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Parents to get child support money faster with new debit cards *State hopes service will save taxpayers' money*

Beginning this month, Hamilton County child support recipients have the option of getting their payments via debit cards instead of direct deposit or a check in the mail. The service is expected to reduce costs while providing benefits to parents, such as faster access to child support money, convenience and, no worries about lost or stolen checks.

The service is provided by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS). It has so far been tested in six counties, including Clermont. Hamilton County is among the second group of counties to pilot the program.

The "Ohio e-QuickPay Debit MasterCard" card works like any debit card. Cardholders can make purchases or get cash from banks or ATM machines. Parents' child support payments are held in a separate account, which they access by using the card. As long as they have a balance on the card, parents can use it at any location anywhere in the world that displays the MasterCard logo, such as stores, gas stations, restaurants, and banks. For parents without checking accounts, the card provides an alternative to paying high check-cashing fees.

The new service is optional. Parents can still request to receive payments via check or direct deposit to their bank accounts. Of the million child support payments processed statewide each month, about one-fourth are deposited directly into the bank accounts of custodial parents. The rest are mailed as checks.

If 60 percent of the child support recipients who receive checks converted to the Ohio e-QuickPay Debit MasterCard, the state could save an estimated \$2.5 million annually in reduced postage and other costs associated with paper transactions, according to the ODJFS child support office. The state pays 55 cents to process each paper transaction of child support and 34 cents for each electronic transaction.

To get a card, Hamilton County parents can:

- Pick up an enrollment form at the HCJFS offices: 222 E. Central Parkway, downtown or 237 William Howard Taft, Walnut Hills. Forms are also at the Child Support Cashier's Office, 800 Broadway, downtown.
- Get an enrollment form online at www.hcjfs.org (click on Ohio e-QuickPay application)
- Call 1-888-965-2676.

Enrollment forms and more information are also available at www.e-quickpay.com.