

SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT SERVICES

We are here to help you.

Together with DSS Office of Child Support Services (OCSS), we:

- Monitor compliance with support orders
- Enforce child support orders through:
 - Income withholding
 - Contempt applications
 - Federal/State tax return intercept
 - Real and personal property liens
 - Bank account seizure
 - Passport denial
 - Credit bureau reporting
 - License suspension
- Enforce medical insurance and childcare orders
- Review support orders for modifications
- Establish and enforce interstate support orders
- Perform service of process
- Manage accounts using a federally certified computer system
- Access federal and state databases to find parents and their income, assets, and new employers

put a smile on all their faces



Q: What is the cost for this service?

A: There is no application fee, but the Office of Child Support Services (OCSS) will deduct a \$25 annual fee from payments sent to a custodial parent who has never gotten Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) if at least \$500 child support is collected and disbursed by the State of Connecticut to the custodial party during the federal fiscal year.

Q: How is my child support order enforced by Support Enforcement Services?

A: Support Enforcement Services (SES) and the state child support program use a combination of court actions (such as contempt applications and income withholdings) and administrative actions (such as seizing bank accounts and intercepting tax returns) to collect child support. All court actions happen in Family Support Magistrate (FSM) court. See the *What Happens When You Go To Family Support Magistrate Court* pamphlet (form JDP-FM-209) for more information.

Q: What happens if a parent stops paying his or her child support order?

A: If payments are not received in 30 days, we will send a payment reminder letter to the noncustodial parent or employer, and SES staff will review the case for enforcement. We will try to find a new employer or source of income and get a withholding order as soon as possible. If necessary, we will file a contempt application to get your case back in court.

Q: How does the SES contempt process work?

A: If the noncustodial parent had the means to pay, SES can file an application for contempt with the court. We will send you a written notice when your court date is scheduled. At the court hearing a Family Support Magistrate will determine if the non-paying parent knew about the court order, whether the non-paying parent had the ability to pay the order, and whether the failure to pay was willful (on purpose). The Family Support Magistrate may order a variety of things including lump sum payments to make up the missed payments and, in the most serious cases, jail for the non-paying parent until the child support is paid.

Questions and Problems Concerning Child Support in Connecticut



1-800-228-KIDS (5437)

Child Support Call Center

Our Mission

The mission of Support Enforcement Services is to assist parents in securing financial and medical support for their children by providing quality services and information to the court, our customers, and the community in a courteous, efficient, and effective manner, that is sensitive to the contributions both parents make to their children's development.



www.jud.ct.gov

JDP-FM-196 Rev. 8/17

For Custodial Parents ANSWERS TO COMMON QUESTIONS



support
ENFORCEMENT
services

**SECURING SUPPORT
FOR CHILDREN**

www.jud.ct.gov/childsupport/
State of Connecticut Judicial Branch

The Judicial Branch of the State of Connecticut complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you need a reasonable accommodation in accordance with the ADA, contact a court clerk or an ADA contact person listed at www.jud.ct.gov/ADA.

Q: Are there other ways to enforce my child support order?

A: Yes. The Department of Social Services, OCSS will also use administrative actions to collect support payments. Parents who owe child support may have their state and federal tax refunds intercepted and bank accounts seized. OCSS may also place a lien against the noncustodial parent's property and report his or her child support debt to consumer credit reporting agencies.

Q: What is an income withholding order?

A: An income withholding order is an order for the noncustodial parent's employer to withhold the child support directly from earnings. Income withholding is also used to withhold benefits, including unemployment compensation and certain social security administration payments. The payer of income or benefits withholds and forwards the support payments to the State Disbursement Unit (SDU) for processing. Then the payment will go to you or the State as appropriate.

Q: What is a medical support order?

A: A medical support order is a court order for either parent or both parents to provide health care coverage (1) through their employer, (2) through the state benefit plan, (3) by an order for cash medical support, or (4) by an order for medical and dental expenses not covered by insurance or reimbursed in any other manner under the Connecticut child support guidelines. Medical support may also include an order to repay a percentage of any un-reimbursed health care costs.



Q: How is a medical support order enforced?

