

Child Support Review Process



By Greg Abbott
Attorney General of Texas
children to suffer because mom and dad can't get along.

The Attorney General's Office, in its efforts to collect and distribute child support to families, strives to foster healthy relationships by treating the parent who pays and the parent who receives support as equal partners in doing what is best for their children. Services provided by the Attorney General's Division for Families and Children include:

- Locating absent parents;
- Establishing paternity;
- Establishing and enforcing child support orders;
- Establishing and enforcing medical support orders;
- Reviewing and adjusting child support payments; and
- Collecting and distributing child support payments.

In order to establish paternity and child support orders, parents typically must make at least one trip to the courthouse, where the facts of their case are presented to a judge, who must then rule on the matter. Going to court can

Most divorced or never-married parents recognize the importance of maintaining cordial relationships for the good of their children. They

don't want their

be a stressful experience for parents, who many times do not know what to expect from the process. The formality of legal proceedings can result in increased tension between parents who already may be at odds about the outcome of their case.

I want to provide the best possible atmosphere for mothers and fathers to resolve legal issues pertaining to their child support case. That is why my office encourages parents to use the Child Support Review Process (CSRP) as an alternative to going to court. The CSRP, for mothers and fathers who qualify, is a way to unite rather than polarize parents who, though they do not live together, must find common ground for taking care of their children.

CSRP is for divorced, separated, or never-married parents who are willing to negotiate orders to:

- establish paternity;
- set current child and medical support;
- establish visitation rights;
- pay retroactive child support;
- obtain judgments for past due child support;
- modify child support amounts; or
- enforce the payment of child support.

With CSRP, both parents meet with a child support officer in the privacy of an office to establish an order. If traveling to the office creates a hardship for either parent, the meeting can be conducted by conference call.

Once an agreement is reached, the order resulting from the CSRP is filed with the court and reviewed by a judge. After the judge has signed it, a CSRP order is legally binding and will be enforced just as any order obtained through a court proceeding.

Parents should consider CSRP because it:

- Saves time. Cases that go to court often require more than one setting and long waits at the courthouse. With CSRP, parents schedule an appointment with the child support review officer, and every effort is made to resolve the legal issues at that time.
- Reduces stress. Because CSRP is less formal than a courtroom setting, parents feel more free to discuss issues related to the outcome of their individual case.
- Provides privacy. Court proceedings are public hearings where sensitive issues may be presented before all present in the courtroom. During the CSRP process, negotiations are conducted in the privacy of a child support office.

If you have a case with the Attorney General's Office and need more information about CSRP, contact your local child support office. To apply for child support services, call (800) 252-8014, or visit our Web site at www.oag.state.tx.us and select "Child Support."

POINTS TO REMEMBER

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ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
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Information on this and other topics is available on the Attorney General's Web site at www.oag.state.tx.us.