



Centrelink Welfare to Work Requirements

What is Welfare to Work?

In 2006 the Australian Government introduced Welfare to Work reforms. These reforms impact on carers receiving the Australian Government Parenting Payment.

Foster and Kinship Carers and Welfare to Work

Centrelink's Parenting Payment is a payment aimed at assisting with the costs of caring for children. The Australian Government has exempted "registered and active" foster carers and kinship carers from the requirement to be looking for employment in order to be eligible for the payment. This was done in recognition of the special needs of children in foster care and kinship care.

Registered and active foster carers and kinship carers include:

- those who are currently providing care or those who could be providing care in the foreseeable future; and/or
- those who are providing respite or emergency care for a child or children on an intermittent, episodic or irregular basis.

Who are registered and active carers?

Registered and active foster carers are defined in the Commonwealth *Social Security Act 1991* as:

- a person who meets the requirements of the law (or regulations) of the State or Territory in which the person resides in order to be registered or approved to provide foster care in that State or Territory; and
- the person is actively involved in providing foster care in that State or Territory.

How do I prove that I am a registered and active carer?

Foster Carers

Foster carers seeking an exemption from the looking for employment provisions will need to provide Centrelink with a copy of their General Parental Authority (GPA). Registered and active carers can receive an exemption for a maximum period of 12 months. Within the ACT a registered and active foster carer is a carer who has provided care to a child within the last six months or will provide care in the next six months.





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Kinship Carers

Kinship carers seeking an exemption from the looking for employment provisions will need to provide Centrelink with a copy of their Specific Parental Authority (SPA). An exemption will generally be granted for the duration of the placement.

Kinship carers who have an Enduring Parental Responsibility (EPR) order for a child or children may be eligible for an exemption from the welfare to work provisions. Please contact Centrelink directly to discuss your personal circumstances and whether you are eligible for an exemption. For more information visit the following web addresses:

[http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/filestores/lw065_1006_c/\\$file/w065_1006en.pdf](http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/filestores/lw065_1006_c/$file/w065_1006en.pdf)

http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/payments/parenting_eligible.htm

What should I do if I Experience difficulties?

From time to time, carers may experience difficulties in their interactions with Centrelink. Should you experience difficulties securing your welfare to work exemption, it may be useful to speak to a Centrelink Social Worker and request they assist you with your application. Centrelink Social

Work appointments can be made by calling 13 17 94.

The Australian Government also provides information about eligibility requirements for welfare to work exemptions at the following web address:

http://www.facsia.gov.au/guides_acts/sq/ssguide-3/ssguide-3.5/ssguide-3.5.1/ssguide-3.5.1.260.html

You may also request assistance from the Foster Care Association ACT, your foster care agency (for foster carers) or your Care and Protection Services caseworker (for kinship carers).

What should I do if my personal circumstances change?

Foster and kinship carers are responsible for advising Centrelink if they experience a change in their care-giving status. Foster carers who become deregistered or who are no longer active should immediately notify Centrelink of their change in circumstances to avoid incurring a Centrelink debt.

Kinship carers, who cease providing care to a relative child, should also ensure that they contact Centrelink immediately and advise them of their change of family circumstances.

For more information go to Centrelink's website **www.centrelink.gov.au**

