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Who can apply for child support services?

A person can receive child support services if the following apply:

- (S)he is the parent of a minor child or is the person who has custody of a minor child.
- The minor child lives in the person's home.
- The child is financially dependent on that person.
- One or both of the child's parents do not live with the child.

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What if I am receiving Medicaid, Family Independence Program (FIP), food assistance (FAP), or Child Development & Care (CDC) benefits?

To receive any of the above public assistance benefits through the Department of Human Services, recipients **must** cooperate with the Office of Child Support, Prosecuting Attorneys and/or Friends of the Court in their efforts to identify a child's non-custodial legal parent(s), obtain a support order and enforce and collect child support. For this reason, anyone who receives the above public assistance benefits is automatically referred for child support services. They do not have to make a separate application.

The DHS Office of Child Support is required to provide all necessary child support services for the benefit of child(ren) receiving public assistance. Recipients of public assistance cannot select what enforcement actions will take place on their child support case(s).

FIP recipients must also assign to the state, the right to receive collected child support. All child support that comes due while the family receives FIP benefits is applied toward reimbursing the state and federal government for FIP benefits received by the family. Medicaid recipients may be required to assign certain medical support obligations to the state.

The FIP family may receive up to \$50 a month of child support as a client participation payment (CPP) during the months that child support is paid on time. When the family goes off FIP, any current support payments and past due support that accrued before the family received FIP are sent to the custodial party.

If a public assistance recipient does not have a court order for child support or if he or she has questions, they can contact their Child Support Specialist or the Office of Child support **toll-free at 1-866-540-0008**.

Persons who do not or have not in the past received public assistance and do not already have a court order for support, may apply for child support services by completing and submitting the [Child Support Services Application/Referral form \(DHS-1201\)](#).

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How do I apply for child support services if I do not receive public assistance?

You apply for child support services by completing and submitting the IV-D Child Support Services Application/Referral form (DHS-1201). If you have questions about the application process, contact the Office of Child Support toll-free at: **1-866-540-0008**.

If you already have a court order for child support and need additional child support services, you may contact the Friend of the Court that issued your court order.

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How long before child support payments begin?

Obtaining a child support order involves a variety of factors, making it difficult to predict the time required to obtain a child support order on individual cases. For example, one case may require the full range of services; locating the non-custodial parent, establishing paternity and a support order, and enforcing the order. Another case may have a divorce with an established order, a social security number and an employer for the non-custodial parent, allowing enforcement of payment through an income withholding order. For a new child support case, when all relevant information is provided, an order will typically be established within 6 to 12 months.

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What information is needed to locate a non-custodial parent?

The most important information an applicant can provide, aside from the non-custodial parent's current address is his or her social security number and the name and address of the non-custodial parent's current employer. If the current employer is not known, the name and address of the last known employer should be provided. The following is a list of helpful information to gather regarding the non-custodial parent:

- Name/s and nicknames
- Social Security number
- Date and place of birth
- Last known home address
- Last known employer
- Photograph
- Relative's name and address
- Military record
- Assets (home, business, cars, boats, etc...)
- Favorite "hangouts" hobbies, memberships, etc...

There are a variety of free resources available to those interested in locating a parent on their own. See Parent Locator Resources

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What documents are helpful when applying for child support services?

If available, child support applicants should have copies of the following:

- Copy of any divorce decree(s), or court orders for child support from Michigan and/or another state(s);
- Copy of any acknowledgment(s) of paternity, if one has been completed;
- The birth certificate(s) of the child(ren) involved; and
- All documents reflecting both parents' incomes and assets (paycheck stubs, tax returns, bank statement, etc...)

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Can grandparents or relatives apply for child support services for child(ren)?

A grandparent or relative may apply for child support services if they have responsibility for the care of a minor child. To apply for child support services or to ask for general child support information, call the following toll-free **1-866-540-0008**.

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What if a person no longer wants Child Support services?

