

This packet contains important information about your case.



CLICK A TOPIC BELOW TO GET STARTED.

**How is the amount of my child support determined?
What if I don't pay child support from the beginning?
Where does my child support go?**

PAYMENTS



**Manage Your Case Online
Credit Card Payments**

INFORMATION



**Changing Your Child Support Amount
Child Support Wage Assignments
Medical Support Obligations
Information for the Noncustodial Parent
Help Your Child Support Professional Help You**



**SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES**

hss.sbcounty.gov/dcsc • (866) 901-3212 • [facebook.com/SanBernardinoCountyDCSS](https://www.facebook.com/SanBernardinoCountyDCSS)

Help Your Child Support Professional Help You



California's Child Support Program: A Resource for Parents...



Contact your local child support agency to keep your case information current and your child support order accurate by telling us about:

- Changes in address or telephone numbers
- Significant changes in your child's needs including medical bills or day care costs
- Incarceration, disability, drug/alcohol, or mental health rehabilitation
- Changes in income, pending worker's compensation payouts or disability income
- New court orders for child support or health coverage
- Changes in employment such as layoff, termination or new job
- Changes in child custody or visitation
- New or lapsed health insurance coverage
- Changes in public assistance status
- Changes in the number of children you are supporting

Call your Local Child Support Agency today at:
1-866-901-3212, or TTY: 1-866-399-4096



Child Support
Directors Association

*A Coalition of Experts Collecting Billions
for California's Children*



"Child Support... An Investment in the Future of Our Children"
CHILD SUPPORT DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION

www.csdaca.org
Revised: September, 2010

How is the Amount of My Child Support Determined?

CALIFORNIA'S CHILD SUPPORT PROGRAM:

A Resource for Parents ...



The amount of child support parents are required to pay is determined by a "Statewide Uniform Guideline Formula". California courts, local child support agencies and private attorneys all use this formula to set the legal amount of child support.

The guideline child support formula takes the following factors into account:

Income

Both parents' average (after tax) income from any source including income from salaries, unemployment benefits, rental income, self-employment and some social security or disability insurance benefits is used in the child support calculation.

Mandatory union dues, retirement contributions, health insurance and child and spousal support paid for separate relationships are deducted from the parents' income.

Timeshare Factor

Spending time taking care of the child is considered to be support of the child. The court or the local child support agency uses the time each parent spends with the child as a factor in the child support calculation. The time both parents spend with their child through visitation or custody arrangement impacts the amount of child support ordered.

Other Factors

The courts or local child support agency may also take into account job related expenses, extraordinary health expenses and the minimum basic living expenses of either parent's child from another relationship who lives with the parent in calculating support if these create an undue hardship.

FAQs

Is my current spouse's income included in the child support order?

Except in extraordinary cases, the income of the current spouse is NOT considered when determining or modifying child support.

Will my child support be reduced because I am paying for another child?

Any child or spousal support payment that is being paid for another child or spouse may be deducted from your income used to calculate child support. You will be asked by the court or the local child support agency for proof of these payments.

Contact your local child support agency: 1-866-901-3212, or TTY: 1-866-399-4096



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Importance of Paying Child Support From the Beginning

CALIFORNIA'S CHILD SUPPORT PROGRAM:

A Resource for Parents ...



California law states that both parents are mutually responsible for the support of their child. By paying child support in a timely manner, your child's future will be more secure with a greater likelihood that he/she will succeed.

Impact of a Father's Involvement With their Child:¹

1. Child performs better in school:
 - a. Improved grades
 - b. Child is less likely to be expelled and/or repeat grades
 - c. Improved math and verbal skills
2. Improved emotional development
3. Greater level of curiosity

¹Father Involvement in Children's Education, Care and Support" National Child Care Information and Assistance Center, Administration for Children and Families (2011)

■ Every child has the right to be supported by his/her parents:

- Until the age of 18, unless he/she marries, becomes legally emancipated; or,
- Until he/she finishes high school or reaches age 19, whichever comes first

■ If you pay your support in a timely manner and do not owe past due child support:

- You will not have to pay interest on past due child support
- Your IRS, state tax refunds and lottery winnings may not be intercepted
- The funds in your bank account will not be taken
- Your driver license, business and other professional license will not be suspended.
- The court will not force you to seek work or hold you in contempt

Although the wage garnishment (Income Withholding Order) takes effect immediately, it may take some time for the employer to process and send the first payment. **To be sure past due child support and interest do not accrue, payment should be made by the parent owing support until the wage withholding goes into effect.**

Contact your local child support agency: 1-866-901-3212, or TTY: 1-866-399-4096



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Where Does Your Child Support Go?

