

Child support changes

Inland Revenue is moving child support into our new system as part of the final phase of our Business Transformation. As a result, it will be easier for customers to see and manage their child support account in myIR.

We'll also be improving how we administer child support so that our customers have more certainty.

We're targeting October for our final release but are closely monitoring any external events that may affect this timing, such as COVID lockdowns and the recent closure of our Wellington office.

What is child support?

Child support is financial support paid by parents who either don't live with their children, or who share the care of their children with another person.

Sometimes, children may be cared for by someone other than parents, such as grandparents, other family members, or Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children. In these cases, both parents may pay child support.

Child support aims to ensure that:

- parents take financial responsibility for their children
- financial contributions from liable parents help to cover the cost of benefits that support their children.

What's changing?

Improvements to child support in myIR

myIR will have a new layout which will make it easier for customers to see the most important information across all of their accounts, including their child support account.

Child support customers will be able to use myIR to:

- apply for child support, and
- apply for and respond to administrative reviews and objections.

It will also be easier for them to manage their child support details, including being able to update their contact and bank account details, and notify us of a change of circumstances.

We'll also be able to pre-populate information we already have on hand such as contact and bank account details.

All Inland Revenue customers will be able to apply for child support from their myIR account.



Child support payments received earlier

Currently child support payments should be paid to Inland Revenue on the 20th of the month and must be paid to customers by the 7th of the following month.

Improvements to our system mean that we'll be able to pay child support payments to customers by the 23rd of the same month, as long as the payment has been made on time.

Legislation changes

The Child Support Amendment Act was enacted in March 2021 and includes changes that are due to come into effect in October and November.

Compulsory employer deductions

One of the main legislative changes for child support customers is that it will become compulsory for returning and newly liable (paying) parents to have their child support payments deducted from their salary or wages. Currently it is only compulsory for a liable parent who falls behind in their child support.

We will let employers know when any of their employees become liable for child support payments and will provide the information they'll need to make these deductions.

Other changes

The other changes being introduced will help us improve the administration of child support and provide more certainty to child support customers. They include:

- a four-year time bar on child support reassessments and for applying for administrative reviews
- timeframes for applying for and providing paternity orders to meet criteria to have child support backdated to an earlier child support application
- timeframes to advise circumstances for first assessments; customers will have 28 days from the date they are notified of their assessment to advise of their existing circumstances
- extending exemptions to hospital patients in overseas hospitals, those suffering with long term illness who cannot earn and overseas prisoners
- changes to late payment penalty charges
- changes to key age-related criteria for children, and
- allowing for debts to be reduced when two parents owe each other overdue child support.

Find out more

You can visit ird.govt.nz/changes-to-child-support for more information on the child support changes.

We've also kicked off a new series of webinars which provide more information on the changes you can expect to see: ird.govt.nz/bt-webinars.