A: SES will notify (tell) the noncustodial parent's employer of the need to place your child on the health insurance plan (if a plan is offered) by mailing them a National Medical Support Notice (NMSN).

Q: How does my child care order work?

A: The most common child care (or daycare) order states that the noncustodial parent must pay a percentage of the child care costs. For example, if the cost of daycare is \$100 and the noncustodial

parent is responsible for 40%, the dollar amount of the order is \$40.

Q: How is my child care order enforced?

A: If a noncustodial parent fails to make 4 weeks worth of child care payments, SES can start court action to collect the money. If the court determines that a percentage child care order was not paid, the order can be changed into a set dollar amount. Child care orders that have been changed into a set dollar amount can be added to an income withholding order.



Q: What happens when the noncustodial parent changes jobs or moves?

A: SES will work to ensure that the noncustodial parent continues paying child support. SES has access to a variety of resources to find people and employers, such as the State and National Directory of New Hires, the Departments of Labor, Correction, Motor Vehicles, and Social Security Administration, and several other federal resources. If you know of a change in the noncustodial parent's employment or address, please inform us as soon as possible.

Q: What happens if the noncustodial parent moves out of Connecticut?

A: Often, SES will withhold child support directly from an employer in another state. SES may also work with the local child support agency in that state to enforce the Connecticut order or to collect any balance owed. SES can also work with many different foreign countries to enforce support orders.

Q: What should I do if I move?

A: If you move or change your mailing address please let us know, in writing, as soon as possible. Failure to keep us informed of your current mailing address might interrupt your receipt of payments.

Q: Is there a connection between payment of child support and visitation?

A: No. Paying child support and visitation are separate legal rights and obligations. A custodial parent

cannot deny visitation because the noncustodial parent is not paying child support. A noncustodial parent cannot stop making payments because he or she is being denied visitation.

Q: What happens to my child support order if the noncustodial parent is in prison?

A: The child support order continues to be in effect while the noncustodial parent is in prison unless a court changes the order. Any payments not made while the parent is in prison will be added to the total amount of child support owed.

Q: Does a second family affect a child support order?

A: When a child support order is established, a noncustodial parent's second family will be reflected in the support calculation. However, once the child support order has been established, a second family is not considered a valid reason to modify (change) the support order for the first family.



Q: Will SES help collect any amounts owed after my current support ends?

A: Yes. SES will continue to enforce the order to collect any amounts that are owed, including arrears.

Q: When does the child support order end?

A: In general, child support orders end when the child reaches the age of 18. However, this general rule may vary from state to state. For example, in Connecticut, the duty to support may extend to age 19 if the child is still in high school. Please contact us for specific information about your child's support order.

Q: What should I do if I get a payment directly from the noncustodial parent?

A: All child support payments must be made through the State Disbursement Unit. If you do get a child support payment directly from the noncustodial parent, please mail or fax a signed statement to SES telling us who you got the money from, the amount received, and the date that you got it. This information will be used to update the payment records in your case.

Q: Who do I contact to get more information about my child support payments?

A: The fastest and easiest way to get payment information is to call the Child Support Information Line at 1-888-233-7223. The Information Line provides information about when a payment was made, the amount and when your payment was processed.



Q: Can the amount of my child support order be changed?

A: Yes, the court can change your order. SES has a process called "review and adjustment" that can help you in getting your case before the court. SES will accept either a written or verbal request asking for a review of your order, and we will start the review process. You may also hire an attorney or go to court on your own as a self-represented party.

Q: How does the "review and adjustment" process work?

A: When you ask for a review of your order, SES will mail you some forms to verify your income information. Complete and return the paperwork, and we will start the review. Using the Connecticut Child Support and Arrearage Guidelines and both parties' income, we will calculate a support amount. If your order is more than 15% different from our calculations, we will begin court action to change your order. Also, in limited situations, SES can help change orders if there has been a substantial change in circumstances since your order was set.

Q: How do I apply for services?

A: You can get applications and instructions for applying for services by calling the Child Support Call Center at 1-800-228-KIDS (5437), Monday through Wednesday and Friday 8:30-5:00, and Thursdays 8:30-7:00.