CALIFORNIA'S CHILD SUPPORT PROGRAM:

A Resource for Parents ...



Child support paid by non-custodial parents helps California children and families to remain self-sufficient. The support payments also go toward recovering money owed to the state for funds expended by the government for a child receiving public assistance.

The following are questions you may have if you are a non-custodial parent...

■ Where does my child support go?

If your child is not receiving public assistance, the payment goes to the custodial party. If your child is receiving public assistance, the payment is applied to recover the funds expended by the government.

■ I pay \$400 each month, why does the custodial party receive only \$50?

When a child is receiving public assistance, the custodial party is entitled to receive up to \$50 (called a "disregard") from the total child support paid for the month. The rest of the child support amount goes towards recovering public assistance funds.

■ Why does my past due balance go up? I make a payment each month towards my past due balance.

Pursuant to California law, if you owe past due child support, 10% annual interest is charged. If the past due child support balance is high enough, the monthly amount of interest charged will be more than the amount you pay each month.

■ The Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) intercepted my IRS tax refund and the custodial party did not receive anything. Where did my money go?

IRS tax intercepts are applied to past due child support only - not to the current child support owed. If there is a past due balance owed to the state, the IRS tax intercept is applied to this balance. Once satisfied, the custodial party will receive the remaining amount.

Why Does it Cost So Much to Raise A Child?

Money is Needed For:

- Housing
- Utilities
- Clothing/Diapers
- Meals/Formula
- Child Care
- Extra Curricular Activities
- Dental/Medical Expenses
- Transportation
- Education
- Miscellaneous Items

Average Annual Cost to Raise a Child¹:

\$11,000-\$13,000

1 "Expenditures on Children by Families, 2009" USDA, Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion.
<http://www.cnpp.usda.gov>



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Revised: April, 2011

Your Obligation to Provide Medical Support



CALIFORNIA'S CHILD SUPPORT PROGRAM: A Resource for Parents ...



The mission of the Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) is to enhance the well-being of children and the self-sufficiency of families by providing professional services to locate parents, establish paternity and enforce orders for financial and medical support. Parents and employers are key partners in ensuring that adequate medical support is provided for your child.

■ Why does DCSS require me to provide medical support?

Federal and state law requires both parents to provide medical support for their children. DCSS is mandated to establish and enforce child support and medical support orders based on both parents' income and the amount of time each parent spends with the child.

■ How much will it cost me?

Based on California law, health insurance is considered to be of reasonable cost if adding a child or children to the policy will not exceed 5% of the non-custodial parent's gross income. Contact your employer to determine the cost to add your children. If health insurance is not available through your employer you can look to obtain health insurance through non-employer sponsored programs to satisfy the terms of your court order.

■ What happens if I lose my job?

Inform your local child support agency if you lose your job. You may be eligible for a modification of your child support order based on your change of circumstances. If you lose your job, there are other programs that may be able to provide you and your children with health insurance.

Five Good Reasons Why Children Should Have Health Insurance¹:

Children with insurance are more likely to have access to preventative care.

Insured children are better equipped to do well in school.²

Insured children are healthier and live longer lives.³

Children with insurance are more likely to have a consistent source of medical care.

Health insurance helps improve social and emotional development.

Contact your local child support agency:
1-866-901-3212, or: TTY: 1-866-399-4096

¹ "Why Do School Aged Children Need Health Insurance?" Campaign for Children's Health Care (2007)

² Why Health Insurance Matters for Children, Washington: Campaign for Children's Health Care (June, 2006), pp. 1.

³ Bobbjerg, Randall and Hadley, Jack "Why Health Insurance is Important" The Urban Institute (Nov. 2007)



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*The Department of
Child Support Services
is pleased to offer*

Customer CONNECT

Customer Connect is California's child support self-service information system designed with YOU in mind.

Get connected—use our secure self-service website or call our toll-free automated phone system. General information and specific account information is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It's easy, fast and ready when you are.

Benefits of Customer Connect

- Convenient 24/7 access
- Update your account information
- Individual case information
- Payment information
- Make a payment
- Reset or change your PIN
- Appointment dates and times

Be sure to have your Social Security number (or Participant ID) and personal identification number (PIN) ready if you want to access case-specific information.

