



Finding Common Ground: The Value of Child Support Agreements

Parents want to support their children. They just need a safe, fair, neutral process that will step them through the requirements. That way they go into their Family Court hearing prepared—with as few surprises as possible.

This is the thinking behind the child support agreement options available through OCSS. These agreements cover two crucial child support processes:

- The establishment of a new child support order, which sets the amount of child support and medical support
- The modification of an existing child support order through our [Modifying Orders Through Stipulation \(MOTS\)](#) program

Outside of New York, many child support programs take this kind of approach every day because they know how much it benefits parents and children.

How Child Support Agreements Work

The process begins with meeting between an OCSS staff member and the parents. Based on the paperwork and documentation the parents have prepared up to that point, the OCSS worker calculates an order amount that follows New York State guidelines—the same ones a Support Magistrate would use.

If the parents agree, the proposed amount is reviewed by members of the Department of Social Services' Office of Legal Affairs before being filed with the court.

Completing the process should require only a single appearance in court. Rather than rehashing the details of their case to the Support Magistrate, the hearing should focus on confirming that the parents entered into the agreement voluntarily and know their rights.

Contact Us to Get the Process Started

To start the process, come to our Customer Service Walk-in Center at 151 West Broadway in Manhattan. You can also email us at dcse.cseweb@dfa.state.ny.us with subject "Agreement."

Contact OCSS

Email us at dcse.cseweb@dfa.state.ny.us

Save the Date: Policy Conference on Child Support and Structural Racism

On October 26, 2023, OCSS will be offering its next policy conference: "Confronting Structural Racism in the Child Support Program: Listening, Understanding, and Taking Action." Developed with input from experts who have studied the racialized effects of systems and programs such as child support, child welfare, economics, and the law, the conference is intended to be a starting point for further discussions and real change.

We have a great assortment of speakers and panelists lined up. Look for more details next month!

Reminder: "Pay It Off" Coming in June

From June 1–30, 2023, OCSS will once again offer its popular debt-reduction program Pay It Off, which has already helped more than 3,800 noncustodial parents and led to a total of \$17 million in debt reduction.

Pay It Off doubles the value of payments over \$500 by reducing DSS debt permanently owed to the New York City Department of Social Services (NYC DSS) for a period when the child on the case received public assistance.

The key to the program is the dollar-for-dollar match of payments over \$500 during the program period. For example, with Pay It Off, a noncustodial parent who owes \$3,000 to NYC DSS and makes a qualified payment of \$800 will receive a matching reduction of \$800. As a result, their \$3,000 debt would be lowered to \$1,400.

Get All the Details

Visit the Pay It Off website (nyc.gov/payitoff) for copies of the Pay It Off flyer and detailed answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs)—all in 12 languages.

Or Watch the [Pay It Off video](#) on YouTube. You can also email questions to dcse.cseweb@dfa.state.ny.us.



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