In Minnesota many grandparents are raising their grandchildren. This brochure answers some frequently asked questions grandparents have about child support.

**Are grandparents legally responsible for supporting their grandchildren?**
Grandparents are not legally responsible to support their grandchildren unless a court orders you to pay support. Parents, even if they are minors, are expected to support their children emotionally and financially. Sometimes a court orders parents to support their children -- pay child support. If you are raising your grandchild, you may be able to receive child support.

**Who can receive child support?**
You can receive child support if all of the following apply:

- You have court ordered custody of your minor grandchild
- Your minor grandchild lives in your household
- Your minor grandchild is financially dependent on you
- One or both of your grandchild's parents are absent from your home and
- The court has ordered someone to pay child support.

**How can I apply for child support services?**
You can apply for child support services through your county child support agency or you can get an application online. Return the completed application to your county child support agency with a nonrefundable $25 application fee.

If your grandchild(ren) have never received IV-A (cash) assistance under your household and you have received at least $500 in child support collections, you will be assessed a $25 federal annual fee from your child support each federal fiscal year. When you apply for services, you also agree to pay a one percent cost recovery fee on your payments or on your obligation.

If you or your dependent minor grandchildren receive benefits from the Diversionary Work Program (DWP), Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), Minnesota Health Care Programs or Child Care Assistance, your financial worker will give the child support agency information about you. The agency will open a case for you and will expect...
you to provide information and cooperate in establishing paternity, establishing an order for support and collecting support. You do not have to complete an application, pay an application fee or pay other fees. If you receive only Medical Assistance or MinnesotaCare, you may choose to have full child support services or only medical support services.

**What child support services are available?**

Services provided by Minnesota’s child support program include:

- Locating parents
- Establishing parentage
- Establishing court orders for basic, medical and child care support
- Reviewing and asking the court to modify basic, medical and child care support orders when appropriate
- Adjusting support orders based on the cost-of-living index (COLA)
- Enforcing support orders
- Working with other states to enforce support orders
- Processing payments received by the child support payment center for child support and spousal maintenance.

**What enforcement tools are used to collect child support?**

- Contempt of court
- Credit bureau reporting
- Criminal non-support
- Federal criminal prosecution
- Financial institution data match
- Driver’s license and occupational license suspension
- New hire reporting
- Passport denial
- State lottery winnings
- Student grant denial
- State tax refund intercept
- Federal tax refund intercept

**Why is establishing paternity important?**

Parentage must be established before the court can order a father to pay child support. A child must have a legal father before a father’s name can be placed on the child’s birth record. Children with legal fathers are entitled to benefits, including Social Security benefits, veteran’s benefits and inheritance rights, through their fathers. Children may also benefit by knowing their families’ biological, cultural and medical histories.

**What happens when one parent does not live in Minnesota?**

Some of the most difficult cases to enforce are those in which the parents live in different states. All states must provide child support services and with the Uniform Interstate Family Support Act (UIFSA), interstate enforcement of child support obligations is improving. UIFSA includes laws that require states to work together to establish and enforce child support orders. State child support agencies must cooperate and help each other in handling requests for assistance.

**Can a child support order be changed?**

The court may change a child support order if there is a substantial change in circumstances, which makes the terms of an existing order unreasonable and unfair. One or more of the following must be shown:

- There is a substantial increase or decrease in either parent’s gross income
- There is a substantial increase or decrease in the needs of a party or the child
- One of the parties or the child receives public assistance
There is a change in the cost of living for either parent.

There are extraordinary medical expenses for the child.

There is additional or a substantial increase or decrease in existing work-related or education-related child care expenses.

The child is emancipated.

What is considered a substantial change in circumstances?

There is a presumption of a substantial change of circumstances, and the terms of an order are rebuttably presumed to be unreasonable and unfair if:

- Based on the obligor’s current gross income, changing the current order would result in a child support amount that is at least 20 percent and at least $75 higher or lower than the current order. If the current support order is less than $75, it results in a calculated court order that is at least 20% per month higher or lower.

- The medical support provisions of the order are not enforceable.

- The health coverage ordered is not available to the child for whom the order is established.

- The current order is for a percentage of income, not a fixed dollar amount.

- The gross income of a party has decreased by at least 20 percent through no fault or choice of the party.

- A deviation was granted because the child lived in a foreign country and the child no longer resides in the foreign country.

The court may also change a support order if custody has changed.

Resources

Child support information line
(651) 431-4199 or (800) 657-3954
www.dhs.state.mn.us

AARP Grandparent Information Center
(888) OUR-AARP (888) 687-2277
www.aarp.org/grandparents

MinnesotaHelp.info – online public information and referral portal
www.MinnesotaHelp.info

211 Minnesota Information and Referral
(800) 543-7709 or 211
www.211unitedway.org

Grandparents Parenting Again Support Services
Rochester (507) 287-2020, ext. 20

Grandparents Preserving Families
Fergus Falls (218) 739-3932

Kinship Caregivers
Marshall (800) 658-2448

Minnesota Kinship Caregivers Association (MKCA)
Referral for Grandparents and Relatives
Raising Children
www.mkca.org

Minneapolis ...(612) 879-5307
Cass Lake .......(888) 231-7886
St. Paul...........(651) 917-4640
Park Rapids ....(800) 450-1385
Rochester .......(800) 462-1660
Virginia..........(800) 748-7354
St. Cloud.......(320) 251-5081
Attention. If you want free help translating this information, ask your worker or call the number below for your language.

تحتاج إلى نسخة مكرسة من هذه المعلومات للذين لديهم مكاحلين أو مكنسة. يمكنك طلب المساعدة من مكتب الخدمة الاجتماعية أو الاتصال على الرقم 1-800-358-0377.

Pažnja. Ako vam je potrebna besplatna pomoć za prevod ove informacije, pitajte vašeg radnika ili nazovite 1-888-234-3785.

Ceeb toom. Yog koy xav tau kev pab txhais cov xov no rau koy dawb, nug koy tus neeg lis dej num (worker) lossis hu 1-888-486-8377.

泰国语。หากคุณต้องการการแปลตามคำขอของคุณ ตัวแทนของคุณจะتعلقด้วย ซึ่งทุกกรมการท่าของกรุงเทพฯ ทุกกรมการท่า 1-888-487-8251.

Hubaddhu. Yoo akka odeeffannoon kun sii hiikamu gargaarsa tolaa feeta ta’e, hojjataa kee gaafaddhu ykn lakkoofsa kana bilbili 1-888-234-3798.

Внимание: если вам нужна бесплатная помощь в переводе этой информации, обратитесь к своему социальному работнику или позвоните по следующему телефону: 1-888-562-5877.

Ogow. Haddii aad dooneyso in lagaa kaalmeeyo tarjamadda macluumaadkani oo lacag la’aan ah, weydiid hawl-wadeenkaaga ama wac lambarkan 1-888-547-8829.

Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para traducir esta información, consulte a su trabajador o llame al 1-888-428-3438.

Chú Ý. Nếu quý vị cần dịch thông-tin nầy miễn phí, xin gọi nhân-viên xã-hội của quý vị hoặc gọi số 1-888-554-8759.

This information is available in alternative formats to individuals with disabilities by calling your county worker. TTY users can call through Minnesota Relay at (800) 627-3529. For Speech-to-Speech, call (877) 627-3848. For additional assistance with legal rights and protections for equal access to human services benefits, contact your agency’s ADA coordinator.