



Information for the Noncustodial Parent



How do I make payments?

Information about how to make your payment and your payment options is available at your local child support agency. You will also be notified by mail with payment instructions. Child support payments will be withheld from your paychecks.

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.



*Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor
State of California*

*Kimberly Belshé, Secretary
California Health and Human Services Agency*

*David Maxwell-Jolly, Director
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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.