

## **Child Support Overview**

California Child Support Services

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

### **Who are we?**

California Child Support Services assists in establishing and enforcing financial and medical support orders for children. Services are offered to either parent or any legal guardian or caretaker of children under 18. We provide neutral assistance and help all parties with the child support and court processes.

### **What is a child support case?**

A child support case may be opened by either parent and creates a child support order, tracks payments, locates financial assets, and enforces child support obligations. Under federal and state law, parents have a legal duty to provide financial and medical support for their children.

### **We can help with:**

- Establishing new orders for financial support of children
- Establishing medical support orders
- Locating parents
- Establishing legal parentage
- Enforcing new and existing child support orders
- Reducing past due child support debt
- Modifying child support orders
- Processing and tracking payments
- Keeping case records
- Granting access to the online self-service account portal

### **Although it's helpful, we can't:**

- Handle custody or visitation matters
- Handle divorces
- Obtain or enforce restraining orders
- Establish spousal support orders

### **Free legal help**

Get free legal help about family law issues such as child support, spousal support, and health insurance from a Family Law Facilitator's office in your county. Visit [www.courts.ca.gov/selfhelp-facilitators.htm](http://www.courts.ca.gov/selfhelp-facilitators.htm).

## **10 Steps of the Child Support Process**

If you already have a child support court order and need help enforcing it, contact your local child support agency.

### **Enroll for services**

Either parent or legal guardian can enroll for services.

### **Locate parents**

Before a child support order can be made, both parents of the child must be located.

### **Summons & Complaint**

The parent being asked to pay will be legally notified that they are named in a child support case.

### **Establish legal parentage**

If named in a case, you have the right to request proof of parentage. We offer free genetic testing.

### **Create a "Stipulated Agreement"**

If both parents can agree on an amount, they can avoid court by filing a "Stipulated Agreement."

### **Court sets the child support order**

A judge or commissioner reviews all the information and decides on a child support amount.

### **Begin making payments**

After a child support order is set, payments are scheduled to begin, usually by payroll deduction.

### **Enforce the child support order**

Parents who refuse to pay or delay paying support will face enforcement actions.

### **Change the child support order**

If either party has a change in circumstances, they may qualify for a modification.

### **Close a case**

There are many reasons why a case can be closed. Visit our website for more information.

Want to learn more?

Visit the Video Resource Library at [www.childsupport.ca.gov](http://www.childsupport.ca.gov). Select Forms and Info.

### **How to enroll for services**

Any parent, guardian or caretaker of a child for whom child support is needed is eligible for child support services. There is no income or other eligibility requirement for services.

Individuals currently receiving CalWORKS are automatically referred to their local child support office for services.

If you receive more than \$550 in child support a year and are not on CalWORKS that year, California charges a \$35 annual service fee.

All services are free for parents paying support.

You can enroll in person at your local office, online at [www.childsupport.ca.gov/enroll](http://www.childsupport.ca.gov/enroll), or download and complete the enrollment packet and mail it in to the closest office.

Local child support offices

Find your local office at [www.childsupport.ca.gov](http://www.childsupport.ca.gov) and search for "find a local office."

Our simplified enrollment form makes it quick and easy to enroll in services. Visit [www.childsupport.ca.gov/enroll](http://www.childsupport.ca.gov/enroll)

### **California Child Support Services**

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

866.901.3212

TTY | 866.399.4096

**Enroll Today!**

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

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