

\$1,000 struggle for mother in financial trap

By Jessica Tang

RAISING a thousand dollars to move house is a tough challenge for single parent Ms Yau, 34.

The mother of three has lived on a monthly social security payment of \$6,000 since she separated from her husband three years ago.

She regularly moves homes in the fear that her

husband will return and take her children away.

Ms Yau says the Comprehensive Society Security Assistance (CSSA) grant is not enough, and the long-term supplement takes too long to apply for.

The supplement of about \$2,600 for a four-person family is only granted a year after the application is made.

Ms Yau turned to the Hong Kong Family Welfare Agency's Isolin Clague Trust, which granted her about \$6,000 for the rent deposit, telephone and furniture.

She is one of 331 single parents to have benefited from the trust, which was set up in 1990 to help single-parent families.

They can apply to the fund for financial assistance regarding tuition, extra-curricular activities, social activities, furniture and vocational training.

However, this source of help will dry up next year when the trust runs out of funds.

There are fears that children will suffer if they are

deprived of activities that form their characters.

Principal social worker at the Hong Kong Family Welfare Society Cynthia Wong Leung Fu-hing said such families were trapped.

It was essential for the government to establish a standard provision of supplement under the CSSA to cater for them, she said.

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