support** can help if you're finding it hard financially. It's a weekly payment to help meet your essential costs while you try to reduce these costs or increase your income. To qualify you must be a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident who normally lives here, and:

- your cash assets must be less than a certain amount (see table on previous page) *and*
- your costs must be essential and higher than your income *and*
- you must have no other way to meet these costs.

You will not get the Temporary Additional Support if you currently receive the Special Benefit. Your Special Benefit will continue until you no longer need it.

The **Recoverable Assistance Payment Grant** can help if you need something essential immediately but can't afford to pay for it right now. You may be able to get the grant for things like appliances, furniture, bedding, rent or school uniforms. You have to pay it back, but may be able to do this in instalments.

Paying back a debt

If you have a benefit debt to pay back, you need to organise your payments. To make arrangements to pay back your debt, or increase your payments, call us free on **0800 558 008** and we'll help you sort it out. It's important you do it as soon as possible.

Here are some of the ways you can pay off your debt:

- automatic payment from your bank
- posting a cheque (including your Work and Income client number) to

Work and Income

Crown Revenue

PO Box 31-344

Lower Hutt

- through deductions from your wages
- over the counter at any New Zealand Post outlet.

If you're a sole parent you don't have to increase your payments for the first 91 days of working. That way, you have time to organise other income like child support.

You might not have to pay back your debt straight away if you have just started work, talk to us about this.

Important

Make sure you bring everything you need to your meeting.

See our *How can we help you?* brochure for a list of the kind of things we need to know about you if you want to apply for assistance.

If you have any questions,
call us on **0800 559 009** from
7am to 6pm Monday to Friday
and Saturday 8am to 1pm or
contact your Case Manager at
your nearest Service Centre.

**If you are deaf or find it hard to
communicate by phone,** you can
send a message to our Deaf Link
free-fax on **0800 621 621** or email
MSD_Deaf_Services@msd.govt.nz

For more information visit:

Work and Income website
www.workandincome.govt.nz

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