

two earning levels. Tables 7.3(b) and 7.4(b) provide the income difference (i.e.: the amounts by which the couple with two children gains or loses) in relation to a childless couple in £ purchasing power parities on the same two earnings levels.

On the 'half average male' earnings level (Tables 7.3(a, b)) tax allowances, housing subsidies and social assistance benefits seem to be the main source of (positive) income difference between couples with children and childless couples. Gross earnings are the highest in Canada, but the lack of housing subsidies significantly reduces the net family income (as well as the value of the child benefit package). Therefore, Canada's child benefit package is the weakest on this earnings level, with the final income of families with children differing only by 197£ppp from childless couples. The US provides the strongest benefit package by a combination of social assistance, school benefits and tax allowances, resulting in a significantly higher net income than gross income for families with children. In the UK, family tax allowance and universal child benefit provision are set off by high housing costs.

On the 'average male' earnings level (Tables 7.4(a, b)) the only positive difference in income between the two family types is derived from family tax allowances (besides the universal child benefit of the UK). In all the rest of the cases families with children do not differ -or lose out- from childless couples. On this earnings level the strongest child benefit package is provided by the UK, where the universal child benefit and family tax allowance are complemented by the lowest health care and no education costs. The US provides the most generous tax allowance to families with children but also has the most expensive health care costs. The income difference after taxes and benefits between the two family types is the smallest in New Zealand, since it provides virtually no tax allowance and charges for children's education and health care costs.

**Table 7.3(a) The structure of the child benefit package for a couple plus two children on half average male earnings in £ ppps, July 2001**

	Earnings	Income tax	Social security contrib.	Income related child benefits	Non income related child benefits	Net housing costs	Net local taxes	School costs and benefits	Health costs and benefits	Social assistance	Total income after taxes & cash benefits	Total net disposable income after all
Australia	972	205	0	0	0	-255	0	0	-1	57	1234	979
Canada	1119	133	-67	0	0	-396	0	0	-45	0	1186	744
N. Zealand	749	66	-10	0	0	-172	0	-12	-18	0	805	603
UK	1043	177	-67	0	112	-310	-81	0	0	0	1265	875
US	994	165	-76	0	0	-3	0	65	-182	391	1474	1354

**Table 7.3(b) The difference between the level of the benefit package for a couple with two children and a childless couple on half average male earnings in £ ppps, July 2001**

	Income tax	Social security contrib.	Income related child benefits	Non income related child benefits	Net housing costs	Net local taxes	School costs and benefits	Health costs and Benefits	Social assistance	Total income after taxes & cash benefits	Total net disposable income after all
Australia	304	0	0	0	107	0	0	0	57	361	468
Canada	220	0	0	0	0	0	0	-23	0	220	197
N. Zealand	331	0	0	0	-23	0	-21	-3	0	331	285
UK	305	0	0	112	7	-21	0	4	0	417	407
US	218	0	0	0	54	0	65	0	365	583	703

**Table 7.4(a) The structure of the child benefit package for a couple plus two children with one earner on average male earnings in £ppps, July 2001**

	Earnings	Income tax	Social security contrib.	Income related child benefits	Non income related child benefits	Net housing costs	Net local taxes	School costs and benefits	Health costs and benefits	Social assistance	Total income after taxes & cash benefits	Total net disposable income after all
Australia	1945	-279	-29	0	0	-362	0	0	-31	0	1636	1243
Canada	2239	-373	-97	0	0	-396	0	0	-45	0	1769	1328
N. Zealand	1499	-302	-20	0	0	-265	0	-12	-23	0	1177	877
UK	2086	-299	-171	0	112	-378	-81	0	-4	0	1728	1265
US	1989	-145	-152	0	0	-272	0	0	-364	0	1691	1056

**Table 7.4(b) The difference between the level of the benefit package of a couple with two children and a childless couple on average male earnings in £ ppps, July 2001**

	Income tax	Social security contrib.	Income related child benefits	Non income related child benefits	Net housing costs	Net local taxes	School costs and benefits	Health costs and benefits	Social assistance	Total income after taxes & cash benefits	Total net disposable income after all
Australia	104	0	0	0	0	0	0	-15	0	104	89
Canada	60	0	0	0	0	0	0	-23	0	60	37
N. Zealand	6	0	0	0	0	0	-12	-3	0	6	-10
UK	43	0	0	112	0	-21	0	0	0	155	134
US	105	0	0	0	0	0	0	-182	0	105	-77

### 7.3 The Child Benefit Package as % of Average Earnings

Table 7.5 expresses the value of the child benefit package after taxes and benefits, both in purchasing power parities and as percentage of average earnings. (The value of the child benefit package is calculated as the difference between the net income (after taxes and benefits) of a (one earner) couple with two children and that of a childless couple on the same earnings level.) On half average male earnings, the US, the UK and Australia provide the most generous cash support to families with children, mainly through a combination of tax allowances and social assistance. On average male earnings, New Zealand is the least supportive and the UK leads followed by the US and Australia.

