

Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Additional Estimates 2006-2007, 13th and 16th February, 2007

Question: HS38

Agency: Centrelink

Outcome 1, Output 1.1

Topic: Parenting Payment

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SENATOR WEBBER asked on 16/02/2007:

1. Can Centrelink explain briefly the new rules for people in receipt of parenting payment once their child turns eight?
2. How many hours do they need to look for work?
3. How is this administered through Centrelink – does the recipient tell Centrelink when they start and finish employment or reporting?
4. How is paid leave counted? Does someone on leave from work have to be “looking for work”?
5. How are the working hours measured? Can a parent work extra hours during school weeks and reduce them during school holidays etc?

ANSWER:

1. New claimants from 1 July 2006 will remain eligible for Parenting Payment Partnered until their youngest child turns six, or Parenting Payment Single until their youngest child turns eight. There are no compulsory participation requirements for Parenting Payment Partnered customers but Parenting Payment Single customers will have compulsory participation requirements once their youngest dependent child reaches six years of age. Grandfathered (or customers eligible before 1 July 2006) Parenting Payment customers may continue to receive Parenting Payment until their youngest child reaches 16 years of age, but must meet compulsory participation requirements from 1 July 2007 or when their youngest child turns seven years of age, whichever is later.
2. Parenting Payment customers with participation requirements will be required to seek and accept an offer of suitable part-time work of 15 hours per week or more but do not need to accept job offers of more than 25 hours per week.
3. Parenting Payment customers with participation requirements must report their participation activities, including employment hours and earnings, fortnightly in person via face-to-face contact, form lodgement, internet or telephone depending on their circumstances, in order to seek approval for fortnightly payments. Parenting Payment customers must inform Centrelink of any changes that could affect their parenting payment, for example, changes to the custody arrangements, their employment status, weekly and/or fortnightly working hours and their fortnightly earnings. Changes are to be reported in their Application for Payment form or through contact with Centrelink.

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4. If the customer has ongoing employment and their paid leave is less than three weeks in duration and is equivalent to the 15 hours of work at award wages or above then they will be considered to be meeting their participation requirements and do not have to look for work during that period.
5. Customers are required to advise Centrelink on a fortnightly basis the number of hours they have worked in the reporting period.

A Parenting Payment recipient must meet the 15 hour participation requirement during each fortnight covered by the participation agreement.

To prepare this answer it has taken approximately 4 hours and 25 minutes at an estimated cost of \$247.