

Parliamentary reply by DPM Teo Chee Hean on enhanced Baby Bonus and Medisave Grant for newborns in the M&P package

TWELFTH PARLIAMENT OF SINGAPORE

ORAL ANSWER

MONDAY, 4 FEBRUARY 2013

Ms Tin Pei Ling:

To ask the Prime Minister how is the effective date of the enhanced Baby Bonus and Medisave grant for newborns in the Marriage and Parenthood Package determined and if it can be extended to cover all Singapore citizen children born on or after 1 January 2012.

Mr Teo Chee Hean (for the Prime Minister):

The enhancements to the Marriage & Parenthood Package 2013 were announced on 21 January 2013.

Many of the enhancements are effective from January 2013. These include the enhanced co-funding for Assisted Reproduction Technology treatment, alignment in accouchement fees, and the Government-Paid Maternity Benefit which took effect from 1 January 2013, as well as the Parenthood Priority Scheme and Parenthood Provisional Housing Scheme which were launched by HDB in the last week of January.

The Government also encouraged employers to voluntarily grant the new and enhanced leave measures to their employees from 1 January 2013, and employers will be reimbursed by the Government if they do so. These include Paternity Leave, Shared Parental Leave and the Extended Child Care Leave.¹

To be inclusive, the Government has exercised flexibility for the enhanced Baby Bonus Cash Gift and the new Medisave grant for newborns to apply to births on or after 26 August 2012. This was the date of the National Day Rally when these enhancements were first mentioned.

We recognise that couples wish to receive as much support as possible. However, we seek the public's understanding that specific start dates are needed for any policy announcement. While we have tried to be as inclusive as possible, whichever start date is chosen, there will be always be some who will marginally miss the start date.

Those who do not qualify for the latest enhancements will still be eligible for the existing benefits under the Marriage & Parenthood Package. These include the existing Baby Bonus Cash Gift and Child Development Account co-savings, tax benefits, the foreign domestic worker levy concession, as well as existing leave provisions (such as 16 weeks of maternity leave and child care leave of 6 days per year for parents with children aged 06). Parents of children born before 26 August 2012 can also benefit from the extended child care leave of 2 days per year for children aged 7–12 years, and the enhanced infant care and child care subsidies.

¹ The leave measures require legislation to be passed to take effect, as well as supporting systems to be developed and implemented. Employers will be required to offer these leave schemes to their employees from 1 May 2013 when the legislation takes effect.