**Table 7.5 The monthly value of the child benefit package after taxes and benefits in £ ppps compared with % average earnings**

	<i>Average earnings in £ ppps per month</i>	<i>Net disposable income after taxes &amp; bens, on half average male earnings in £ ppps</i>	<i>Child benefit package as % average earnings</i>	<i>Net disposable income after taxes &amp; bens, on average male earnings in £ ppps</i>	<i>Child benefit package as % average earnings</i>
Australia	1812	361	19.9	104	5.8
Canada	1981	220	11.1	60	3.0
New Zealand	1326	331	25.0	6	0.4
UK	1890	417	22.1	155	8.2
USA	1729	583	33.7	105	6.1

Table 7.6 presents the net value of the child benefit package in £ ppps and as percentage of average earnings (i.e. after housing costs and service charges have been added). On average male earnings the impact of health care and education costs is to radically change the ranking of the five countries. The US, which was in the leading position on half average male earnings, drops to the last place with a child benefit package of -4.5% of average earnings. The UK and Australia retain their high rankings because of their relatively generous tax allowances for working families and low service charges.

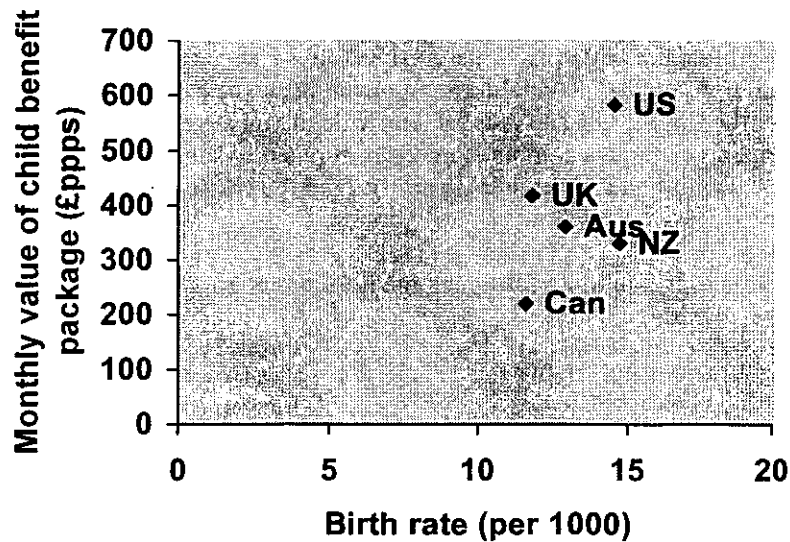
**Table 7.6 The monthly net value of the child benefit package after taxes, benefits, housing costs and services in £ ppps compared with % average earnings**

	<i>Average earnings in £ ppps per month</i>	<i>Net disposable income after all on half average male earnings in £ ppps</i>	<i>Child benefit package as % average earnings</i>	<i>Net disposable income after all on average male earnings in £ ppps</i>	<i>Child benefit package as % average earnings</i>
Australia	1812	468	25.8	89	4.9
Canada	1981	197	9.9	37	1.9
New Zealand	1326	285	21.5	-10	-0.75
UK	1890	407	21.5	134	7.1
USA	1729	703	40.6	-77	-4.5

### 7.4 The Relationship between Birth Rates and the Strength of the Child Benefit Package

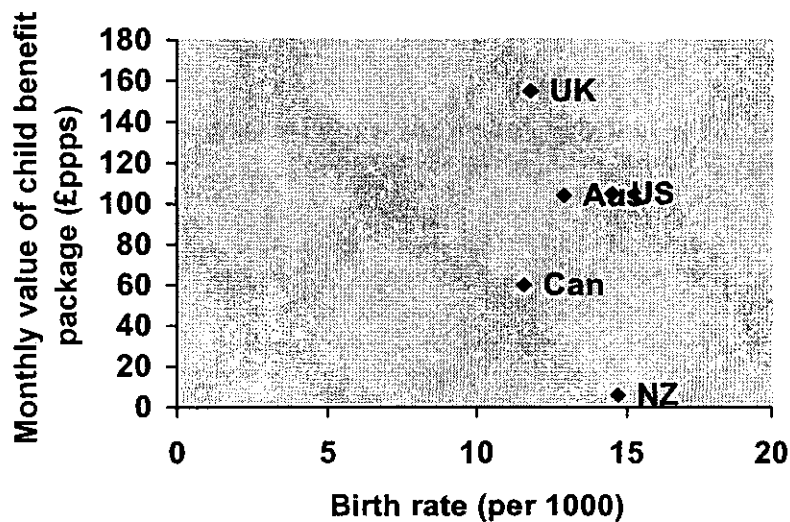
Figures 7.1(a,b) examine the relationship between birth rates and the overall value of the child benefit package after taxes and benefits for a standard family on half average and average male earnings respectively. In Figure 7.1(a) there appears to be a trend towards higher birth rates as the value of the child benefit package increases.

