

# Financial support guide for home-based carers

July 2017

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# Victorian government care allowances

Assessed and approved foster, kinship, permanent and special needs local adoptive parents are eligible to receive care allowances where the Victorian child protection service or a registered community service organisation places a child (aged 0 to 18 years) in their care.

The Victorian Government provides care allowances through the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services to contribute to the day-to-day costs incurred while providing home-based care as a volunteer carer.

For general enquiries, please contact the Department of Health and Human Services Care Allowances Helpdesk on **1300 552 319** or email the [Care allowances helpdesk <caregivers.mgt@dhhs.vic.gov.au>](mailto:caregivers.mgt@dhhs.vic.gov.au). Further information, including current care allowance rates, is available on the [Support for home based carers in Victoria page](https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/support-home-based-carers-victoria) on the Services website <<https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/support-home-based-carers-victoria>>

## Care allowance

Assists home-based carers with the day-to-day costs of providing care for children and young people, such as food, household provisions, utilities, clothing, recreational activities and entertainment. There are different allowances available depending on the needs and age of the child or young person in care.

Changes to the care allowance structure and payment rates came into effect 1 January 2016. Further information is available on the [Support for home based carers in Victoria page](https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/support-home-based-carers-victoria) on the Services website <<https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/support-home-based-carers-victoria>>.

## Care allowance structure and payment rates 2017-2018

### Level 1

Age	Annual rate	Fortnight rate
0-7 years	\$10,071	\$386.04
8-10 years	\$10,422	\$399.49
11-12 years	\$11,543	\$442.46
13+ years	\$14,812	\$557.76

### Level 2

Age	Annual rate	Fortnight rate
0-7 years	\$10,631	\$407.50
8-10 years	\$11,553	\$442.85
11-12 years	\$13,659	\$523.58
13+ years	\$18,754	\$718.87

### Level 3

Age	Annual rate	Fortnight rate
0-7 years	\$13,868	\$531.60
8-10 years	\$14,990	\$574.60
11-12 years	\$17,874	\$685.13
13+ years	\$24,650	\$944.85

#### Level 4

Age	Annual rate	Fortnight rate
0-7 years	\$26,638	\$1,021.00
8-10 years	\$26,638	\$1,021.00
11-12 years	\$26,638	\$1,021.00
13+ years	\$26,638	\$1,021.00

#### Level 5

Age	Annual rate	Fortnight rate
0-7 years	\$41,035	\$1,573.00
8-10 years	\$41,035	\$1,573.00
11-12 years	\$41,035	\$1,573.00
13+ years	\$41,035	\$1,573.00

#### Therapeutic foster care allowance

Age	Annual rate	Fortnight rate
0-7 years	\$17,108	\$655.77
8-10 years	\$18,230	\$698.77
11-12 years	\$21,114	\$809.30
13+ years	\$27,889	\$1,069.00

#### School attendance allowance

Age	Annual rate	Fortnight rate
5-11 years	\$347.14	-
12-18 years	\$520.71	-

#### New placement allowance (6 months)

Age	Annual rate	Fortnight rate
Level 1	-	\$61.34

#### New placement allowance

An additional \$61.34 per fortnight paid over the first six months of a new level one placement to meet the immediate or 'start up' costs of caring for a child or young person.

#### Education and medical payment

A payment to contribute to the educational and health needs of a child or young person in home-based care. The education and medical payment is paid fortnightly with the care allowance.

## School attendance allowance

An allowance paid to foster and statutory kinship carers to contribute to education expenses for children and young people. The allowance is \$347.14 per year for 5-11 year olds and \$520.71 for 12-18 year olds paid quarterly in arrears.

## Client support funding

Client support funding is additional funding that carers may be eligible for to help cover costs for extraordinary expenses. This includes the purchase of specific items or services that exceed the day-to-day costs of what the care allowance contributes to or to assist with high costs that place an unreasonable financial burden on the carer.

Where a child has extraordinary needs or needs that are above the day-to-day costs of caring, carers should contact the service from where they receive support to discuss access to client support funding.

