

Connect Families to Child Support - Increase Outcomes for Families

Once families enroll in child support services, child support can bring more income into custodial family households reducing financial stress and helping families overall. When this happens it:

Reduces the Risk of Child Maltreatment

Research shows that receiving child support reduces the risk of child abuse and neglect (Cancian et al., 2013). Specifically, the mothers who received child support were 10% less likely to have a “screened-in maltreatment report” than mothers who did not receive child support.

Improves Outcomes for Children Across a Variety of Social Indicators

Children in single-parent households receiving child support payments are more likely to complete school, have fewer behavioral problems, amongst other benefits (Yeung, W. J., Duncan, G. J., & Hill, M. S. (2000)).

How Much Child Support Do Clients Receive?

- Clients not on cash assistance receive 100% of the ongoing, court-ordered amount OCSS collects on behalf of the family.
- Clients in receipt of cash assistance receive \$100 (one child) or \$200 (2+ children) of the noncustodial parent’s payments in addition to their cash assistance benefit amount.



If (a custodial parent is sanctioned, encourage him/her to comply so that the sanction can be lifted as soon as possible.

Ensure families receive their full Cash Assistance benefits

In accordance with federal law, custodial parents who do not cooperate with child support may be sanctioned and as a result lose 25% of their total cash benefit and lose Medicaid for themselves, but not for their children.

Clients are sanctioned for the below reasons.

- The custodial parent did not keep his/her appointment with OCSS.
- The custodial parent kept his/her appointment but did not cooperate: They intentionally did not provide sufficient information to locate the noncustodial parent such as Name and/or Address, DOB, SSN #.
- The custodial parent kept their appointment but did not cooperate with providing the necessary documentation such as a divorce decree or signing an Affidavit of Alleged Paternity or documents for interstate case processing.
- The custodial parent did not show up to their court date to establish paternity and support.

Instructions on How to Apply for Child Support

If a custodial family is not already connected to the child support program, explain the financial benefits of the program and encourage them to consider enrolling at nyc.gov/hra/ocss. Parents can also use the [NYC Child Support – Access HRA Mobile App](#) to enroll.

- Parents with safety concerns should review the [safeguards](#) available on the OCSS website.
- Parents can decide if they want to create an [agreement](#) with OCSS’s help, which can shorten their time in court and be more supportive.



Child Support App

Help Noncustodial Parents with Child Support Debt

Reduce debt related stress

Research indicates that a lack of money creates stress, which limits mental bandwidth, impairs aspects of reasoning and judgement, and reduces capacity for good decision-making and problem-solving. Indebtedness is also associated with greater parental depression and poor health, worsened family relationships, less effective parenting, and deteriorating child behavior. The US Office on Child Abuse & Neglect recommends families reduce debt to stabilize finances and prevent child maltreatment.

Nationwide, 70% of Child Support arrears are owed by parents reporting an annual income of \$10,000 or less. Studies also show that high debt can:

- cause parents to disengage from their children and disappear
- cause noncustodial parents to avoid contact with civic agencies
- discourage labor force participation, reduce earnings, and increase participation in the underground economy
- increase recidivism
- inflate custodial parent expectations and increase friction

Studies and OCSS's experience have shown that participants pay more child support and make more frequent payments when unmanageable arrears are reduced.



If a noncustodial parent has a high order or child support debt that is creating stress for them or their family, OCSS may be able to help.

Tell them to either visit the OCSS Customer Service Walk-in Center to learn about the debt reduction programs, child support order modification program (called MOTS), arrears management strategies, and employment programs or set up a virtual telephone interview by emailing dcse.cseweb@dfa.state.ny.us.

More information can also be found online at nyc.gov/hra/ocss.

Encourage parents to sign-up for text messages so they can receive important reminders and information. Text CHILD to 844-429-7512.

Child Support Snapshot – Empowering Partners to Help Parents with Child Support

You can further help parents by using the Child Support Snapshot application, with their consent, to:

- Identify if someone in the household has an order and/or child support debt.
- Learn about the next steps the parent can take to optimize their case
- Learn about debt reduction and employment programs and how to reduce / increase the child support order amount.
- Access helpful brochures, forms, and videos on various child support topics.



Video about Child Support Snapshot

Gain access to the Child Support Snapshot application by sending an email to dcse.cseweb@dfa.state.ny.us or by calling (929) 221-4596.

“The {New York City} child support program has undergone a significant evolution in its goals and philosophy ... [toward] a more family-centered service delivery model which gives consideration to the needs of noncustodial parents and their relationships with their children.” [NYC Independent Budget Office \(IBO, 7/11/2014\)](#)