Visit our secure self-service website
www.childsup-connect.ca.gov

or call toll-free

866-901-3212

TTY 866-399-4096

Customer Connect Q&A

When I call the toll-free number, who will I reach?

You will reach an automated system designed to answer your child support questions and provide specific case information—24 hours a day.

Can I still speak to someone if I have questions?

Yes. For individuals with an open child support case at a local child support agency, **Customer Connect** can transfer your call to a local representative during regular business hours.

If you have a wage assignment payment processed by the State Disbursement Unit, your call can be transferred to a customer service representative during regular business hours.

*Can **Customer Connect** provide up-to-date information on payments and appointments?*

Yes.

I have cases in different counties.

Do I need to call each local child support agency (LCSA)?

LCSAs statewide are in the process of transitioning to **Customer Connect**. If your LCSA has transitioned to the new system, you can use it to access your case information. If you have cases in multiple counties, ask your LCSA when they will transition to **Customer Connect**.

Visit our secure self-service website
www.childsup-connect.ca.gov

or call toll-free

866-901-3212

TTY 866-399-4096

California Department of Child Support Services
P.O. Box 419064
Rancho Cordova, CA 95741

PUB 255 (3/07)



Welcome to

Customer CONNECT

*Access
@ your
fingertips*



California Department of
Child Support Services

Getting started with **Customer CONNECT** 866-901-3212

Customer Connect is an exciting new service that allows parents, guardians, and others to get child support information 24 hours a day.

Use **Customer Connect** to verify:

- Appointment times
- Account balances
- Payments received
- Payments made

What to expect when you call Customer Connect

Call the toll-free number and you will be greeted with a menu of choices. You have the option of speaking your choices or using your touch-tone phone.

When you call, our system will ask if you are a parent or guardian calling about your case. If so, have your Social Security number (or Participant ID) and your personal identification number (PIN) ready.

Customer Connect also provides general information about child support services for those who do not have an open case.

For speech and hearing impaired customers, services are available through our TTY number, 866-399-4096.

Customer Connect . . . *step-by-step*

PARENT OR GUARDIAN WITH A CASE

Press 1 for *English* or 2 for *Spanish*

Press 1 (parent or guardian) or say *Yes*

Enter your Social Security number (or Participant ID) and PIN

Press 1 or say *Payments*

Press 2 or say *Appointments*

Press 3 or say *PIN change*

Press 4 or say *General info*

Press 5 or say *More options; then*

Press 1 or say *Update contact info*

Press 2 or say *Update employment info*

PIN change

Press 1 for *English* or 2 for *Spanish*

Press 1 (parent or guardian) or say *Yes*

Enter your Social Security number (or Participant ID) and PIN

Press 3 or say *PIN change*

Payment information

Press 1 for *English* or 2 for *Spanish*

Press 1 (parent or guardian) or say *Yes*

Enter your Social Security number (or Participant ID) and PIN

Press 1 or say *Payments*

Appointment inquiries

Press 1 for *English* or 2 for *Spanish*

Press 1 (parent or guardian) or say *Yes*

Enter your Social Security number (or Participant ID) and PIN

Press 2 or say *Appointments*



GENERAL INFORMATION

Press 1 for *English* or 2 for *Spanish*

Press 2 (not a parent or guardian) or say *No*

Press 6 for other options, or say *None of these*

TO OPEN A NEW CASE OR REQUEST AN APPLICATION

Press 1 for *English* or 2 for *Spanish*

Press 2 (not a parent or guardian) or say *No*

Press 1 for New case or say *New case*

Customer Connect Toll-Free
866-901-3212



How do I make payments?

Most court-ordered child support payments are made through income withholding—when an employer deducts court-ordered child support payments from an employee's paycheck. If your payment for current child support is not made by income withholding, other payment options are available. Confirm with your LCSA or family law facilitator if you are eligible to pay using the following options:

- Make a debit/credit card payment online at www.casdu.com or by phone at 1-866-901-3212.
- Set up ongoing (recurring) automatic withdrawals from a checking or savings account.

Contact a local child support agency:

866-901-3212 toll-free
(within the U.S.)

TTY 866-399-4096

Remember—child support payments must be paid in full and on time.

What happens if I don't make all my payments on time?