Figure 7.1(a) Birth rates by value of child benefit package (after taxes and benefits, for a couple with 2 children on half average male earnings)



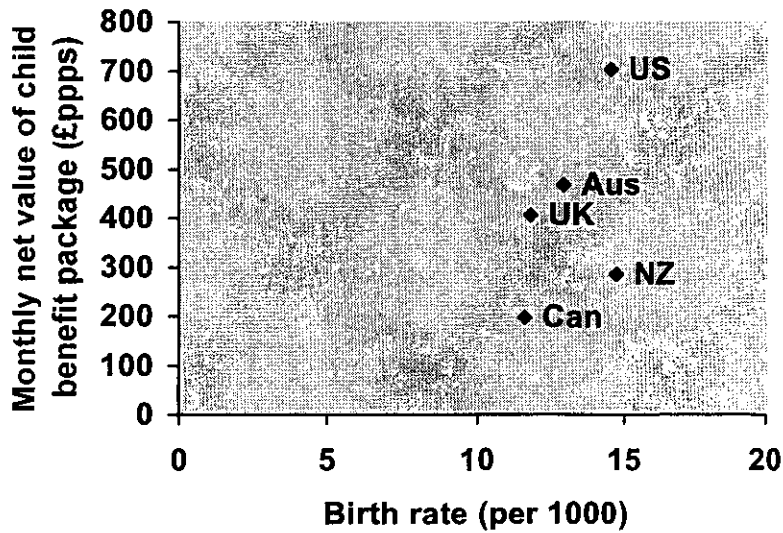
The picture is less clear in the case of a family on average male earnings. In Figure 7.1(b), New Zealand and the UK seem to contradict the positive association between fertility rates and the strength of child benefit provision.

Figure 7.1(b) Birth rates by value of child benefit package (after taxes and benefits, for a couple with 2 children on average male earnings)



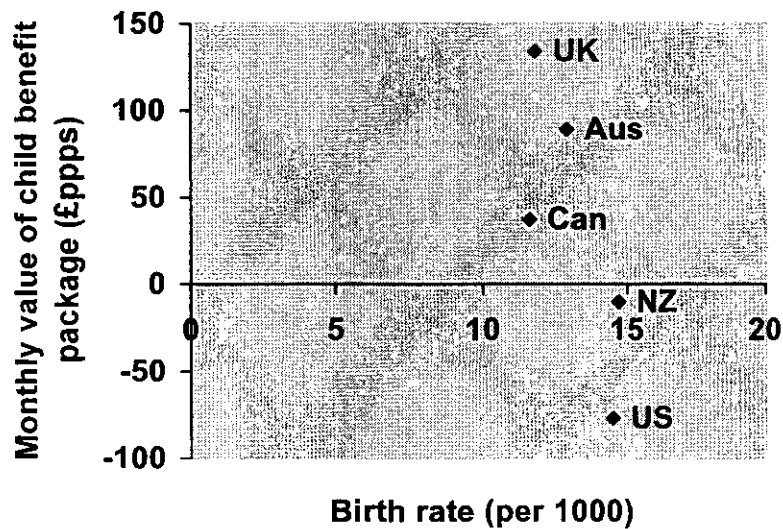
Figures 7.2(a, b) explore the relationship between the net (i.e. after housing costs and services) value of the child benefit package for a family on half average male earnings and on average male earnings respectively. The results are very similar to those of the previous figures. In Figure 7.2(a) stronger child benefit packages imply slightly higher birth rates.

**Figure 7.2(a) Birth rates by the net value of child benefit package (for a couple with 2 children on half average male earnings)**



In Figure 7.2(b), representing families on average male earnings, there is no clear relationship between fertility and the strength of the child benefit package.

**Figure 7.2(b) Birth rates by the net value of child benefit package (for a couple with 2 children on average male earnings)**



We can conclude, that the value of the child benefit package is strongly dependent on family earnings and less so on the number and age of dependent children in the household. There is moreover a significant difference between the value of the package before and after housing costs and service charges. The strength of child benefit provision is better associated with birth rates on the lower earnings levels than on higher earnings.