For more information on client support funding and support for home-based carers in Victoria is available on the [Support for home based carers in Victoria page](https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/support-home-based-carers-victoria) on the Services website <<https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/support-home-based-carers-victoria>>.

## Other Victorian and Commonwealth Government financial supports

In addition to the Victorian Government care allowances and supplementary funding, home-based carers may be entitled to a range of other financial supports and benefits from the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments.

Contact details for the relevant government department or organisation are listed in the contacts section of this guide.

## Child care

### Child care benefit

Assists with the cost of approved child care including long day care, family day care, occasional care, outside school hours care, vacation care, in-home and registered care.

Up to 50 hours of Child Care Benefit (CCB) for approved child care per week is available if eligibility requirements are met. The CCB is paid directly to the child care service which reduces the child care fees. For eligible families, the current approved care rate in 2016-17 for a non-school aged child is \$4.24 per hour or \$212 per week although different rates may apply depending on a family's circumstances

For further information, contact the Centrelink Families and Parents Line on 13 61 50 or visit the website

[Centrelink child care benefit](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/child-care-benefit) <<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/child-care-benefit>>  
or

[Family Relationships](http://www.familyrelationships.gov.au) <<http://www.familyrelationships.gov.au>>

### Child care rebate

Assists eligible parents and carers who are working, studying or training with out-of-pocket child care costs. The Child Care Rebate (CCR) is paid in addition to the Child Care Benefit (CCB) and is not income tested. To receive the CCR, carers must first apply to claim the CCB for approved care. The CCR covers 50 per cent of out of pocket expenses (total cost of childcare less the CCB), up to a maximum of \$7,500 per child per year. The CCR can be paid directly to the child care service which reduces the child care fees or as a quarterly reimbursement to the carer.

For further information, contact the Centrelink Families and Parents Line on 13 61 50 or visit the website [Centrelink child care rebate](https://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/child-care-rebate) <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/child-care-rebate> or [Family Relationships](http://www.familyrelationships.gov.au) <http://www.familyrelationships.gov.au>

### **Grandparent child care benefit**

Grandparents with primary care of a grandchild may be eligible to receive extra help with child care fees. This benefit covers the full cost of approved child care for up to 50 hours per child per week. It is paid directly to the relevant child care service.

For further information, contact the Centrelink Families and Parents Line on 13 61 50 or visit [Centrelink child care benefit](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/child-care-benefit) <http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/child-care-benefit>

### **Special child care benefit**

Covers the full cost of approved child care fees if a child is at risk of serious abuse or neglect or in an exceptional case of short-term financial hardship. The child care service can receive the Special Child Care Benefit for up to 13 weeks in any financial year.

For further information, contact the Centrelink Families and Parents Line on 13 61 50 or visit the website [Centrelink child care benefit](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/child-care-benefit) <http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/child-care-benefit> or [Family Relationships](http://www.familyrelationships.gov.au) <http://www.familyrelationships.gov.au>

## **Concessions**

### **Concessions**

The Victorian Government offers a number of concessions designed to assist and improve the affordability of essential services for low-income households who hold an eligible Commonwealth Government concession card. This may include concessions for council rates, water, electricity and gas bills, as well as public transport.

For further information, contact the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services Concessions Information Line on 1800 658 521 or see the [Concessions and benefits page](http://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/concessions-and-benefits) on the Service Providers website <http://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/concessions-and-benefits>

### **Victorian government carer card**

Carers in receipt of a care allowance through the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services are eligible for a Victorian Carer Card. The card provides access to a wide range of discounts and benefits. Cardholders are also entitled to free travel on public transport on Sunday plus two return off-peak travel vouchers each year.

For further information, contact the Carer Card Information Line on 1800 901 958 or visit the website [Carer Card](http://carercard.vic.gov.au/) <http://carercard.vic.gov.au/>

## **Disability**

### **Child disability assistance payment**

An annual payment to assist parents and carers with the costs of caring for a child or young person with a disability. Eligible recipients can receive a payment of up to \$1,000 for each child in their care.

