

## Why Am I Being Asked to Pay Child Support and Medical Support?

Each parent has the legal duty to pay support while his or her child is in foster care. This includes parents who are living together or separate. It doesn't include stepparents.

Parents must pay support whether they place their child in foster care or the court orders placement. This includes children who need help or who have gotten in trouble with the law.

The support each parent pays applies to the total cost of foster care. The state of Iowa pays the cost up front.

The types of care for which parents will be asked to pay include:

- Family foster care
- Shelter care
- Qualified residential treatment care
- Supervised independent living
- Kinship foster care
- Subsidized guardianship

## How is Support Set?

If a parent already has an order to pay support for the child, Child Support Services does not get a new order. Instead, you will owe that support to the state from the first day through the last day the child is in foster care.

If a parent does not already have a child support order, the process to get one starts.

## How Does Child Support Services Get a New Support Order?

Child Support Services serves the parent with a legal notice asking for income information. The notice explains how Child Support Services figures child support and medical support and how you can pay support.

Child Support Services uses the Iowa Supreme Court guidelines to set the amount of support. We use the information you and the other parent give us to find out the amount of support you should pay.

You get a notice showing the recommended amount of child support based upon your income information and availability of health care coverage. The proposed support order contains the child support and medical support amount unless someone objects. The court must approve the proposed order. Once that happens, the order is final. You receive a copy of the final order.

**Getting a support order is a serious legal issue. You may want to ask an attorney for advice about the process.**

## What Do I Need to Do to Help?

To serve you better, we need your help. Please:

- Keep us updated on where you work.
- Attend scheduled appointments.
- Complete and provide requested documents.
- Appear at court hearings as requested.

## What if I Get Child Support or Medical Support While My Child is in Foster Care?

If you receive a support payment, please contact any child support office. You can find office phone numbers and addresses on our website: [www.childsupport.ia.gov](http://www.childsupport.ia.gov) or by calling the child support automated information line at 1-888-229-9223 (toll free nationwide). The payment may be owed to the state of Iowa.

## How Can I Pay My Support?

Child Support Services collects the amount of support ordered by the court.

The most common method of collecting support is through income withholding. Non-income withholding payments can be made:

- **By automatic withdrawal:** Make payments automatically from a checking or savings account or by phone. Forms to sign up to make these types of electronic payments are available on our website: [www.childsupport.ia.gov](http://www.childsupport.ia.gov).
- **By mail:** Send a check or money order, including your case number to:  
Collection Service Center  
PO Box 9125  
Des Moines, IA 50306-9125
- **Online:** [www.childsupport.ia.gov](http://www.childsupport.ia.gov) allows you to:
  - Pay with a credit or debit card
  - Pay with a checking or savings account
  - Find local retail locations that accept MoneyGram payments using Receive Code 14659.

## Once an Order is Entered, How is it Enforced?

Child Support Services may:

- Withhold payments from wages, unemployment benefits or other income.
- Place a lien on your real estate.
- Collect from state and federal tax refunds or other government payments.
- File contempt of court proceedings.
- Refer your name and past due balance to credit agencies.
- Ask licensing agencies to sanction your:
  - Business or professional licenses.
  - Recreational or driver's licenses.
- Take steps to sanction your passport.
- Collect from your bank account or other financial institution.

## What if My Child Receives Social Security Payments or Other Government Money?

If your child receives benefits or you receive a benefit check for your child, notify the social worker or juvenile court officer.

- The state becomes the payee while your child is in foster care.
- Even if your child's benefit amount is redirected to the state, you must still pay support.
- When your child leaves foster care, the benefits will start going back to you as payee.

- If you are disabled and receive social security disability benefits, please call the phone number listed in your legal notice or in this flyer.
- Call us if your child gets social security disability benefits because of your disability. You may get dollar-for-dollar credit to replace your child support.

## How Do I Contact You?

You can get more information, office phone numbers and addresses, and payment options on our website:

[www.childsupport.ia.gov](http://www.childsupport.ia.gov) or by calling the child support automated information line at 1-888-229-9223 (toll free nationwide). Offices are open 8:00AM to 4:30 PM Monday through Friday, except state holidays.

## Policy Regarding Discrimination, Harassment, Affirmative Action, and Equal Employment Opportunity

The Iowa Department of Health and Human Service (HHS) policy on non-discrimination, harassment, affirmative action, and equal employment can be viewed on the HHS website at the bottom of the page at: <https://hhs.iowa.gov>.

## What You Need to Know About Paying Child Support While Your Child Is in Foster Care

All parents have a duty to support their children. This flyer explains what parents must do when their child is in foster care.

