

Receiving Child Support

Who decides how much support I will receive?

A Child Support Enforcement Agency administrative (CSEA) officer or the court determines the amount of support. Using information on income, certain expenses, and dependents for you and the other parent, the amount of support is calculated using a formula mandated by state law.

You will receive a copy of the formula that applies to your case with support calculations after your hearing. The formula is located in Ohio Revised Code, Section 3119.021 and 3119.022, in the *Ohio Family Law Handbook* at your local library or CSEA. The formula was revised in March 2001, so make sure you have the latest version.

How is child support paid?

All child support payments throughout Ohio are sent to Child Support Payment Central in Columbus. Child support payments can be submitted in the following ways:

- If the absent parent is employed, CSEA can issue a wage withholding to the employer. The employer must deduct the support directly from wages and send it to the state.
- The court or CSEA can issue orders to withhold support from other financial sources such as Workers Compensation, certain Social Security benefits, pensions and annuities.
- If the absent parent is self-employed, unemployed or receiving Workers Compensation, he or she can have a bank or other financial institution deduct payments directly from a checking or savings account. The bank then sends the payments to Child Support Payment Central in Columbus. This is financial institution withholding.
- The absent parent pays support directly to Child Support Payment Central in Columbus. Once Child Support Payment Central (CSPC) receives the support payment, it is posted to the appropriate child support account(s). Ohio then prints and mails a child support check or executes a direct deposit.
- Regardless of how the payments are made, Child Support Payment Central must mail or deposit a check to you within two working days of receiving the payment. (Note: Holidays and postal delays can affect your check.)

When will I receive my child support check?

Once the court or CSEA issues an order for support:

- If the absent parent is employed, it takes four to six weeks to set up a wage withholding for the employer. The employer is required by law to send the support payment within seven business days of the employee's pay date.
- If the absent parent pays directly, it depends on when the payment is made.

Why aren't all my checks for equal amounts?

- *If you DO NOT have past due child support...*

CSEA charges the absent parent a two percent administrative fee. This is paid with each support payment. But under law, CSEA must pay you all your support in a month before we can collect our fee. You receive both the administrative fee and your support amount until your account reaches one month of support for a single calendar month. You may receive support checks for many months before your account reaches one month of support. At that time, CSEA will take all of the administrative fee due,

and your check will be for less than usual. The law requires that we pay your support and collect our fee in this way.

We strongly recommend that you put aside the administrative fee amount from each check to make up the difference when we withhold it from a later check.

- *If you have past due child support...*

CSEA still charges the absent parent a two-percent administrative fee; however, it cannot be collected until all past due child support has been paid to you.

How long can I collect child support?

In most cases, child support ends when your child reaches age 18 and is no longer a fulltime student at an accredited high school. Regardless of school status, almost all child support orders end when a child reaches age 19. Some common exceptions follow:

Child support can continue:

- For a disabled child who is still dependent, regardless of age.
- Because the absent parent still owes unpaid support.

Child support must stop if:

- Your child marries before age 18.
- Your child joins the armed forces.
- Your child no longer lives with you.
- Your child or the other parent dies.
- Someone else adopts your child.
- You and the other parent begin or resume living together.

Don't forget: By law, you must inform CSEA of any of these circumstances. In every case, the court must decide to continue or stop support before CSEA can act.

What if I have questions about my child support payment?

You can get information in any of the following ways:

Phone:

- For automated information about your case, call the SETS toll-free information line in Columbus at 1-800-860-2555
- Call the Child Support Call Center at 513-946-7387 between the hours of 7:00 am and 5:00 pm Monday through Friday

Fax:

You can fax questions or problems 24 hours a day. Child support workers collect and respond to faxed messages during regular business hours. Be sure that your SETS case number is on your fax.

- Enforcement/general – 513-946-2396
- Legal/Admin. Hearings – 513-946-1293

Internet:

Complete the online form at our web site, www.hcifs.org. Child support workers collect and respond to online messages during regular business hours.

For faster service, have the following information available when you speak with an operator or caseworker, leave a voicemail message, or send a fax including your:

- Full name
- Telephone number
- Mailing address
- Social Security number
- SETS case number
- The other parent's full name