For further information, contact the Centrelink Families and Parents Line on 13 61 50 or visit the website [Centrelink child disability assistance payment](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/child-disability-assistance-payment) <http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/child-disability-assistance-payment>

## Contenance aids payment scheme

Provides a payment to assist eligible people who have permanent and severe incontinence to meet some of the costs of their incontinence products. Eligible recipients can receive up to \$558.90 which will be indexed annually.

For further information, contact Medicare on 132 011 or visit the website [Bladder Bowel](http://www.bladderbowel.gov.au/caps)  
<<http://www.bladderbowel.gov.au/caps>>

## Disability initiative in the adoption and permanent care program

Permanent carers or adoptive parents may access discretionary grants to assist with the costs of caring for a child or young person with a disability or developmental delay. The maximum amount payable for any one child per year is \$5,000.

For further information, contact the Adoption and Permanent Care Services closest to you. Contact details can be found on the [Adoption and permanent care services contact page](http://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/adoption-and-permanent-care-services-contacts) on the Services Providers website  
<<http://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/adoption-and-permanent-care-services-contacts>>

Program guidelines are available on the [Program requirements for out-of-home care services page](http://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/program-requirements-out-home-care-services) on the Service Providers website <<http://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/program-requirements-out-home-care-services>>

## Disability support pension

Young people may be eligible for the Disability Support Pension if they are aged 16 years or over, and have an illness, injury or disability that prevents them from working. Current rates are:

Maximum payment rates of the Disability Support Pension if you are over 21 years of age, or under 21 years of age with children	Maximum rate per fortnight
Single	\$794.80
A member of a couple	\$599.10 each or \$1,198.20 combined
Couple separated due to ill health	\$794.80 each

For further information, contact the Centrelink Families and Parents Line on 13 61 50 or visit the website [Centrelink Families And Parents](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/disability-support-pension) <<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/disability-support-pension>>

## Electronic communication devices scheme

A state-wide service which supports people with a disability who have no speech, or speech that is difficult to understand, to buy speech generating devices and software.

For further information, contact Yooralla on (03) 9666 4500 or visit the website [Yooralla](http://www.yooralla.com.au/services/Communication-and-Assistive-Technology/electronic-communication-devices-scheme)  
<<http://www.yooralla.com.au/services/Communication-and-Assistive-Technology/electronic-communication-devices-scheme>>

## Individual support packages

Disability services funds to meet a person's ongoing disability support needs and assist them to achieve their goals.

For further information, contact the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services on 1800 783 783 or visit the [Individual support package page](http://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/individual-support-package) on the Service Providers website <<http://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/individual-support-package>>

## **Mobility allowance**

Assists people aged 16 years of older with disabilities who are working, looking for work, or training and cannot use public transport without substantial assistance. The standard rate for the Mobility Allowance is \$93.20 per fortnight. A higher rate of \$130.30 per fortnight is available to people receiving the Disability Support Pension, Parenting Payment, Newstart Allowance or Youth Allowance as a job seeker.

For further information, contact Commonwealth Department of Human Services on 13 61 50 or visit the website [Commonwealth Department of Human Services](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/mobility-allowance) <<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/mobility-allowance>>

## **Home renovation loans**

Loans to help people with renovations to assist people with disabilities to remain living independently in their own home environment.

For further information, contact the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services on 1800 134 872 or visit the website at [Department of Health and Human Services](https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/home-owner-and-renter-support) <<https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/home-owner-and-renter-support>>

## **Statewide equipment program**

Provides people who have a permanent or long-term disability or who are frail or aged with subsidised aids, equipment, and vehicle and home modifications. To determine eligibility and requirements, a Statewide Equipment Program (SWEP) registered prescriber conducts an assessment. Subsidies to cover the costs of equipment differ depending on the device required.

For further information, contact the SWEP on 1300 747 937 or visit the website [State wide equipment program](http://swep.bhs.org.au) <<http://swep.bhs.org.au>>

## **The National Disability Insurance Scheme**

Funds reasonable and necessary supports that help people with disabilities aged 0-64 to reach their goals, objectives and aspirations in a range of areas, such as education, employment, social participation, independence, living arrangements and health and wellbeing.

The roll out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme begins from 1 July 2016 and will be introduced in stages over three years around the country, including Victoria.

For further information, contact the National Disability Insurance Agency on 1800 800 110 or visit the website [National disability insurance agency](http://www.ndis.gov.au/) <<http://www.ndis.gov.au/>>.

## **Youth disability supplement**

Provides extra assistance to young people up to 21 years of age with a disability. The current maximum rate of Youth Disability Supplement is \$123.50 per fortnight.

For further information, contact the Centrelink Families and Parents Line on 13 61 50 or visit the website [Youth disability supplement](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/youth-disability-supplement) <<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/youth-disability-supplement>>.

## **Education**

### **ABSTUDY**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who are studying or undertaking an Australian Apprenticeship may be eligible to receive ABSTUDY to assist with living expenses, school expenses, equipment and travel fares. The

amount of ABSTUDY received depends on a person's circumstances such as study load, the course studied and the individual's age.

For further information, contact the Centrelink ABSTUDY line on 13 23 17 and ask for an Indigenous Contact Officer or visit the website [ABSTUDY](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/abstudy) <http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/abstudy>.

## Assistance for isolated children

Assists families with the extra costs associated with educating their children where the child cannot attend an appropriate state school because of geographical isolation, disability or a special health need. The current rates are:

Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme Allowance	Maximum payment rate
Boarding Allowance (Basic and Additional)	\$9,548 per year, made up of two components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$8,015 – basic</li> <li>• \$1,533 – additional (subject to parental income and actual boarding costs).</li> </ul>
Second Home Allowance	\$232.84 per fortnight, per student – limited to a maximum of three students in a family.
Distance Education Allowance	\$4,007 per year.
Assistance for Isolated Children Pensioner Education Supplement	\$62.40 per fortnight – for students aged under 21 years receiving Disability Support Pension or Parenting Payment (single) and studying at primary level.

For further information, contact the Centrelink Families and Parents Line on 13 61 50 or visit the website [Assistance for isolated children](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/assistance-for-isolated-children?utm_id=7) <http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/assistance-for-isolated-children?utm\_id=7>.

## Camps, sports and excursions fund

The Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF) provides payments for eligible students to attend camps, sports and excursions. Families holding a valid means-tested concession card or students residing in out-of-home care are eligible to apply. The community service organisation (agency) or the Department of Health and Human Services are eligible to make an application on behalf of the student which will be processed as 'Special Consideration' category applications.

\$125 per year will be paid for eligible primary school students, with \$225 per year paid for eligible secondary school students. Payments are made directly to the school and are tied to the student.

For further information, contact the Department of Education and Training Service Information and Referral Service on 1800 809 834 or visit the website [Camps sports and excursions](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/Pages/csef.aspx?Redirect=1) <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/Pages/csef.aspx?Redirect=1>.

## Early start kindergarten

Free kindergarten programs for children who turn three years old by 30 April in the year they will be attending kindergarten and who are children known to child protection (including those referred directly from child protection to Child FIRST) or are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

For further information, contact the Department of Education and Training Service Information and Referral Service on 1800 809 834 or visit the website [Early start kindergarten](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/learningdev/Pages/earlystartkinder.aspx)

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/learningdev/Pages/earlystartkinder.aspx>.

## GreenPC

Eligible home-based carers may purchase low-cost computers through GreenPC. The social enterprise sells refurbished computers donated by corporate and government organisations which are internet ready and come with software installed.

For further information, contact GreenPC on (03) 9418 7436 or visit the website [GreenPC](http://www.greenpc.com.au/)  
<<http://www.greenpc.com.au/>>.

## Kindergarten fee subsidy

Supports eligible children to attend kindergarten for 15 hours per week at no cost.

For further information, contact the Department of Education and Training Service Information and Referral Service on 1800 809 834 or visit the website [Kindergarten funding](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx)  
<<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx>>.

## Program for students with disabilities

A targeted supplementary funding program to provide a range of supports and initiatives to assist state school students with disabilities.

For further information, contact the Department of Education and Training Service Information and Referral Service on 1800 809 834 or visit the website [Program for students with disabilities](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/needs/Pages/disabilityprogram.aspx)  
<<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/needs/Pages/disabilityprogram.aspx>>.

## State schools relief

A charity that can provide students attending government schools with non-branded school clothing and footwear free of charge or subsidise branded uniform items. Books, calculators and stationery are also available.

For further information, contact the school in the first instance or visit the website [State schools relief](https://www.ssr.net.au/)  
<<https://www.ssr.net.au/>> for further information.

## Student scholarships

A range of different scholarships are available for primary, secondary and tertiary students.

For further information, contact the Department of Education and Training Information and Referral Service on 1800 809 834 or visit the website [student scholarships](https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/scholarships/default.aspx) <<https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/scholarships/default.aspx>>

## Zero TAFE training fees for young people transitioning from care

'Zero-fee' training places are available to young people in out-of-home care, subject to custody or guardianship orders, or those aged 21 and under who have recently transitioned from out-of-home care.

For further information, email the [Department of Education and Training](mailto:access.equity@edumail.vic.gov.au) <[access.equity@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:access.equity@edumail.vic.gov.au)> or visit the website [Fee waivers and exemptions](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/training/learners/vet/pages/feeexemptions.aspx)  
<<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/training/learners/vet/pages/feeexemptions.aspx>>.

## Family assistance

### Carer payment (child)

Provides income support to parents and carers who are unable to support themselves through paid employment because of the demands of their caring role for a child or young person under 16 years of age with a severe disability or medical condition. Current payments rates are:

<b>Status</b>	<b>Rate per fortnight</b>
Single	\$794.80
Couple	\$599.10 each or \$1,198.20 combined
Couple separated due to ill health	\$794.80 each

## **Commonwealth carer allowance (child)**

A supplementary payment to parents and carers who provide daily care and attention at home for a child aged under 16 years with a physical or intellectual disability or medical condition. The Commonwealth Carer Allowance when caring for a child under 16 years is either a fortnightly payment of \$123.50 and a Health Care Card for the child, or a Health Care Card for the child depending on the particular needs of the child. The current Commonwealth Carer Allowance when caring for a person 16 years or over is \$123.50 per fortnight.

For further information, contact the Centrelink Families and Parents Line on 13 61 50

## **Carer adjustment payment**

A one-off payment when a child under seven years of age is diagnosed with a severe illness, medical condition or major disability following a catastrophic event. The maximum amount of Carer Adjustment Payment any family can receive is \$10,000 for each child for a single catastrophic event.

For further information, contact the Centrelink Families and Parents Line on 13 61 50 or visit the website [Care adjustment payment](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/carer-adjustment-payment) website <<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/carer-adjustment-payment>>.

## **Dad and partner pay**

Supports fathers or partners caring for a newborn or recently adopted child with up to two weeks government-funded pay based on the rate of the National Minimum Wage. Dad and Partner Pay is currently \$672.60 per week before tax.

For further information, contact the Centrelink Families and Parents Line on 13 61 50 or visit the website [Dad and partner pay](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/dad-and-partner-pay) <<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/dad-and-partner-pay>>.

## **Double Orphan Pension**

Helps with the costs of caring for orphaned children or children who are unable to be cared for by their parents. The current payment rate is \$62 per fortnight and is not taxed.

For further information, contact the Centrelink Families and Parents Line on 13 61 50 or visit the website [Double orphan pension](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/double-orphan-pension) <<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/double-orphan-pension>> or [Family Relationships](http://www.familyrelationships.gov.au) <<http://www.familyrelationships.gov.au>>.

## **Family tax benefit A and B**

Income tested payments to help families (including carers) with the cost of raising children. The amount of Family Tax Benefit Part A and B received by families depends on family income, the number of children in a family, and how old they are.

For further information, contact the Centrelink Families and Parents Line on 13 61 50 or visit the website [Family tax benefit](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/family-tax-benefit-part-a-part-b) <<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/family-tax-benefit-part-a-part-b>>.

## **Newborn upfront payment and newborn supplement**

An increase to a Family Tax Benefit Part A payment when you have care of a baby or following adoption of a child.. The amount of Newborn Upfront Payment and Newborn Supplement depends on your family's income and how many children you have.

