

# California Child Support Services

## Avoiding Common Problems with Your Child Support

[www.childsupport.ca.gov](http://www.childsupport.ca.gov)

### What happens if you don't pay your court-ordered child support?

All of the actions below can occur if you don't pay your court-ordered child support on-time and in-full:

- 10% interest per year may be charged on your unpaid balance
- Other income may be intercepted such as, but not limited to:
  - State or federal income tax refunds
  - Unemployment benefits
  - Workers' compensation benefits
  - State disability benefits
  - Lottery winnings
- Your driver license and/or professional license may be suspended
- Liens may be placed on property and bank accounts
- Your passport may be denied
- Unpaid balance may be reported to credit bureaus
- Other legal enforcement actions can be taken

### Child support orders

If you already have a court order for child support, simply provide it to your local child support agency to receive enforcement assistance. Orders are not automatically enforced, you must contact your local child support agency and apply for services. As part of a child support order, an Income Withholding Order will be served on the paying parent's employer. California Child Support Services can help locate employment information of the paying parent.

### License suspension

If your child support payment is overdue by more than 30 days, a notification is automatically sent to several California licensing agencies, including the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), and your driver's, professional, and/or recreational (fishing, hunting, etc.) licenses may be suspended.

If you receive a notification from the DMV or any of the California licensing agencies, you should immediately contact the child support agency handling your case. We can help you avoid this action or help get your license released.

### How do I get my license back?

If your license has been suspended for non-payment of child support, contact the child support agency handling your case and be prepared to make a payment on the amount overdue. You may also file a motion with the court to ask for a license release.

We can assist you with releasing your license if you:

- Provide payment information to bring your account current, or
- Make payment arrangements with a child support representative

Once your child support agency submits a license release, it may take up to 10 business days for the license to be released by the issuing agency if the only reason for the suspension is non-payment of child support. The faster you contact us, the faster this gets fixed.

### **Passport denial**

If your unpaid child support balance reaches \$2,500, the U.S. State Department will not issue you a passport or renew your old one until your balance is paid in full. If you are notified that your passport application is denied, please contact your child support agency immediately.

### **Bank levies, tax intercepts, and other financial actions**

Federal and state law allow for other enforcement actions including intercepting tax refunds, seizing bank assets, and placing liens on homes or other property when child support is unpaid.

### **Credit reporting**

Getting behind on your child support payments can affect your credit rating. Every payment and/or failure to pay is reported to the major credit reporting agencies.

### **Property liens**

A lien will be filed in any county a paying parent may have interest in real property when a child support case is opened.

### **Loss of unemployment/disability insurance benefits**

If your only source of income is unemployment or disability, your benefits may be intercepted to pay your child support obligation.

If your child support order was based on employment income and you are now unemployed or disabled, call the child support agency handling your case and ask about a modification of your support order.

### **Help with past-due payments**

There is a program to help parents pay off certain types of past-due child support debt:

- The Compromise of Arrears Program (COAP) is for parents who owe the government money because welfare benefits were paid for a child living with a relative, legal guardian, or while in foster care.

- COAP may allow a parent who owes the government \$501 or more to reduce the total amount owed by making payments. Contact your child support agency for more information.

**What is the Child Support Warning Notice?**

This is a notice sent annually to all parents ordered to pay child support that have a balance of overdue child support (called “arrears”). In the notice, you will find information about how much you owe and some of the options available for paying this debt. Your child support agency can help you with questions about this notice.

Staying on top of your child support case information is easy now with Customer Connect! Log on to the self-service portal at: <https://www.cse.ca.gov/CustomerConnect>

For more information on child support visit: [www.childsupport.ca.gov](http://www.childsupport.ca.gov)

**Contact California Child Support**

866.901.3212 – Toll-free (within the U.S.)

TTY – 866.399.4096

**Customer Connect**

See your case information 24/7!

**Gavin Newsom**

Governor of State of California

**Mark Ghaly**

Secretary of California Health and Human Services Agency

**David Kilgore**

Director of California Child Support Services