

Top Ten Things You Need To Know About Child Support

Hamilton County's child support system is here to serve you and your family. Its success depends on you. Child support is required by law and you are likely to be involved in the system for a long time. **It is your responsibility to learn how the system works and to actively participate in your own case.** The following information will get you started:

1. Know your numbers

Keep these numbers in a safe and handy place:

- SETS case number (This is your child support case number, and it always starts with a 7. SETS is the name of our computer system.)
- Court case number (top right corner of every court document)
- Social Security number for each child
- Telephone number of your county child support worker

2. Keep us posted

Have you moved? Did you lose or change your job? Have you become disabled? Is your child no longer living with you? Did the other parent move? Did you gain custody of your child? We need to know.

Mistakes happen when the system doesn't have your current information. Don't assume the county child support agency knows about changes that happen in court and vice versa. The Post Office does not tell the child support system your new address and it does not forward child support checks to your new address. Tell your child support worker when you move.

Put the new information in writing, sign it, add your Social Security number or SETS case number and send it to Hamilton County Child Support Services (see address on other side.)

3. The clock is ticking

You start owing child support as soon as the order is signed in court. However, it can take as long as eight weeks before your employer begins deducting support from your wages.

To avoid falling behind, make payments by cash or check to Ohio Child Support Payment Central. You should do this until your employer starts withholding child support from your paycheck. (See How to Pay below.)

4. How to pay

For most people, child support is withheld from their wages. Employers are required to do this by law. But, if you are laid off, self-employed or waiting for your employer to start wage withholding, you should pay by cash, check or credit card.

Send checks (including your SETS case number or court order number) to:

Ohio Child Support Payment Central
PO Box 182372
Columbus, OH 43218-2372

To pay with cash or credit card:

Go to the cashier's office in the lobby at 800 Broadway, downtown Cincinnati. For a print-out of your payment record, call your child support worker or go to the Cashier's Office window at 800 Broadway (picture I.D. required).

If problems arise – such as the wrong amount being deducted from your paycheck – call your child support worker.

5. Make child support count

When a judge or magistrate orders a person to pay child support, it must be paid through the child support system. You are certainly free to provide gifts and other extras for your child, but only payments made through the child support system will count toward your support order.

6. What to do if the other parent doesn't pay

There are many actions you and your child support worker can take. Some actions are mild, such as reporting to the Credit Bureau. Some actions are more serious, such as seizing the other parent's savings account. It depends on the problem. Your child support worker can guide you through the process.

7. What to do if I owe and don't pay

You're creating problems and debt for yourself. Your credit rating could be hurt or your driver's license could be suspended - you could even go to jail.

If you have difficulty paying or have lost your job, tell your child support worker. Your worker can guide you through a limited number of options. But remember: you will continue to owe child support. Only an official action of the child support agency or the court could change that.

8. Parenting time (visitation) and child support

These issues seem related, but legally, they are handled separately. The county child support agency cannot help with custody or parenting time (visitation) problems. Take those issues to the court that handled your child support case (either Juvenile Court or the Court of Domestic Relations.)

9. When you will receive your first payment

If the other parent begins paying immediately as required, you should receive a first payment within a few weeks after the court sets the child support order. If you are on public assistance, your child support payments will go to the state.

Remember: you only receive money when the other parent pays, either on his or her own, or through wage deduction.

Payments are processed and posted by the state of Ohio. Once the state receives a payment, it will send payments to your bank account or e-QuickPay[®] card.

10. Contact Information:

- Main child support telephone number: (513) 946-SETS (7387). Call this number to get the name and number of your child support worker.
 - For 24-hour automated information about an existing case: 1-800-860-2555
- Questions or problems? Choose any of the following options:
 - Call your worker.
 - Fax your question to (513) 946-1430 (include your name, telephone number, address, Social
 - Security number, full name of the other parent and your SETS case number)
 - Fill out a form online at www.hcjfs.org. Click on *Child Support Help*.
 - Interstate cases: Customer service – (513) 946-SETS (7387)

Addresses:

Hamilton County Child
Support Services
222 E. Central Parkway
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Hamilton County
Juvenile Court
800 Broadway
Cincinnati, OH 45202
(513) 946-9200

Hamilton County Court of
Domestic Relations
800 Broadway
Cincinnati, OH 45202
(513) 946-9000

For more information:

Visit www.hcjfs.org, click on *Clients* then *Child Support* to locate more Child Support fact sheets.