For further information, contact the Centrelink Families and Parents Line on 13 61 50 or visit the website [Newborn upfront payment and newborn supplement](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/newborn-upfront-payment-and-newborn-supplement)

<<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/newborn-upfront-payment-and-newborn-supplement>>.

## Newstart allowance

Financial assistance for people looking for work while they undertake activities that may increase their chances of finding employment. Principal carers who are registered and active foster carers may be eligible for an exemption from mutual obligation requirements for a period of time.

**Current Newstart allowance rates are:**

If you are	Maximum fortnightly payment
Single, no children	\$527.60
Single, with a dependent child or children	\$570.80
Single, aged 60 or over, after nine continuous months on payment	\$570.80
Partnered (each)	\$476.40
Single principal carer granted an exemption from mutual obligation requirements for either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• foster caring</li><li>• non-parent relative caring under a court order</li><li>• home schooling</li><li>• distance education</li><li>• large family.</li></ul>	\$737.10

For further information, contact the Centrelink Families and Parents Line on 13 61 50 or visit the website [New Start Allowance](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/newstart-allowance) <<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/newstart-allowance>>.

## Parental leave pay

Financial support for up to 18 weeks to help eligible working parents and carers to care for a newborn or recently adopted child. Parental Leave Pay is currently \$672.60 per week before tax for a maximum of 18 weeks.

For further information, contact the Centrelink Families and Parents Line on 13 61 50 or visit the website [Parental leave pay](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/parental-leave-pay) <<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/parental-leave-pay>>.

## Parenting payment

A payment to eligible principal carers of a child to help with the cost of caring for them. Current rates are:

Family situation	Maximum fortnightly payment
Single	\$737.10 (includes the pension supplement)
Couple	\$476.40
Couple, separated due to illness, respite care, or prison	\$570.80

For further information, contact the Centrelink Families and Parents Line on 13 61 50

## Rent assistance

Provides financial help to eligible people who pay rent and receive a Centrelink payment. Payment rates for rent assistance depend on an individual's circumstances.

For further information, contact the Centrelink Families and Parents Line on 13 61 50 or visit the website [Rent assistance](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/rent-assistance) <<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/rent-assistance>>.

## Single income family supplement

An annual payment of up to \$300 to help eligible households.

For further information, contact the Centrelink Families and Parents Line on 13 61 50 or visit the website [Single income family supplement](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/single-income-family-supplement) <<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/single-income-family-supplement>>.

## Telephone allowance

Assists with the costs of a telephone and home internet service for those in receipt of certain Commonwealth Government benefits. The current basic rate for this payment is \$27.80 per quarter, and the higher rate is \$41.40.

For further information, contact the Centrelink Families and Parents Line on 13 61.

## Utilities allowance

Assists to help meet the costs of regular bills such as gas, electricity and water for those in receipt of certain Commonwealth Government benefits. The current allowance rates are:

- Single – \$608 per annum, paid at the rate of \$152 per quarter.
- Couple – \$608 per annum, paid at the rate of \$76 per quarter for each eligible member of a couple.

For further information, contact the Centrelink Families and Parents Line on 13 61 50 or visit the website [Utilities allowance](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/utilities-allowance) <<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/utilities-allowance>>.

## Victorian managed insurance authority insurance

The Victorian Managed Insurance Authority (VMIA) is the insurer for the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services, which has established a Volunteer Care Givers insurance cover. It applies to home-based care arrangements, and provides cover where, during a period of care, a child or young person causes damage to your property, either through accident, theft or malice.

If you need to make a claim, speak to your agency about this process or contact the VMIA. Call (03) 9270 6900 or email [contact@vmia.vic.gov.au](mailto:contact@vmia.vic.gov.au).

For further information, visit the website [VMIA](http://www.vmia.vic.gov.au/) <<http://www.vmia.vic.gov.au/>>.

## Youth allowance

Assists young people aged 16 to 24 years who are studying full time, undertaking a full time Australian Apprenticeship, training, looking for work or sick. The amount of Youth Allowance received depends on a person's circumstances.

For further information, contact the Centrelink Families and Parents Line on 13 61.

## Health

### Access to Allied Psychological Services

Enables general practitioners to refer people to mental health professionals who deliver focussed psychological services. Patients are eligible for a maximum of 12 sessions per calendar year.

