

# Child Support



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## **CHILD SUPPORT**

Nationwide laws provide for strong child support enforcement (CSE) measures to ensure parental responsibility is met. The El Paso County Child Support Services Office is the local office providing parents assistance with the following CSE services: (1) locating absent parents; (2) establishing paternity; (3) establishing child support obligations; and (4) enforcing child support orders. The El Paso County Child Support Services Office can be contacted at (719) 457-6331 and Colorado families can apply for services online at: <https://childsupport.state.co.us/siteuser/do/general/application/eAppforservices>. More information is available at <https://childsupport.state.co.us> and <http://elpasocountycss.com/>.

In all states, CSE services are available automatically for families receiving assistance under Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) programs. Child support services are also available to families not receiving TANF; however, some states may charge for the cost of services rendered. Colorado's TANF program is called Colorado Works. For information on Colorado Works, see <http://www.colorado.gov/coloradoworks>.

### **Locating Absent Parents**

CSE officials use local information and resources of the State and Federal Parent Locator Service to locate parents for child support enforcement or to find a parent in parental kidnapping or custody disputes.

### **Establishing Paternity and Support Obligations**

Establishing paternity (legally identifying a child's father) is a necessary first step for obtaining an order for child support when children are born out of wedlock. Establishing paternity also provides access to Social Security, pension, and retirement benefits, health insurance, and interaction with members of both parents' families. Many fathers voluntarily acknowledge paternity. In a situation where a father does not, the father, the mother, and the child will likely be required to submit to genetic testing.

States have guidelines to establish how much a parent should pay for child support. The Colorado Judicial Branch website includes a child support calculator; the calculator can also be found at: [https://www.familylawsoftware.com/download\\_client\\_edition\\_co/](https://www.familylawsoftware.com/download_client_edition_co/). Support agency staff can take child support cases to court or to an administrative hearing process to establish a child support order.

### **Enforcing Child Support Orders**

Parents paying child support may be required to have the payment deducted directly from their paycheck and sent to the child support office or court by their employer. If the child support payment is less than a certain percentage of the order and/or is overdue, it can be collected from federal and state income tax and liens on property (or even having the property sold). Unpaid child support can be reported to credit bureaus, which negatively impacts a person's credit rating. Additionally, a person's driver's license may be suspended and he or she may lose any recreational licenses.

*Current as of June 2021*

The local District Attorney handles cases involving non-payment of child support. There are both criminal and civil penalties available for those who chronically fail to pay support. The CSE unit is capable of enforcing both local and out-of-state support orders in the local courts. They can also coordinate child support enforcement actions with other states. The El Paso County District Attorney can be contacted at (719) 520-6000.