

## Can I get social assistance & child support?

If you have custody of your child and you are getting social assistance, you must also try to get child support from the child's other parent. If you do not try, you may receive less assistance or none at all.

Parents on social assistance who do not have custody may still have to pay some support.

## What if my ex-partner abused me?

Abuse will not change the amount of child support that your child's other parent will have to pay.

If s/he was abusive, be very careful when you sign your child support arrangement. **An abusive partner may try to bully you into agreeing to something that is not fair to you and your child.**

If you are on social assistance and your child's other parent abused you, you may not be required to seek child support from him/her. This does not mean you will get more social assistance, only that you will not get less.

Talk to your social assistance worker about the abuse to find out if you are not required to seek child support.

One woman said...  
"John was a really mean guy. When it came to child support, I was so scared of him, I just signed on the dotted line. I was happy to get anything. Now I know he should be paying us more."

## Numbers to Call for Help & Information

### Legal Aid Ontario:

1.800.668.8258  
TTY: 1.866.641.8867

### Family Responsibility Office

(Mon - Fri 8am - 5pm)  
1.800.267.4330  
1.888.815.2757  
(Customer Service Unit)

### Ontario Women's Justice Network (OWJN)

[www.owjn.org](http://www.owjn.org)

My Local Women's Organization:

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

### Assaulted Women's Helpline

(free & confidential information on local services)

1.866.863.0511  
TTY: 1.866.863.7867

This flyer is part of *Legal Information Workshops for Women Experiencing Violence* developed by METRAC & the Ontario Women's Justice Network, and funded by the Law Foundation of Ontario.

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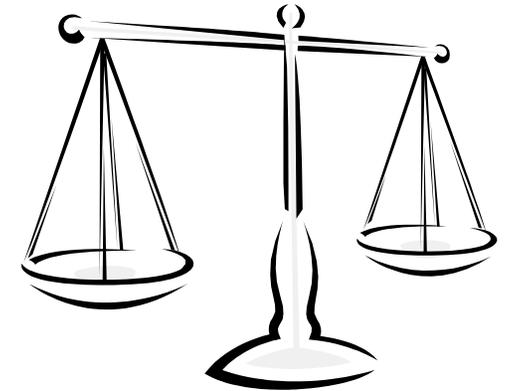
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Legal Information for Women  
Experiencing Violence

What women should  
know about

## Child Support



Woman Abuse Is A Crime



## What is Child Support?

Children must be financially supported by their parents. It is the law. If you and your child's other parent do not live together, you must share the costs of caring for your children.

If you have physical custody of your children (they live with you most of the time), you are entitled to **child support** from the other parent. The parent paying support is called the **payor or paying parent**.

Child support is decided based on the needs of the child and the income of the paying parent.

## Who is considered a "Parent"?

Anyone who acted as a parent for a child may be considered a "parent" for child support purposes. The payor can be a birth (biological) parent or an adoptive parent. A step-parent who has acted as a parent may also be required to pay child support.

Parents must support their children even if:

- they do not live with the children;
- they do not see the children;
- they are not married to the other parent; or
- they never lived with the other parent.

As a result, more than one parent may have the legal duty to pay child support for the same child.



## How long must a parent pay child support?

Child support must be paid as long as the child is still a dependent. In most cases, this means at least until the child turns 18.

Children under 18 are no longer dependent if they get married or leave home. The payor parent may have to keep paying child support after the child turns 18 if the child cannot support herself because she is sick, has a disability, or is a full-time student.

## How do I get child support for my kids?

You and your child's other parent can make your own arrangements about child support. It is a good idea to put your agreement in writing, with the date, and get both parents to sign it. It is best to have a lawyer look at it, and to file it with the Court.

If you cannot agree about the amount, or if the agreement breaks down, you can ask the court to make an order for child support. It is very helpful to have a lawyer for this, especially if your ex-partner was abusive or controlling.

The federal and provincial governments decide the basic amounts that payor parents should pay for child support. The amounts are based on the cost of living in each province. These amounts are called the **Child Support Guidelines**.

In almost all cases, the courts must use the Child Support Guidelines for court orders dealing with child support. The Child Support Table in the Guidelines is used to determine the amount of support to be paid. There is a different table for each province and territory.

## How much will I get?

The amount will depend on:

- The number of children
- Your custody arrangement
- The province you live in
- The amount of money the paying parent makes
- Any special expenses for your child such as health care, sports, school activities, lessons

## What if my child's other parent won't pay?

Orders for child support are enforced by the:

**Family Responsibility Office (FRO)**  
at 1.800.267.4330.

The FRO is a provincial government office. Every court order for child support is automatically filed with the FRO. If you and your former partner have an agreement about support, you can choose to file a copy with the FRO, to make sure it is followed. If the payor does follow the child support order, the FRO can take money from the payor's wages, suspend driver's licenses, try to take money from bank accounts and/or cancel passports etc. The office is very busy, however, and the FRO process is usually very slow. Be as patient as you can.



One woman said...  
"My ex hadn't paid child support for our three kids for more than a year. I called the FRO. It took them a long time to take care of things, but when they did, he lost his license. They he paid in a hurry!"