## 8 Conclusion

The aim of this study was to provide a detailed description of the characteristics and level of state support to families with children in five countries and to relate the findings to national birth and fertility rates. Different aspects of the child benefit package were introduced in separate chapters and evaluated in the context of countries' economic and demographic characteristics.

The results show that birth rates are influenced positively by policies that facilitate high female labour market participation rates. Higher birth rates appear to be associated with shorter maternity leave provisions (Chapter 4) and high rate of childcare usage (Chapter 5). Higher levels of family tax allowances (Chapter 3) and social assistance provision (Chapter 6) similarly seem to make a positive impact on birth rates. Birth rates seem to relate positively to the overall value of the child benefit package especially on lower earnings levels but not above average earnings. It must be noted that these findings only indicate weak associations and should be tested on more data and preferably on a much larger set of countries.

The value of the child benefit package has been found to vary significantly between lone parents and couples with children, and between different earnings levels. One of the most noteworthy findings of the study is that most countries do not provide universal and/or income related child benefits at all, instead cash provisions are determined by family earnings. Only low-income families with children receive more cash benefits than childless families in the form of tax allowances, housing subsidies and social assistance. Above average male earnings there is no significant variation between the net income of families with and without children.

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## Appendix

**Table1. Purchasing power parities**

	<i>Purchasing power parities to £ adjusted to 2001</i>
Australia	2.08
Canada	1.86
New Zealand	2.29
UK	1
US	1.56

**Table2. Gross average earnings**

	<i>Gross average earnings in £ ppps adjusted to 2001</i>
Australia	1,812
Canada	1,981
New Zealand	1,326
UK	1,890
US	1,729

**Table3. Hourly minimum wage**

	<i>Hourly minimum wage in £ ppps adjusted to 2001</i>
Australia	4.9
Canada	3.7
New Zealand	3.4
UK	3.7
US	3.3



**Family Policies in English Speaking  
Countries: 1960-2001**

**Emese Mayhew**

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# 1 Australia

## 1.1 Chronology of Australian Family Policy Legislation

- 1921 *Maternity Allowance* introduced. Abolished in 1978, re-introduced in 1996.
- 1941 *Department of Social Services* formed. Assumed responsibility for civil pensions and Maternity Allowance from the Treasury.
- 1941 *Child Endowment Act*. The precursor of current family payments.
- 1942 *Widows Pension Act*.
- 1945 *Unemployment and Sickness Benefit Act*. Paid unemployment, sickness and special benefits with additions in respect to dependents. Precursors of the Parenting Payment and additional family allowances.
- 1947 *Social Services Act*.
- 1969 *States Grants (Deserted Wives) Act 1968*. The Commonwealth agreed to share with States the costs of helping lone parent (mother) families where they were ineligible for Widow Pension. The act was repealed in 1982.
- 1971 *States Grants Housing Act*.
- 1972 *Wife Pension*. Pensioner's additional allowance with respect to a dependent spouse.
- 1973 *Supporting Mothers' Benefit*. Payable to unmarried mothers. In 1977, renamed as *Supporting Parents' Benefit*.
- 1988 *Child Support Registration and Collection Act*.
- 1989 *Sole Parent Pension* replaces Supporting Parents' Benefit.
- 1991 Unemployment Benefit abolished, instead *Job Search Allowance* introduced.
- 1993 *Childcare Rebate Act*.
- 1994 *Partner Allowance*. Replaced additional benefit paid to recipients with respect to spouses. From July 1 1995, the payment was restricted to people born before 1 July 1955 without dependent children and with little recent labour force experience. Most partner allowees with dependent children qualified for Parenting Allowance.
- 1995 *Youth Training Allowance* introduced for the unemployed under 18.
- 1995 *Parenting Allowance* introduced.
- 1996 *Newstart Allowance* replaces Job Search Allowance.
- 1996 *Maternity Allowance* re-introduced.
- 1998 *Parenting Payment (for Singles and Partners)* replaces *Sole Parent Pension* and *Parenting Allowance*. Paid at basic pension rate.
- 2000 *Family Tax Benefit (A/B)* replaced Family Allowance and Family Tax Payment on 1 July 2000. *Child Care Benefit* introduced. See figure 1.
- 2002 *Welfare Reform*. The *Australians Working Together* package provides new funding for employment and community services to expand and improve the assistance available to Australians looking for work. Extra help will be provided for parents, mature age people, Indigenous Australians and people with disabilities. The package provides new incentives for people to take up full-time, part-time or irregular casual jobs by allowing them to keep more of their income support payments when they start work. From July 2002 new requirements will apply to working-age people receiving income support payments. Taking account of their individual circumstances, working-age people receiving income support payments will be required to take up opportunities available to help them become job-ready and better able to take part in Australia's economic and community life.

