

Centrelink may have advised you that your benefits will be reduced unless you take reasonable action to obtain child support from the father of your child. You have been referred to the Child Support Service of Legal Aid NSW for help with this action.

Steps to take

If you know the name of the father, and have some details about where he is, you will need to take the following steps:

1. Lodge an application for a child support assessment with the Child Support Agency (CSA) by phone on 131 272 or at Centrelink.
2. The CSA will only accept your application if they are satisfied that the person you named is the father of your child. There are a number of ways to prove that someone is the father of your child. Your solicitor will advise you whether or not you have proof of paternity. Your solicitor may be able to write to the father to ask him to sign a document admitting that he is the father of your child.
3. If you do not have proof that someone is the father of your child, the CSA will send you a letter refusing your application. You should send this letter to your Legal Aid solicitor immediately. You only have a limited time from the time you get your referral letter to commence court proceedings (56 days in the Federal Magistrates Court and 60 days in the Family or Local Courts).
4. You can now make another appointment to see a solicitor from the Child Support Service of Legal Aid NSW.

You will need to bring the following things to that appointment:

- CSA letter refusing your application
 - details of the father and his whereabouts (if available)
 - completed application for legal aid and proof of your income and assets (eg. copies of your bank statements for all accounts held by you showing transactions for the last three months and a Centrelink income statement or recent payslip).
5. The next step is to start court proceedings. Your solicitor will advise you about this process. Court proceedings will often involve DNA parentage testing.
 6. Once a court has made orders about the parentage of your child, you can register those orders with the CSA. The CSA will then issue a child support assessment.

Who can help?

If you are unsure about any of these steps please contact your solicitor. The details for the Child Support Service of Legal Aid NSW are:

Child Support Service, Legal Aid NSW
Level 5, 91 Phillip Street, Parramatta 2150
PO Box 165 Parramatta 2124
Ph: (02) 9633 9916 or 1800 451 784
toll free Fax: (02) 9689 1082