For further information, contact Medicare on 132 011 or visit the website [Department of Health](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/mental-boimhc-ataps) <<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/mental-boimhc-ataps>>.

## **Ambulance**

All holders of Health Care Cards and Pensioner Concession Cards, and children and young people subject to a Care by Secretary or Long Term Care Order are entitled to free, clinically necessary ambulance travel anywhere in Australia. This covers all emergency transport treatment and non-emergency transport on the recommendation of a doctor to the nearest and most appropriate hospital.

For further information, contact Ambulance Victoria on 1300 366 141 or visit the website [Ambulance Victoria](http://www.ambulance.vic.gov.au) <www.ambulance.vic.gov.au>.

## **Better access to psychiatrists, psychologists and general practitioners**

Provides improved access to mental health practitioners through Medicare. Under this initiative, Medicare Benefits Schedule rebates are available to patients for selected mental health services.

For further information, contact Medicare on 132 011 or visit the website [Department of Health](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/mental-ba) <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/mental-ba>.

## **Child dental benefits schedule**

Under the schedule, eligible children aged 2 to 17 years can access a range of basic dental services range up to \$1,000 per child over a consecutive two year period.

For further information, contact Medicare on 132 011 or visit the website [Child dental benefits schedule](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/child-dental-benefits-schedule) <http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/child-dental-benefits-schedule>.

## **Dental health services Victoria**

### **General dental**

In Victoria, all children and young people up to the age of 18 years in out-of-home care have priority access to public dental services, which means they are offered the next available appointment for general care and are not placed on a wait list. All children and young people in out-of-home care, including kinship and permanent care, are exempt from fees and are not required to present a Health Care Card to receive free treatment.

Additionally, all children and young people may be eligible for free general dental care at one of the many public dental teaching clinics across Victoria.

For further information on the cost for public dental services, contact 1300 360 054 or 1800 833 039 (country areas only) or visit the website [Dental Health Services Victoria](http://www.dhsv.org.au) <www.dhsv.org.au>.

### **Orthodontic treatment**

Public orthodontic treatment is also available at The Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne for children and young people in out-of-home care when specific requirements are met.

For further information please call the Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne on (03) 9341 1000 or 1800 833 039 (country callers) or visit the website [Dental Health Services Victoria](http://www.dhsv.org.au/dental-health/teeth-tips-and-facts/orthodontics) <http://www.dhsv.org.au/dental-health/teeth-tips-and-facts/orthodontics>

## **Health care card**

Entitles individuals to cheaper medicine and some other concessions. All children in foster or kinship care are eligible for a Health Care Card in their own name. Permanent carers and special needs local adoptive parents may be eligible for another type of concession or health care card.

For further information, contact the Centrelink Families and Parents Line on 13 61 50 or visit the website [Payments for families](http://www.familyassist.gov.au/payments/family-assistance-payments/health-care-cards.php) <http://www.familyassist.gov.au/payments/family-assistance-payments/health-care-cards.php>.

## Medicare

A child placed in out-of-home care remains eligible for services funded through Medicare on presentation of a valid Medicare card or number.

For further information, contact Medicare Australia on 132 011 or visit the website [Medicare](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/dhs/medicare) <<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/dhs/medicare>>.

## Medicare safety net

Provides families and children, including children in care, with financial assistance for high out-of-pocket costs for out of hospital Medicare Benefits Schedule services.

For further information, contact Medicare Australia on 132 011 or visit the website [Medicare safety net](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/medicare-safety-net) <<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/medicare-safety-net>>.

## Pharmaceutical allowance

Provides families and children, including children in care, with financial assistance for high out-of-pocket costs for prescription medicines.

For further information, contact the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme on 132 290 or visit the website [PBS safety net](https://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/pharmaceutical-benefits-scheme-pbs-safety-net) <<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/pharmaceutical-benefits-scheme-pbs-safety-net>>.

## Leaving care

### Leaving care brokerage

Provides financial assistance to young people 16 to 21 years of age who are, or have been, on a Victorian Care by Secretary or Long-term Care order on their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday or after.