If the custodial party is not receiving public assistance benefits and wishes to discontinue child support enforcement services, the child support case can be closed by written request to the Friend of the Court that issued the order. This can only be done if there is no past due support (arrear) owed by the non-custodial parent that is owed to the state as reimbursement for public assistance provided to the custodial party.

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How can a child support amount be changed?

Either of the parents may ask the court to change the support amount when there is a significant change in circumstances; for example, you marry the other parent, the child no longer lives with you, you become disabled, or you have a significant increase or decrease in income. The support amount will remain the same until the court orders a different amount.

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What do I do if I have been ordered to pay child support when I am in school and have no money or I lose my job and earn less money?

A non-custodial parent is responsible for supporting his or her child even if that parent is still a minor. The court will look at a young parent's income while (s)he is still in school and decide how much support must be paid. The law requires parents to inform the Friend of the Court in writing when their income (earned or unearned) has changed. Parents remain responsible for paying the existing support amount until the court changes the amount.

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Do unmarried parents need to establish paternity if the father is providing support?

Yes, parents need to establish paternity to determine the legal parental relationship between a man and a child based on an [Affidavit of Parentage form](#) or a court order. Even though the child's father may provide support, there is no legal relationship without establishing paternity.

Children born to unmarried parents without paternity established have only half of their legal rights, and often children supported by only one parent do not have enough money to meet their basic needs. Every child is entitled to financial support and other resources from both parents. If paternity is established, a child has a legal father and will have the possible right of inheritance, and other benefits like Social Security, medical insurance, life insurance and veteran's benefits from **both** parents.

The child's doctors will also need to know whether the child has inherited any genetic health risks. Doctors can better treat a child when they know the child's full medical history, from **both** sides of the family.

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How does paternity establishment affect custody and visitation?

Each parent has the duty to financially and emotionally support his or her child(ren). Each legal parent also has rights to custody or visitation. If the parents cannot agree, custody, child support and visitation will be decided by a court. Both parents must obey the court order. In other words, one parent cannot refuse to pay child support because the other parent is refusing visitation and vice versa.

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How is paternity established?

Paternity may be voluntarily established by the parents signing an [Affidavit of Parentage form](#) (AOP). If the mother or the alleged father is not sure about the paternity of the child, neither person should sign an AOP. In these situations, paternity should be established, through a court order possibly including DNA genetic testing.

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What happens if the father signs the Affidavit of Parentage (AOP) form?

When both parents sign the AOP and the form is notarized, the alleged father becomes the legal father. This also enables the court to order the father to pay child support if he lives apart from the child, and enables the court to grant the father visitation or custody of the child. In order to establish paternity or obtain a child support order, a parent may apply for child support services through the DHS Office of Child Support or through a private attorney.

If you do not yet have a court order for child support, but receive, or have received [public assistance](#), contact your Child Support Specialist. If you do not have contact

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information for your Child Support Specialist, or if you have questions about the application process, contact the Office of Child Support toll-free at **1-866-540-0008**.

If you already have a court order for child support and need additional child support services, you may contact the Friend of the Court that issued your order.

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Where can parents get an Affidavit of Parentage form?

All Michigan birthing hospitals will assist **unmarried parents** in completing an Affidavit of Parentage form (AOP) at the time of the child's birth. Parents must present photo identification at the time they sign the AOP. Parents can also obtain an AOP from the Michigan Department of Community Health Web-site. To become a legal document, the AOP must be witnessed, at the time of signing, by a notary public. After completion, the parents should file the AOP with the Department of Community Health, Central Paternity Registry, Vital Records & Health Data Development Section.

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What if the mother is married to someone other than the biological father?

When the mother is married, even if the biological father signs the Affidavit of Parentage form, he will not be named on the birth certificate or be the legal father of the child unless a court declares **the mother's husband is not the father of the child**. Court statements indicating there are no children of the marriage or remaining silent regarding a child are not sufficient to avoid naming the husband of the mother, as the father for the child on the birth certificate.

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What if the mother is not sure who the father is?

