



**GOVERNMENT OF THE COOK ISLANDS**  
**MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS**

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## **CHILD BENEFIT**

### **FACT SHEET**

#### Definitions

*“Child” means person under the age of 12 years.*

*“Applicant” means a person by whom or on whose behalf an application has been made*

*“Chief Examiner” means Director of Social Welfare*

*The Welfare Act 1989 states that the term child includes a step child, an adopted child and any child who though not a member of the applicants family but is maintained as a member of that family.*

#### ***What is the Child Benefit?***

The child benefit is a payment made on behalf of Government for the maintenance and education of all children in the Cook Islands

#### ***What age is it paid from and when does it end?***

The Child Benefit is paid from the time a child is born up to the age of 12 years.

#### ***Who can apply for a Child Benefit?***

The Child Benefit is open to all Cook Islanders and those of Cook Islands descent residing in the Cook Islands, provided they have documents of proof of their Cook Islands connections.

#### ***What documents are needed for application?***

All applications require the following documents:

1. Notification form from Ministry Of Justice (if child was born in country)
2. Bank of the Cook Islands bank account (BCI)/ EFTPOS Card.
3. The Child’s passport or birth certificate

Applicants with Cook Islands connections, require all documents mentioned above and the following additional documents;

4. The Child’s genealogy showing their Cook Islands connection

#### ***What if my child was born overseas?***

If your child was born overseas the following is required;

*Please reply all correspondence to the Secretary of Internal Affairs*

- Child's Passport/or NZ Cook Islands Consulate Departures Letter.
- Child's Birth certificate.

***How often are payments made?***

Payments are made twice monthly, on the 1st and the 16th of each month.

***Which bank are the benefit payments made to?***

All Cook Islands Benefits are paid directly into a Bank of the Cook Islands (BCI) account.

***If I have more than one child collecting the benefit can they use the same Bank Account?***

Yes they can, we recommend that you use one account as it would be easier and saves you on bank fee charges.

***Are Payments backdated?***

As of 1st July 2009 a policy change took effect stating:

“There will be no back dated payment of benefits made on ALL late applications received. Payments due will only be paid on and from the date of application”

This change of policy does not apply to the Child Benefit category for a new born where that new born child was born in the Cook Islands. The six months late payment entitlement is provided for in the Welfare Act

***If my child is out of the country will my child's payments continue?***

If your child is departing the country for more than a month or for an indefinite period, their benefit will cease the pay period immediately one month after they have departed.

*IN THIS INSTANT PLEASE NOTIFY OUR OFFICE WHEN YOUR CHILD DEPARTS THE COUNTRY.*

***How do I put my child back onto the benefit roll when payment has been ceased?***

Come into the office with your travel documents and our Welfare Officers will assess your situation.

***Is there a stand down period and how long is it?***

The stand down period is three months which applies to all new applicants that have arrived into the country starting from the month of arrival. Those that have been out of the country for more than a year the stand down period will apply. For those that have left for less than a year the three months stand down will not apply.

***What is the Newborn allowance?***

The newborn allowance is a one off payment for children born in the Cook Islands. This payment is not made to those children who were born overseas however;

If the child was born overseas where the mother was referred by the Ministry of Health for medical reasons, the child is entitled to the newborn allowance provided a copy of the referral

letter is presented when making the application.

***What changes will affect the Child Benefit Payment?***

- Unexpected Departure of the Child out of the country for more than a month
- Relocation of child to the outer islands
- Custody Issues
- Age Expiration
- Change of Account Number

If there are any issues that are of concern regarding payment of the Child Benefit, please feel free to contact us and we will gladly assist.

***INFORMATION FOR NON– COOK ISLANDERS***

Consideration will be made to applications from non Cook Island parents of children under the age of twelve residing in the Cook Islands. Provided that the chief Examiner (Director of Social Welfare) is satisfied that the child/children will remain in the Cook Islands the following conditions apply;

The child/children

- must have resided in the Cook Islands continually for twelve months or more;
- parent(s) or caregiver(s) can provide evidence to support that they and the child/children are likely to remain in the Cook Islands such as
  - Proof of purchase of land or business
  - Confirmation of legal residence from Immigration Office
  - Copy of Permanent Residence status.

The following documents must be presented when making the application;

- Child/Children's Passport
- Parents work permit certification and a copy of the work contract.
- Birth certificate of the Child/Children.
- Any such documents that proves the intention to make the Cook Islands their home

**Payment Rates:**

\$66.00 per month

Newborn allowance—one off payment

\$1,000.00 for children born as of 01st November 2010

Remember:

The child benefit must not be used/collected by any person other than the person the child is living with.