If you don't pay court-ordered child support, the following actions can be taken:

- Interest will be charged on your unpaid balance at a rate of 10 percent per year.
- Other income can be intercepted, including:
 - State or federal income tax refunds
 - Unemployment benefits
 - Workers' compensation benefits
 - State disability benefits
 - Lottery winnings
- Your driver license and professional license can be suspended.
- Liens can be placed on your property and bank accounts.
- Your passport can be denied.
- Unpaid child support will be reported to credit bureaus.
- Additional enforcement actions can be taken.



*Edmund G. Brown Jr., Governor
State of California*

*Diana S. Dooley, Secretary
California Health and Human Services Agency*

*Kathleen Hrepich, Interim Director
California Department of Child Support Services*

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TTY 1-866-399-4096 (toll-free)
www.childsup.ca.gov

PUB 247 (11/2012)

Information for the Noncustodial Parent



The California Department of Child Support Services does not provide legal services to parents or guardians.

Who are we?

Through local child support agencies, the Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) provides free services to parents, guardians and caretakers of minor children, regardless of marital status, income, or if the parents are receiving public assistance.



What we do:

- Locate a parent
- Establish paternity (the child's father)
- Establish, change, and enforce child support orders
- Establish, change, and enforce an order for health insurance coverage
- Collect and distribute child and spousal support payments



Financial support and parental involvement determines what a child has in life, what that child can do, and who that child will become.

Who is the noncustodial parent?

The noncustodial parent is the parent without primary physical custody of his or her children. This term is used to distinguish the person who *pays* child support from the person who *receives* it—although the term may cause concern when a noncustodial parent is actively involved personally and financially in his or her child's life.

Why do I have a case?

A case is opened for any parent, caretaker or guardian who requests our services. By law, if a child receives public assistance, a case is opened automatically.

Do I have to go to court?

You have the right to have your case heard in court—however, you may be able to settle your case out of court by meeting with someone at the local child support agency.

What should I expect?

You will be served (given) legal papers concerning your case. A Family Law Facilitator at the courthouse (not employed by the local child support agency) will provide free legal assistance, and can help you if you have questions about the paperwork.

If you do not think you are the father of the child, the local child support agency can arrange for genetic testing to determine if you are the father. Once paternity is established, a child support order will be obtained.

The amount of child support is set using state guidelines that consider each parent's income and other information like the amount of time each parent spends with the child. Special needs of the child are also considered.

You will be required to pay child support through the State Disbursement Unit as long as the case is open. Your employer will be required to withhold child support payments from your paychecks.

What if I don't think I'm the father?

As soon as you are served with legal papers that claim you are the father of a child, contact the local child support agency handling your case. The local child support agency may be able to help you arrange for testing. **Do not ignore this document.** If you wait longer than 30 days, the court **will** automatically establish you as the legal father. You may be required to provide medical support and pay child support in an amount set by the court.

What if I don't agree with the amount of child support?

The local child support agency may request a change to your order if you provide new information about changes in your circumstances (see below). You can also go to court to seek a judge's decision.

What should I do now?

- Read and respond to all paperwork sent to you.
- Contact the local child support agency if you have any questions or concerns.
- Pay your support in full and on time.
- Seek private legal advice if you wish.
- Keep accurate records of payments—it will help if you have a question concerning your case.
- Tell the local child support agency about any changes in circumstances that could affect your case, including:
 - Custody and visitation
 - Income
 - Employment
 - Workers' compensation
 - Disability status
 - Address
 - Marital status
 - Changes to your family size
 - Jail or prison
 - Child care
 - Health insurance coverage



Providing this information may benefit you and could affect the amount you are expected to pay.



Supporting California's Children

Important Points!

- Your employer is allowed to charge up to \$1.50 as an administrative fee for each deduction made.
- You can dispute the amount owed by filing papers with the court anytime.
- You have 10 days from the date you receive a copy of the wage assignment to dispute the amount before the first withholding occurs.
- Once your child support payment is received from your employer, it is sent to the custodial party within two business days.
- Not paying child support is a crime. If you intentionally quit your job to avoid paying child support, you may be held in contempt of court.



The California Department of Child Support Services does not provide legal services to parents or guardians.

Contact a local child support agency:

866-901-3212 toll-free
(within the U.S.)

TTY 866-399-4096



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PUB 250 (11/2012)

Child Support Wage Assignments



Department of
Child Support Services



What is a wage assignment?

A wage assignment, also called an *Order/Notice to Withhold Income for Child Support*, requires an employer to make a deduction from a parent's paycheck to pay child, spousal and/or medical support. The amount of the wage assignment is based on the most recent court order; however, the amount can be increased if the past due support grows.