## 1.2 Maternity/Parental Leave and Provisions

### 1.2.1 Current provisions

In Australia there is no distinction between maternity, paternity and parental leaves. Leave is unpaid, unless the employer has some awards for payment. The public sector provides more generous leave and payment than the private sector

**Table 1.1 Maternity/Parental leave and provisions, Australia 2001**

<i>Type of Provision</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Length paid</i>	<i>Eligibility Criteria</i>	<i>Level of Payment</i>	<i>Job protection</i>	<i>Paid by</i>
Maternity/ Paternity/ Parental Leave	Up to 52 weeks of leave for mothers, fathers and adoptive parents.	Generally unpaid leave, unless paid by employer through award.	To all permanent employees with 12 months service.	Not applicable	Yes	If paid, it is paid by employer.
Maternity Allowance	Means-tested allowance after the birth of a child.	A one-off payment.	Parents must qualify for Family Tax Benefit A, must claim within 13 wks of child's birth.	A single sum of: \$780, in 2001	Not applicable	State
Leave to care for children	None	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

*Source:* Bradshaw and Finch, 2002

## 1.2.2 Chronology

- 1990 *Parental Leave Test Case*. Established minimum award standards for parental leave, for those covered by federal awards. The PLTC provided access to part-time work, with the agreement of the employer up to a maximum of 2 years from the birth of the child. It also provides for maternity leave of up to six weeks before the birth of the child.
- 1993 *Industrial Relations Reform Act*. Specified minimum entitlements for employees in relation to termination of employment and parental leave.
- 1996 *Workplace Relations Act*. Requires all federal awards to be streamlined and made simpler. The Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC) has started simplifying parental leave clauses in federal awards to ensure that they meet the requirements of the Act while protecting employee's entitlements.
- 2000 *Workplace Relations Amendment Bill*. Parental leave made available to casual/part-time employees who have been regularly employed by the same employer over the last 12 months.

Workplace agreements: made under the Federal Government's Workplace Relations Act provide a very effective means for introducing policies and practices such as paid parental leave, which help employees balance their work and personal lives. An increasing number of businesses have found that the variety of options available for making agreements and the processes involved have enabled them to develop new and innovative initiatives that benefit both employees and the business. (In 2000, the Finance and Insurance Sector had the highest levels of provision of paid maternity leave in federal certified agreements, with 77% of women having access to paid maternity leave.)

## 1.3 Child Benefits and Family Tax Allowances

### 1.3.1 Current provisions

There are no universal child benefits in Australia. Income related family allowances are built into the income tax system.

**Table 1.2 Family tax allowances and benefits, Australia 2001**

<i>Tax Allowance</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Eligibility</i>	<i>Level of payment</i>	<i>Method of payment</i>
Family Tax Benefit A (FTB A)	Income-tested tax allowance. Helps families with the cost of raising dependent children.	It is paid to families with children up to 21 years and young people between 21 and 24 who are studying full-time (and not receiving Youth Allowance or a similar payment). <u>Income free area<sup>1</sup> per year: \$ 29,857.00</u> <u>Higher income free area: only applies to FTB Part A.</u> A. The basic amount is \$77,234 for families with one FTB child. An additional amount of \$3,139 applies for each FTB child after the first.	<u>Annual FTB A at maximum rate:</u> Child under 13: \$3,204.70 Child aged 13-15: \$4,062.45 Child aged 16-17: \$1,029.30 Child aged 18-24: \$1,383.35	Both payments are administered by the Family Assistance Office and are available either as fortnightly payments through Centrelink, or through the tax system.
Large Family Supplement (LFS)	Cash benefit for families with 4 or more children.	Part of the maximum rate of FTB Part A if the customer has 4 or more FTB children.	<u>The annual amount of LFS:</u> \$219.00 multiplied by the number of FTB children after the third child.	
Multiple Birth Allowance (MBA)	Cash benefit for families with multiple births.	Part of the maximum rate of FTB Part A if the customer has 3 or more FTB children under the age of 6 who were born during the same multiple birth.	<u>Annual amount of MBA:</u> Triplets: \$2,679.10 Quadruplets or more: \$3,577.00	
Family Tax Benefit B (FTB B)	Income-tested tax allowance.	Provides extra assistance for families with only one main income earner, particularly those with children under five. It is paid to families for children up to 16 years and children aged 16-18 who are studying full-time. <u>Income free area<sup>1</sup> per year: \$1,679.00</u>	<u>Annual FTB B at maximum rate:</u> Youngest child < 5: \$2,752.10 Youngest child 5-18: \$1,919.90  Cut-out amount <sup>2</sup> : \$8,079	

<sup>1</sup>Income free area is the amount of adjusted taxable income an individual may have before their rate of FTB is affected.

