

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF WELFARE AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES
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CHILD SUPPORT GUIDELINES COMMITTEE
Chairperson Kimberly Surratt

Public Comment Submitted for Consideration

Subject: Gradual Child Support Changes for Percentage of Shared Parenting

Please consider using tables similar to IRS tax tables for determining child support for any percentage of custody and income level, regardless of any designation of primary custody or shared custody arrangement, and regardless of high earner, low earner designation.

The idea is to incorporate all considerations into the tables. Both parents would use the same table to determine each parents' percentage of income obligation to support based on percentage of custody, and the high obligation pays the low obligation the difference. Considerations for the fact that shared parenting is more expensive than single custody can be built into the table, but the table should be gradual with no significant steps in it.

Currently there is a dramatic change in child support between 39% custody and 40% custody, in some cases thousands of dollars difference. I know of a recent case where the 1% difference amounted to a \$540 change in support. This type of dramatic change should be avoided to reduce the tendency for parents to shoot for a target. Nearly all divorces end up with some visitation or shared parenting. The table should blur the distinction between the two.

Though the table could start with something like 18% of income for 0% to 20% of custody, and end with 0% of income for 80% to 100% custody, the transition between should be gradual and incorporate the added cost of sharing parenting.

After each parent has found the percentage of their income they should pay based on the percentage of custody, the highest obligation pays the lower obligation the difference.

Be sure to carefully explain that the calculation is only for the monetary portion of the obligation for support, and balances monetary support against physical custody support, and restrict judges from making further adjustment based on time with each parent.

If the child is under 5 years of age, clearly and strongly prohibit the use of imputation, when if the parent imputed were to work for the imputed amount, it would interfere with or prevent continuing the child care practice that was well established and practiced at the time a petition for divorce was first filed.

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