If the mother applies for child support services or is referred to the DHS Office of Child Support to establish paternity, she will be asked questions about men who may have fathered her child. It is very important for the mother to provide as much information as she can to help determine the father's identity. Paternity may be established even if the father or mother is still in school or if the father lives in another state.

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What if the pregnancy was unplanned?

Michigan law says that both parents are responsible for supporting their children, even if the pregnancy was not planned. This means that once the court determines that a man is the legal father, that man must help support the child.

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What if the father does not believe it is his child?

The man may ask for a genetic paternity testing. A court will examine the results of the genetic paternity test and determine whether the alleged father is the legal father of the child. Contact the Prosecuting Attorney in your county if you have questions about genetic testing.

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Who pays for the paternity test?

If the genetic paternity testing indicates that the man is not excluded (***found to be the legal father***), the court will generally order the man to repay the State of Michigan for the genetic paternity testing, the testing costs are approximately \$27 per person (mother, alleged father and child(ren)). If genetic paternity testing indicates that the man is excluded (***found not to be the legal father***), the man will **not** have to repay the State of Michigan for the testing cost.

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What if the father or mother changes his or her mind and no longer wants to acknowledge paternity after signing an Affidavit of Parentage form?

Per Michigan Compiled Law (MCL 722.1011):

- (1) The mother or the man who signed the Affidavit of Parentage form, the child who is the subject of the Affidavit of Parentage form, or a prosecuting attorney may file a claim for revocation.
- (2) A claim of revocation must be supported by an affidavit, signed by the claimant setting forth facts that constitute one of the following:
 - Mistake of fact.
 - Newly discovered evidence that by due diligence could not have been found before the acknowledgment was signed.
 - Fraud
 - Misrepresentation or misconduct.
 - Duress in signing the acknowledgement.
- (3) If the court finds that the affidavit is sufficient, the court may order blood or genetic tests at the expense of the claimant, or may take other action the court considers appropriate. The party filing the claim has the burden of proving, by clear and convincing evidence, that the man is not the father and that, considering the equities of the case, revocation of the acknowledgment is proper.

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Can a parent take custody of the child instead of making child support payments?

Both parents must provide for their child(ren), no matter who has custody. Child Support is normally paid to the custodial party. Legal custody can be changed, but only if the parents go to court to modify the previous child support order and establish a new child support amount for the non-custodial parent.

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Does the DHS Office of Child Support handle custody and parenting time disputes?

No. Parents must contact their Friend of the Court to establish an order for custody and parenting time. The Friend of the Court will investigate and make a recommendation regarding custody and support if requested to do so by the court.

- See the Michigan Custody Guideline
- See the Michigan Parenting Time Guideline
- There is also a parenting time web-site available.
- There are also custody and parenting time forms available for use by parties in a custody and parenting time case.

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What is MiCase?

MiCase is a Web site in which parents have 24/7 access to their support case information. With a MiCase ID and password, parents can see current payment and enforcement information without having to wait for a case worker.

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What is the Michigan State Disbursement Unit (MiSDU)?

The MiSDU receives and disburses all support payments in Michigan. It is responsible for sending child support collections to families by either electronic direct deposit into their checking or savings account or use of the debit card. This provides recipients with a safe, convenient and secure method for receiving their payments, and the state with a more efficient way to get child support funds to families.

New child support customers receive their initial child support check with a request to make a choice between:

- Direct deposit into their checking or savings account, or
- A debit card.

If customers do not already have direct deposit or if they do not return the form to request direct deposit, they will automatically receive a debit card.

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How do I make a child support payment?

Payments are made to the MiSDU either by check or through the internet.

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Links to additional information:

- [Child Support Web site](#)
- [Child Support Information for Parents](#)
- [MiCase](#)
- [Michigan State Disbursement Unit \(MiSDU\)](#)
- [Assistance with the application for child support services](#)
- [Locating parents](#)
- [Establishing paternity](#)
- [Friend of the Court Parenting Time Web site](#)
- [Friend of the Court Custody Guideline Brochure](#)

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