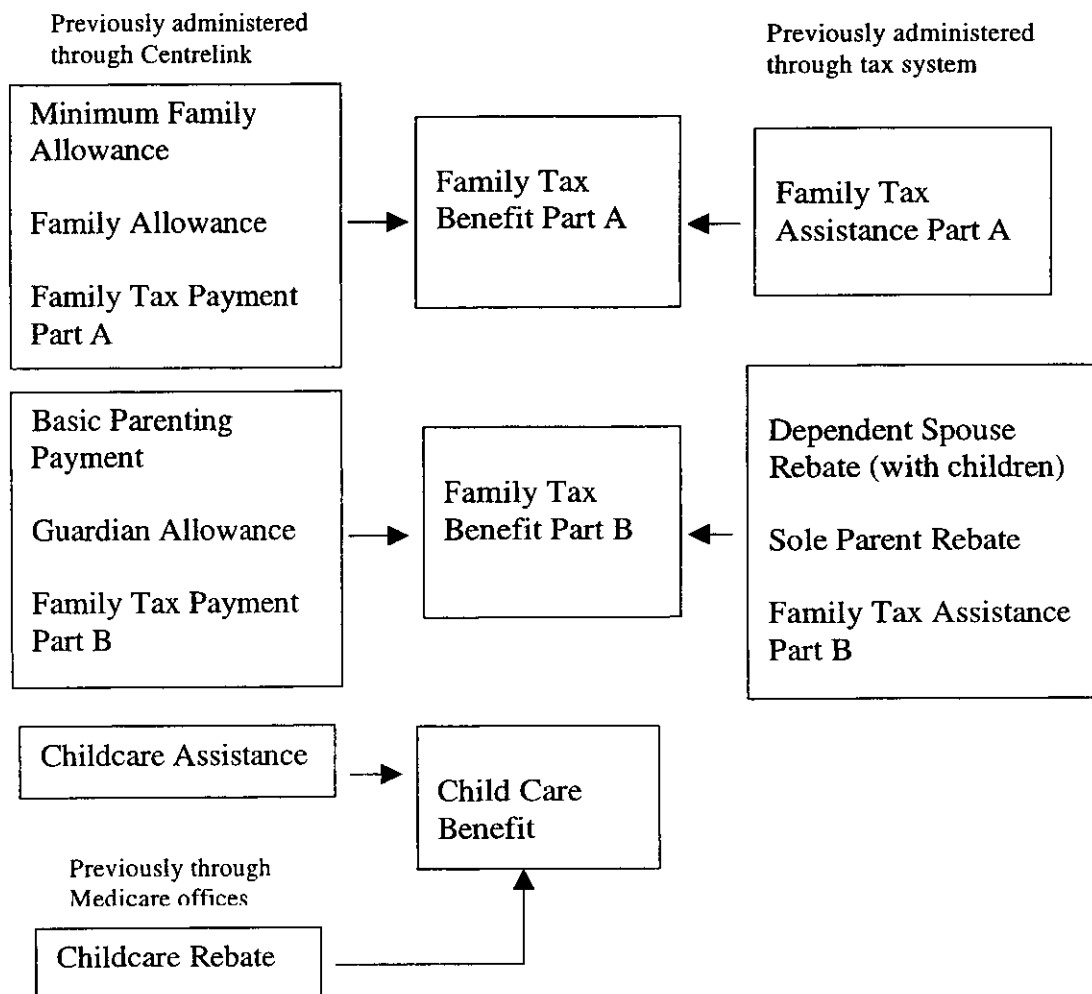
<sup>2</sup>The cut-out amount is the adjusted taxable income limit that relates to an FTB child. It is worked out by dividing the Part B Standard Rate that applies when the youngest child is 5 years or over by 0.3, and then adding the Part B income free area.

Source: Department of Family and Community Services.

