

Support Establishment



 **From Birth to 18**
 **Support is Key**



Why Is Support Establishment Important?

Every child deserves the support of both parents. Regular and consistent payments of support can lead to better outcomes for children. A child support order determines the amount of child support to be paid, to whom the support will be paid and which parent(s) will be responsible for health insurance.

When Can Support Be Established?



Child support agencies can establish a support order for parents once paternity has been determined. Child support and medical support orders can be established at **no cost** to you through your child support agency. Agencies can use an administrative process to schedule parents to appear before an Administrative Hearing Officer for a hearing to determine a support obligation. The hearing officer issues an administrative order, which has the same weight as a court order. Administrative orders are effective 14 days after issuance. Parties have the right to object to the order and request a court hearing. If no objections are filed, the administrative order becomes final and is **legally binding**. It is important to provide information and attend all hearings.

Agencies **may** also file cases with the court to establish support in instances where the administrative process has failed, or in cases where the parties are married, but living separate and apart. Agency attorneys may be staff attorneys or prosecutors, and represent the State of Ohio and the **best interest of the child**.



Child support orders can also be established through court order from a divorce, dissolution, or other custody and support matter, outside of agency involvement.

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How Does Ohio Determine Support?

Ohio uses an Income Shares method, which calculates **each parent's financial share** for the support of the child, based on their income and adjustments. This guideline support calculation is set by law and required to be run on every case.

Some factors which are taken into consideration are the **incomes of each parent**, other biological or adopted children of each parent, costs of medical insurance, daycare expenses and court ordered parenting time. Both parents must provide verification of their incomes for the past six months and their most recent income tax returns including schedules. Each child support order will include cash medical support and division of health care expenses. If you cover the health insurance for the child, be prepared to provide the cost for your coverage.



There are some circumstances which would allow the court to deviate from the standard guidelines such as a child's special needs. The child support agency **cannot deviate** from the guidelines. Just as every family is unique, so are the factors used for determining child support.

Where Should Payments Be Sent?

All child support payments are processed and disbursed at a centralized processing center in Columbus. The following addresses should be used when submitting payments by check or money order:

Obligor Parent Payments

Ohio Child Support Payment Central
P.O. Box 182372
Columbus, OH 43218-2372

Debit card payments for Employers and Obligor Parents:

<https://oh.smartchildsupport.com/Employer/>

Credit card payments for Obligor Parents:

<https://oh.smartchildsupport.com/Main>

Contact your child support agency for more information if you have questions.