



CHILD SUPPORT REVIEW PROCESS (CSRP)

by Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott

A CHILD NEEDS AND DESERVES BOTH parents to play an active role in his or her life. That's why it is important for moms and dads to work together to parent their children.

Most parents recognize the importance of maintaining cordial relationships for the good of their children. They don't want their children to suffer because mom and dad can't get along.

Under Texas law, the Office of the Attorney General is responsible for collecting and distributing child support. In an effort to foster healthy relationships, the parent who pays and the parent who receives support are treated as equal partners who are committed to doing what is best for their children.

Services provided by the Attorney General's Child Support Division include:

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

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

Child Support Review Process (CSRP) is a non-adversarial way parents can resolve legal issues about their child support without going to court, thereby supporting improved family relationships. That is why parents are encouraged to use CSRP as an alternative to the courthouse. For mothers and fathers who qualify, CSRP is a way to unite rather than polarize parents who must find common ground and resolve their child support obligations. Last year, more than 60,000 legal actions were resolved through CSRP.

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
- enforce the payment of child support.

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

Once an agreement is reached, a CSRP order 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 appearance 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 right then and there.

- **Reduces stress.** Because CSRP is less formal than a courtroom setting, parents are more comfortable and more willing 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 who are 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 Office of the Attorney General and need more information about CSRP, contact your local child support office. To apply for child support services, call (800) 252-8014, or visit the Attorney General's website at www.texasattorneygeneral.gov and click on "Child Support."