### 1.3.2 Chronology

- 1921 *Maternity Allowance* introduced. Abolished in 1978, re-introduced in 1996.
- 1983 Monthly rate of Family Allowances: \$22 for 1<sup>st</sup> child, \$32.55 for 2<sup>nd</sup> child, \$39 each for 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and \$45.55 for 5<sup>th</sup> and each subsequent child.  
Weekly rate of single parent's benefit (same as old age pension): up to \$77.25; child's supplement up to \$10.00 (under 16); rental supplement \$10.00/week.
- 1996 *Maternity Allowance* reintroduced. To help with the costs associated with the birth of children and is payable for each new child born to families eligible for Family Payment. Paid as a single lump sum, at the time of introduction its rate was equivalent to six times the weekly maximum payment of Parenting Allowance.
- 2000-01 Welfare Reform. Twelve family assistance benefits simplified into three:

**Figure 1.1 Family assistance reforms, 2000**



Source: The Family Assistance Office, [www.familyassist.gov.au](http://www.familyassist.gov.au)

## 1.4 Childcare Services and Usage

### 1.4.1 Current provisions

The most recent childcare statistics available for Australia is in the *1999 Child Care Services Census*.

#### Main types of child care arrangements:

- *Long Day Care*: care for predominantly children under school age, in premises specially built or adapted for childcare. Private operators, local councils, community organisations, employers and non-profit organisations may run long day care centres. They provide flexible, quality, all-day or part-time care for working families and offer developmental programs within their care programs. Some long day care centres provide care for limited numbers of primary school children before and after school, and during school holidays.
- *Family Day Care*: a network of experienced carers who provide care and developmental activities in their own homes for other people's children. Family day care is primarily for children who have not yet started school, but can also provide care for school children up to 12 years old. Care is flexible and can be tailored to suit each family's needs, including care outside normal working hours and, if needed, overnight care.
- *In-home Care*: in-home care is a flexible form of childcare where care is provided in the child's home by an approved carer. In-home care may be available for families who do not have access to a standard child care service, or where their childcare needs cannot be met by an existing service.
- *Playgroups*: aboriginal playgroups give young children below school age the chance to socialise and interact with other children and adults, with parents usually being involved in the children's activities. Playgroups also provide a good opportunity for parents to talk and share common experiences. Enrichment programs may provide supervised care, organised activities, homework centres and nutrition services to school age children and teenagers.



**Table 1.3 Long Day Care services and their usage 1997-1999**

<i>Service Type</i>	<i>1997</i>	<i>1999</i>
<b>Private</b>		
Nr of services	2,593	2,617
Nr of children enrolled	190,755	193,785
Average nr children/service	73.6	74.0
<b>Community Based</b>		
Nr of services	1,063	1,016
Nr of children enrolled	79,139	76,450
Average nr children/service	74.4	75.2
<b>Family Day Care</b>		
Nr of schemes	321	313
Nr of children enrolled	83,471	81,418
Average nr children/scheme	260	260

*Source: Department of Family and Community Services, 1999 Census of Child Care Services, 2000.*

Average weekly fee for full-time childcare (1999):

\$161 for Private Centres

\$171 for Community Based Centres

Child Care Benefit (CCB): income-tested benefit (introduced in 2000) to any parents with dependent children, subject to residential qualifications. Children born after 1/1/1996 must have appropriate immunisations, unless exempt. Both parents or the lone parent must be doing at least some paid work, study or training to be eligible for CCB. Child must visit approved or registered childcare services.

Rate of CCB (2001): customers using registered care is eligible for minimum rate CCB, regardless of their income. CCB entitlement for registered care is dependent on the number of hours of care used. The following formula is used to determine a customer's CCB entitlement: *Eligible child care hours x registered care standard hourly x schooling percentage*. The schooling percentage is applied to take account of the cheaper cost of providing care for a school child as opposed to a non-school child. The percentage applied is

- 85% for school children;
- 100% for non-school children.

#### 1.4.2 Chronology

2000 Childcare Assistance and Childcare Rebate combined into a simplified, more generous single payment called *Child Care Benefit (CCB)*. All Australian families using approved or registered childcare services are eligible for CCB.

**Table 1.4 Number of operational childcare places for age < 12, 1991-1998**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Community Based Centre</i>	<i>Private Centre</i>	<i>Family Day Care</i>	<i>School Age Care</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
1991	39,600	36,700	42,500	44,500	5,100	168,400
1992	40,300	53,200	45,500	48,300	5,700	193,000
1993	42,800	61,400	47,900	50,300	5,600	208,000
1994	43,400	80,400	51,700	59,800	6,200	241,500
1995	44,600	99,900	54,000	64,100	6,300	268,900
1996	45,600	122,500	60,100	71,800	6,500	306,500
1997	46,300	136,600	62,700	79,000	6,600	331,200
1998	51,700	142,900	63,700	134,400	6,700	399,400

*Source:* Department of Family and Community Services Child Care System, 1998

**Table 1.5 Childcare (aged<12) usage rates 1994-1997**

<i>Service type</i>	<i>1994-95</i>		<i>1996-1997</i>	
	<i>Nr enrolled</i>	<i>% of all</i>	<i>Nr enrolled</i>	<i>% of all</i>
Centre-based Long Day Care	251,100	55	294,700	54
Family Day Care	85,600	19	85,00	16
School Age Care	90,400	20	130,500	24
Other	33,200	7	34,500	6
Total	460,300	100	544,700	100

*Source:* Department of Family and Community Services Censuses of Child Care Services 1994 to 1997.