Why do I have a wage assignment?

Federal and state laws require a wage assignment in almost every case where there is a child support order. Wage assignments are ordered, even if payments are currently being made. A wage assignment helps children get their child support on time. Wage assignments can also help you by providing a payment record.

How long will the wage assignment last?

Wage assignments continue until there is no longer any child support or arrears owed.

Can I be fired because I have a wage assignment?

No. It is against the law for an employer to fire an employee because the employee has a wage assignment. If you think this has happened, you may want to speak to an attorney.

Is my employer required to follow the wage assignment?

Yes. A wage assignment is a legal document served on your employer. If the employer does not follow it, your employer can be held in contempt of court.

What if my employer is deducting payments but I am not receiving credit?

Your employer has been given instructions for processing wage assignments. Although your employer is required to deduct and send payments on your behalf, you are responsible for making sure that your payments get to the local child support agency in a timely manner.

Check your child support statements and keep your pay stubs to make sure you are receiving proper credit. If there is a problem, contact your local child support agency immediately.



How much can be taken from my paycheck?

Generally, up to 50 percent of your net wages can be taken for child support, but in special circumstances, up to 65 percent. If the total of your support order is more than 50 percent of your net income, your full support obligation will not be covered.

You are responsible for paying the difference. If your support order is more than 50 percent of your net income, it is possible that you are eligible for a change in your child support order. Ask the local child support agency to review your case for a modification of the child support order.



What if I change jobs?

You must notify the local child support agency every time you change jobs. You must also notify the local child support agency if you become unemployed.

Even if you are not working, you are still required to make payments every month. You should immediately contact the local child support agency about modifying your child support.



Changing Your Child Support Amount



Points to Remember

- Parents or caregivers can request a modification (change).
- To request a modification through the local child support agency, you must have an open case.
- A case can be opened anytime.
- Your child support order can go up or down based on information gathered. The order may not be what you expected.
- There is no charge for requesting a modification through the local child support agency.
- Even if your request is denied, you can still go to court to have a judge decide your order. The Family Law Facilitator at the courthouse can help you do this.

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PUB 252 (11/2012)

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Department of
Child Support Services

How can I change my child support amount?

You can ask for a modification to increase or decrease your court-ordered child support amount.

Who can ask for a modification?

- Noncustodial parents.
- Custodial parties (parents, caregivers, etc.)
- Local child support agencies.
- Child support agencies from other states.

How do I ask for a modification?

- Contact your local child support agency.
- Go to court on your own. The Family Law Facilitator at the courthouse (not part of the local child support agency) provides free legal assistance and can help you with the process.
- Hire a private attorney to go to court with you.

When can I ask for a modification?

You can ask for a modification if your circumstances change, such as:

- You are laid off or fired from your job.
- You get a new or additional job.
- Your income or the other parent's income increases or decreases.
- Custody or visitation changes.
- Family size changes.

- You become disabled.
- You go to jail or prison.
- You are deployed to active military service.



What do I need to provide?

In order for the local child support agency to review your case for modification, you will need to provide information, such as:

- Income and expenses.
- Child care expenses.
- Medical insurance.
- Disability (SSI, SDI, SSA, etc.)
- Jail or prison status.
- Unemployment benefits.
- Retirement income.
- Custody and visitation arrangements.

What should I expect?

After reviewing the information (above) you and the other parent provide, the local child support agency will determine whether a modification is needed, and if so, the appropriate amount of support. A modification may be justified if the support order would change by 20 percent or \$50, whichever is less.

If you and the other party can agree to the support amount ahead of time, you can sign a stipulation (agreement) that must be filed with the court.

If there is no agreement, you will receive a notice to appear in court for a hearing where a judge or commissioner will decide the amount.

If the other party lives in another state, the local child support agency may have to request that the other state conduct a review and request a modification.



Available Now!

Pay your Child Support ELECTRONICALLY!

FAST, EASY, SECURE

**New options are available to make
Child Support payments**

Pay Using the SDU Website at
www.casdu.com

- Available to parents and employers
- Parents can set up recurring debits from checking or saving account
- It's fast and convenient
- Pay using your credit card
- No fees, no delays

Pay By Phone-Call the SDU
1-866-901-3212

- Available to parents and employers
- To make payments, simply follow the automated instructions
- It's fast and convenient
- Pay using your credit card
- No fees— safe and secure

Questions?

Call the California State Disbursement Unit

at

1-866-901-3212

