



# CHILD SUPPORT REVIEW PROCESS

by Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott

MOST DIVORCED OR NEVER-MARRIED parents recognize the importance of maintaining cordial relationships for the good of their children. They don't want their children to suffer because mom and dad can't get along.

The Attorney General's Office, in its efforts to collect and distribute child support to families, strives to foster healthy relationships by treating the parent who pays and the parent who receives support as equal partners in doing what is best for their children.

Services provided by the Attorney General's Division for Families and Children include:

- Locating absent parents;
- Establishing paternity;
- Establishing and enforcing child support orders;
- Establishing and enforcing medical support orders;
- Reviewing and adjusting child support payments; and
- Collecting and distributing child support payments.

In order to establish paternity and child support orders, parents typically must make at least one trip to the courthouse, where the facts of their case are presented to a judge, who must then rule on the matter. Going to court can be a stressful experience for parents, who many times do not know what to expect from the process. The formality of legal proceedings can result in increased

tension between parents who already may be at odds about the outcome of their case.

Child Support Review Process (CSRP) is a non-adversarial way parents can resolve legal issues about their child support without going to court, thereby supporting positive family relationships. That is why my office encourages parents to use the CSRP as an alternative to going to court. For mothers and fathers who qualify, CSRP is a way to unite rather than polarize parents who, though they do not live together, must find common ground for taking care of their children. Last fiscal year, more than 50,000 legal actions were resolved through CSRP.

CSRP is for divorced, separated or never-married parents who are willing to negotiate orders to:

- establish paternity;
- set current child and medical support;
- establish visitation rights;
- pay retroactive child support;
- obtain judgments for past due child support;
- modify child support amounts; or
- enforce the payment of child support.

With CSRP, both parents meet with a child support officer in the privacy of an office to establish an order. If traveling to the office creates a hardship for either parent, the meeting can be conducted by

conference call.

Once an agreement is reached, the order resulting from the CSRP is filed with the court and reviewed by a judge. After the judge has signed it, a CSRP order is legally binding and will be enforced just as any order obtained through a court proceeding. Parents should consider CSRP because it:

- Saves time. Cases that go to court often require more than one appearance and long waits at the courthouse. With CSRP, parents schedule an appointment with the child support review officer and every effort is made to resolve the legal issues at that time.

- Reduces stress. Because CSRP is less formal than a courtroom setting, parents feel more comfortable to discuss issues related to the outcome of their individual case.

- Provides privacy. Court proceedings are public hearings where sensitive issues may be presented before all present in the courtroom. During the CSRP process, negotiations are conducted in the privacy of a child support office.

If you have a case with the Attorney General's Office and need more information about CSRP, contact your local child support office. To apply for child support services, call (800) 252-8014, or visit our website at [www.oag.state.tx.us](http://www.oag.state.tx.us) and select "Child Support."

## POINTS TO REMEMBER



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Information on this and other topics is available on the Attorney General's website at [www.oag.state.tx.us](http://www.oag.state.tx.us).



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT