

## Your Court Hearing

### The Role of Child Support Services

Child Support Services' (CSS) role is to present facts of each case to the court for both parties. Our goal is to have a CSS professional speak with each customer prior to their hearing. Customers will not be able to speak directly with a CSS attorney while court is in session. The CSS Attorney does not represent you, your child (ren), or the other parent. You may retain an attorney to represent you.

### Types of Hearings

CSS does not handle other family law matters such as visitation. Court Commissioners conduct child support-related hearings only. Once the Commissioner is satisfied with all relevant facts, he/she will make a decision and a child support order may be entered.

### How Child Support Is Determined

CSS' goal is to set reliable child support amounts for children. To accomplish this, CSS and the Court follow statewide guidelines (Guideline Calculator). The following are some factors the court considers when determining a child support amount:

- Monthly income of both parents
- Actual visitation
- Child care expenses
- Cost of health insurance
- Support payments (child or spousal support) paid/received from other relationships (proof is required)
- Other biological children living with each parent

To access the Guideline Calculator and user guide, visit [childsup.ca.gov/resources/calculatchildsupport](http://childsup.ca.gov/resources/calculatchildsupport).

### Continuance

A continuance means the case is being postponed for another date. CSS does not grant continuances or cancellations of court dates; only the court has that authority. If you contact CSS to request a continuance, we will relay your request to the court; however, there is no guarantee your request will be honored and the court may proceed without you. If the court orders you to appear, be there unless the court gives you permission to be absent.

## Getting Ready

### Documents Needed

You need to provide the documents below to CSS **at least two weeks prior to the court hearing**. You must also bring a copy of the documents to the court hearing. If you do not provide these documents, the court may issue a continuance or not hear the matter.



- A completed Income & Expense Declaration form (signed within 90 days of the hearing)
- 3 most recent paycheck stubs
- If self-employed, a copy of your most recent federal tax return (including all Schedules and Profit & Loss Statements)
- Dates, times & duration of visitation
- Childcare verification and receipts for costs

### Forms Workshop

CSS staff and volunteers help by providing customers guidance in completing CSS forms. CSS does not fill out the forms for customers or offer legal advice.

- Help is provided in groups
- For help with any document listed above, bring it to the workshop



#### Child Support Services Forms Workshop

Community Resource Center  
1015 N. Main Street  
Santa Ana, CA, 92701

Monday - Friday  
8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

For questions about the workshop, call  
(866) 901-3212 or visit our website,

[www.css.ocgov.com](http://www.css.ocgov.com)

## Your Court Day

### Before You Leave Home

- Remember, court hearings take place in Lamoreaux Justice Center located at 341 The City Drive, Orange CA 92868
- Dress in casual business attire
- Bring a pen or pencil
- Arrive to court early and park in visitor parking structure (*you will have to pay for parking*)
- You will go through a metal detector before being allowed inside the courthouse building
- Children are not allowed in court unless you have been subpoenaed to bring them
- Court process may take all day and leaving for lunch / snack may be challenging



### Check-in at Court with CSS Staff

You must check in on the 5th floor (outside of Dept. L-51) with the child support professional at the Information/Check-in Desk. Have your case information ready prior to check-in.

### The Pre-Hearing Interview

You have the opportunity to attend a pre-hearing interview with a child support professional. The purpose of the interview is to gather updated information. Only parties to the case may be present during pre-hearing interviews. Time frames for pre-hearing interviews as follows:

If Hearing is Scheduled at:	Pre-hearing Interviews Begin at:
8:00 a.m.	7:30 a.m.
1:30 p.m.	10:00 a.m. through 12:30 p.m.

- A child support professional will meet with you to verify/obtain necessary information to reach a reasonable and appropriate child support agreement. This information will be relayed at the hearing. If parents agree, we will meet with both of you at the same time.
- Based on the facts of the case, the child support professional will offer parents an opportunity to agree on a child support amount. If parents reach an agreement, they may sign a Stipulation (a written agreement filed with the court) and be given further instructions. If you do not reach an agreement, you will appear for the hearing in the assigned courtroom.
- If you are represented by an attorney, CSS staff cannot interview you without your attorney present.

### Following the Hearing

You will receive a "Post Hearing Information" handout at the end of the hearing. A copy of any child support order issued by the court will be mailed to you.

### Payments

For your convenience, you may begin making payments at the courthouse immediately. See a child support professional for assistance. We accept payments in cash (exact amount only), check, money order, cashier's check or credit/debit card.

## Contacting Us

You may need to contact us about your upcoming court date or for questions and general information after your court date.



### Department of Child Support Services, Customer Service Center

1055 N. Main Street, 1st Floor  
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Monday - Friday (except holidays)

Hours: 7:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

*To guarantee service, please arrive by 4:30 p.m.*

[www.css.ocgov.com](http://www.css.ocgov.com)

(866) 901-3212

TTY - (866) 399-4096