**Table 1.6 Average weekly fees for Long Day Care 1991-1998**

	<i>1991</i>	<i>1993</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>1997</i>	<i>1998</i>
Community Centres	106	126	139	162	169
Private Centres	104	124	142	154	162
Family Day Care	103	116	122	130	134

*Source:* Department of Family and Community Services Child Care System, 1998.

#### Weekly levels of assistance in 1999:

- Childcare Assistance: \$96.50
- Childcare Rebate (at 30% rate): \$28.95
- Childcare Rebate (at 20% rate): \$19.30

## **1.5 Other Policies Related to Children and Parenting**

### **1.5.1 Current provisions**

**Table 1.7 Other provisions for families with children, Australia 2001**

<i>Type of service</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Eligibility</i>	<i>Level of payment</i>		
			Monthly payment/Fam. type	Half average male earnings	Half average female earnings
Parenting Payment	Means-tested benefit for lone parents and one member of couples.	Complex dual income and asset tests on both partner's incomes, also varies by age.	Single p. + 1 child Single p + 2 ch. Couple +1/2/3 ch.	\$180.38 \$201.72 \$111.76	\$272.83 \$294.36 \$273.22
Newstart Allowance	For unemployed people aged 21 and over but below 65.	Registered unemployed, capable of undertaking work, available for work and actively seeking it. Have to be prepared to enter a Preparing for Work Agreement, which might involve some Mutual Obligation activity, including Work for the Dole.	Basic rates per fortnight: Single aged 21 or over, no children: Single aged 21 or over, with children: Partnered (each):		\$364.60 \$394.30 \$328.90
Health care	Medicare is a national health service scheme that provides free public hospital treatment and free or subsidised GP treatment. It does not cover dental treatments. Prescription charges are subsidised to a standard rate.	To all children and adults. Children are charged less than adults and there are concessions to families who hold a Health Card or Pensioners Concession Card (income support recipients).	Medicare levy in 2000-01 is 1.5% of taxable income. The levy is not payable when taxable income is less than the following Medicare levy thresholds (\$ per annum): <u>Individuals eligible for:</u> Senior Australians (SA) tax offset Pensioner tax offset Other individuals <u>Couple or sole parent eligible for SA tax offset</u> For each dependent child add Other couples or sole parent For each dependent child add		20,000 15,970 13,807 31,729 2,140 23,299 2,140

<p>Maternity Immunisation Allowance</p>	<p>A one-off lump sum paid for children fully immunised at 18 months, or after 18 months but before their second birthday. It also is paid where a valid exemption exists.</p>	<p>Claimants must have been paid Maternity Allowance for the child or be eligible for Family Tax Benefit, Part A when the child meets the immunisation or exemption requirements.</p>	<p>One-off payment of \$208</p>																				
<p>Rent Assistance (RA)</p>	<p>Supplementary payment added on to the rate of FTB A. It recognises the housing costs that low income families face in the private rental market.</p>	<p>Must receive FTB A through fortnightly payments; must have at least one RA child; cannot be an ineligible home-owner or an aged care resident and must pay, or be liable to pay rent, other than government rent, of more than the rent threshold.</p>	<p>Customers must pay a minimum amount of rent before they become eligible for RA. This minimum amount is the rent threshold, and varies depending on the customer's circumstances. Rent level: at which maximum RA is payable. 2001-02 maximum fortnightly rates of RA:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="742 206 914 1021"> <thead> <tr> <th>Family type</th> <th>Max RA</th> <th>Rent threshold</th> <th>Rent level</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Sngl+1-2ch</td> <td>\$105.00</td> <td>\$104.58</td> <td>\$244.58</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sngl+3+ch</td> <td>\$118.72</td> <td>\$104.58</td> <td>\$262.87</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cpl+1-2ch</td> <td>\$105.00</td> <td>\$154.84</td> <td>\$294.84</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cpl+3+ch</td> <td>\$118.72</td> <td>\$154.84</td> <td>\$313.13</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Family type	Max RA	Rent threshold	Rent level	Sngl+1-2ch	\$105.00	\$104.58	\$244.58	Sngl+3+ch	\$118.72	\$104.58	\$262.87	Cpl+1-2ch	\$105.00	\$154.84	\$294.84	Cpl+3+ch	\$118.72	\$154.84	\$313.13
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Source: Department of Family and Community Services; Centrelink.