For further information, call the Leaving Care Hotline on 1300 532 846 or visit the [Leaving care support programs page](http://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/leaving-care-support-programs) on the Services website < <http://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/leaving-care-support-programs>>.

### Transition to independent living allowance

One-off Commonwealth Government payment of up to \$1,500 to assist eligible young people who are leaving care to meet some of the costs involved in moving to independent living. The payment is available as a lump sum or up to six instalments.

For further information, email [Transition to independent living allowance](mailto:tila@dss.gov.au) < [tila@dss.gov.au](mailto:tila@dss.gov.au)> program office, or visit the website [Families and children](http://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/families-and-children/benefits-payments/transition-to-independent-living-allowance-tila) <<http://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/families-and-children/benefits-payments/transition-to-independent-living-allowance-tila>>.

In Victoria, the application process is managed by Melbourne City Mission. For further information, and to apply, email [Melbourne City Mission](mailto:tila@mcm.org.au) <[tila@mcm.org.au](mailto:tila@mcm.org.au)>, or contact by phone on the Leaving Care Hotline 1300 532 846, or visit the website [Melbourne City Mission](http://www.melbournecitymission.org.au/services/program-detail/transition-into-independent-living-allowance-(tila)) <[http://www.melbournecitymission.org.au/services/program-detail/transition-into-independent-living-allowance-\(tila\)](http://www.melbournecitymission.org.au/services/program-detail/transition-into-independent-living-allowance-(tila))>.

## Transport

### Conveyance allowance program

A form of financial assistance for parents and carers to transport children and young people to and from school in rural and regional Victoria. The allowance is also available for students to attend their nearest recognised special school or specialist setting.

For further information in relation to eligibility for a conveyance allowance, the school should be contacted in the first instance. If enquiries cannot be resolved at school level, the Department of Education and [Training Family Payments Unit](mailto:conveyance@edumail.vic.gov.au) <conveyance@edumail.vic.gov.au> can be contacted or visit the website [Conveyance allowance program](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/finance/Pages/conveyance.aspx) <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/finance/Pages/conveyance.aspx>.

## School bus program

An extensive school bus network that provides travel at no cost to eligible government and non-government students living in rural and regional Victoria.

For further information, contact Public Transport Victoria on 1800 800 007 or visit the website [Student transport](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/management/Pages/transport.aspx) <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/management/Pages/transport.aspx>

## Students with disabilities and transport program

Students attending government specialist schools may be eligible for transport support. This is usually in the form of access to a free bus or a conveyance allowance (see above).

For further information and to discuss eligibility for the program, the school should be contacted in the first instance or visit the website [Students with disabilities and transport program](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/management/Pages/sdtransport.aspx) <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/management/Pages/sdtransport.aspx>.

## Victorian public transport concessions/student pass

All children 16 years and under can travel on public transport at a concession rate without the need for a concession card. Students aged 17 and over must carry a Victorian Public Transport Concession Card to travel on concession fares. Further discounted travel is available for students with the purchase of a Victorian Student Pass or Regional Transit Student Pass.

Holders of a current Pensioner Concession Card can buy concession fares. Primary holders of a Health Care Card with a Victorian address can also receive concession fares.

Pensioner Concession Card holders from Victoria who receive a Disability Support Pension or a Commonwealth Carer Payment can apply for free weekend travel. Applicants complete a form, and if eligible, they receive a free Myki which contains a free weekend travel entitlement.

For further information, contact Public Transport Victoria on 1800 800 007 or visit the website [Concession](http://ptv.vic.gov.au/tickets/concessions/students/) <http://ptv.vic.gov.au/tickets/concessions/students/>.

To receive this publication in an accessible format phone the Allowances Helpdesk on 1300 552 319 using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required, or [email Caregivers](mailto:caregivers.mgt@dhhs.vic.gov.au) <caregivers.mgt@dhhs.vic.gov.au>

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Where the term 'Aboriginal' is used it refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Indigenous is retained when it is part of the title of a report, program or quotation.

Available at [Support for home based carers in Victoria page](https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/support-home-based-carers-victoria) on the Services website <https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/support-home-based-carers-victoria>