


House of Representatives Standing Committee
on Family and Community Affairs

Submission No: 1104

Date Received: 7-8-03

Secretary:


Committee Secretary,
Standing committee on family and community affairs,
Child custody arrangements,
Department of the house of representatives,
Parliament house,
Canberra, Act, 2600

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please accept my submission to this inquiry, I only learnt about it last night and as such I have not had any time to prepare properly.

My husband has six (6) children from his previous marriage. He lived in a housing commission house so he could have his children stay with him, which they did every weekend, he had custody of six children for Friday evening, all day Saturday up to Sunday afternoon. He paid 100 % child support to his ex-wife for her to have to have them 100% of the time but he was in fact in custody of them for 28.49% of the time. He received nothing from the family assistance office (fao) as no-one told him he was entitled to anything. He was constantly broke and had a huge credit card debt as he used that to pay bills and then tried to pay it off, unsuccessfully.

After we got married, four (4) children came to our house every weekend, again we were paying his ex-wife 100% child support and we had custody of four of the children for 28.49% of the time, after quite a few months of this I realised we were entitled to get assistance from the family assistance office, we then put in a claim, it was delayed as the mother would not read and sign the form before we submitted it so the fao had to proceed with getting her assistance. In the meantime she decided she could not control the boys so all four of them came to live with us, we then had full time custody and then got assistance from the fao.

Last year the boys went back to their mother, we now have two (2) boys every weekend, 28.49% of the time, we pay child support for four boys for 100% of the time to their mother. We have just put a claim in for assistance from the fao.

I agree that both parents have to share the responsibility for the children from a past relationship, although I think it needs to be a fairer system, one that takes into account the amount of time the parent paying child support has custody of the children and adjusts the amount of child support payments accordingly, similar to the way that the fao works out how much assistance they can pay, i.e.. we have two of the boys for 28.49% of the time but we are paying their mother to have them 100% of the time, so even when we have them we are paying her to have them, for the last school holidays their mother asked if we could have them for a week, we did but we still had to pay her child support to look after them when we had them. Really, it is not a fair system.

Also, if you are paying rent, you can get assistance for that, but if you pay a mortgage, you get nothing, it is not taken into account. What is the difference? Also, if the paying parent has a child in a new relationship that is taken into account and it lessens the taxable income, but there is no consideration for a new spouse.

I hope that this helps you, I am very pressed for time and I apologise for not being able to be more thorough.

Yours sincerely,
