



NEWS RELEASE – September 2005

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

The way parents receive child support is changing. Paper checks are being phased out, to be replaced with electronic payments. The change will mean faster, simpler and safer payments for parents and major cost savings for Ohio.

Beginning October 1, parents with **new** child support orders will be required to receive payments via direct bank deposit or a new state-issued debit card. Parents can choose one of the two options. If they don't choose, they will be automatically enrolled in the new debit card plan, which is called Ohio e-QuickPaySM Debit MasterCard®. This initial phase of the project is expected to affect 2,500-4,000 child support cases each month throughout Ohio.

After October 1, mandatory electronic payments will be phased in for existing child support customers, a few counties at a time. In Hamilton County, the program is expected to become mandatory in early 2006. The exact date is still to be determined.

The new system – required by state law - is expected to save Ohio taxpayers more than \$2 million a year in reduced postage and other costs connected with processing checks, according to Ohio's Child Support office. The state pays 55 cents to process each paper transaction of child support and 34 cents for each electronic transaction. The state receives as many as 11,000 returned checks each month because of incorrect addresses.

The Ohio e-QuickPaySM Debit MasterCard® has been available as an option to child support customers for more than a year. About 34,000 people have voluntarily enrolled in the program statewide. Currently, Ohio's Child Support Payment Central disburses child support via paper checks, direct bank account deposit, or the new debit card. Parents have been allowed to choose a method of payment – and two-thirds have chosen to receive checks.

Ohio e-QuickPaySM Debit MasterCard® is provided by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS). When parents receive a child support payment, the state holds the payments in a separate account that parents access by using the card. When parents use the card, the money is automatically deducted from the balance. Cardholders can make purchases or get cash from banks or ATM machines. 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.

To get a card now, 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) or www.e-quickpay.com
- Call 1-888-965-2676.

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