

Washington State Superior Court Judges

Uniform Child Support Guidelines

*Effective Date:*

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WASHINGTON STATE

ASSOCIATION OF SUPERIOR COURT JUDGES

UNIFORM CHILD SUPPORT GUIDELINES

FAMILY LAW COMMITTEE

AND

OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR FOR THE COURTS

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Members of the State Bar Family Law Section Executive Committee

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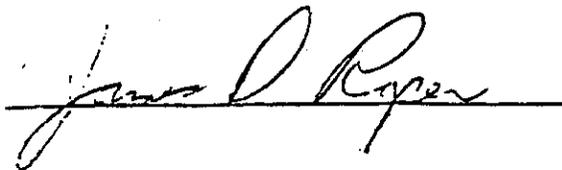
Members of the Seattle-King County Bar Association Subcommittee on Child Support Guidelines

The following individuals took time to provide written comments:

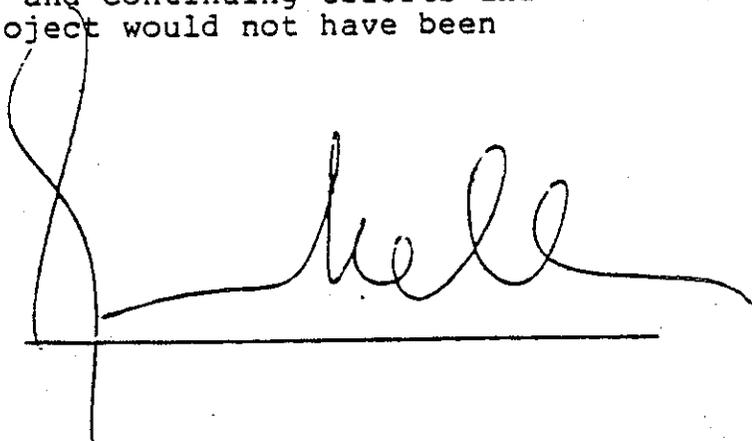
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James D. Roper, Chairman



Gerard M. Shellan, Past Chairman

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GUIDELINES FOR USE OF ASCJ UNIFORM  
CHILD SUPPORT SCHEDULE

THE CHILD SUPPORT SCHEDULE IS DESIGNED TO PROVIDE GUIDELINES FOR JUDGES, ATTORNEYS AND LITIGANTS TO ESTABLISH CHILD SUPPORT LEVELS. USERS ARE CAUTIONED TO REMEMBER THAT THE SCHEDULES SHOW AVERAGES DERIVED FROM ECONOMIC DATA AND ARE GUIDELINES ONLY. INDIVIDUAL CASES IN CONTROVERSY SHOULD BE DECIDED ON THE FACTS OF EACH CASE.

### Introduction

A major purpose of these guidelines is to promote settlement of child support disputes by providing flexible and realistic measures of predictability regarding judicial standards for child support determinations. It is anticipated that these will be helpful for attorneys working with clients in the office and in settlement conferences with the court.

The overriding principle of these guidelines is to maximize the attention paid by the parties and the court to the rights of the children with respect to support, and the duties of both parents to share as much as possible in the maintenance of the children at a level of living which is comparable to that available to their parents. The guidelines and schedule also seek to isolate issues relating to child support from spousal support issues.

The child support schedule is designed to establish dollar amounts for an appropriate basic level of child support at different income levels and family sizes. It uses the total net income of both parents to establish the schedule amount. Support actually to be paid by the non-custodial spouse to the custodial spouse will be a fraction of the schedule amount based on the percentage of the total net income earned by the non-custodial spouse. Worksheet 2 on page 6 may be used for this purpose.

**INCOME:** This is income of both parties from all sources. It is recommended that all income be annualized and that copies of the last two years' tax returns accompany financial statements, as well as current wage stubs.

Income from non-parents: These guidelines do not take into account income from other adults who may reside with either of the separated spouses at the time of divorce. For purposes of modification of initial support awards, income from new spouses may become relevant; however, the guidelines assume that the level of living at which parents have a duty to support their children will be primarily reflective of the parents' own income. Step-parent contributions toward the household expenses of either divorced parent should not serve to markedly affect the obligations of the natural parents to provide support for their own children.

OUTSIDE INCOME OF OLDER CHILDREN IS A  
FACTOR RECOGNIZED AS APPROPRIATE FOR THE  
COURT TO CONSIDER IN DETERMINING SUPPORT

DISPOSABLE INCOME: (See Worksheet #1) The schedule applies to the total disposable income of both parties. The following deductions from total income should be made to arrive at disposable income:

(All deductions should be annualized)

- a. Taxes. The standard deductions applicable to the number of exemptions provided by law will be used to establish the amount of taxes.
- b. Social Security (FICA)
- c. State Industrial Insurance
- d. Union Dues
- e. Prior support payments (where there is proof of the annual amount actually being paid)

NOTE: Other mandatory deductions imposed by law or contract, such as retirement benefits, may be considered by the court.

PRO-RATA SHARE OF SCHEDULE AMOUNT: After the basic support level is determined, the pro-rata share of both parents will be determined from the optional worksheet or by any appropriate percentage arithmetic display. Example: If total net income is \$1,800 and if the custodial spouse contributes \$600 and the non-custodial \$1,200, the non-custodial spouse will be expected to pay 66.6% of the basic support level amount to the custodial spouse. (See Worksheet #2)

RANGES OF SUPPORT: The schedules include columns indicating "high", "medium" and "low" support amounts for each income level listed. It is the high column which reflects a norm of support established through analysis of BLS Consumer Expenditure data, as discussed in pp. 12 through 19 of this booklet.

Inclusion of ranges provides an additional reminder to parties and the judges that no single schedule amount will be appropriate in all cases. Debt structure, substantial deductions from the obligor's monthly income for children's medical insurance, unique occupational expenses, frequent visitation and direct cost-sharing are examples of con-

siderations which may serve to warrant reductions from the "high" column.

It is presumed that in the majority of cases, individual differences will not account for variations outside the ranges in the schedule.

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEMPORARY & PERMANENT SUPPORT:** The schedule is intended to be used for both temporary and permanent support awards. This is consistent with the intent of the guidelines to separate issues related to rights of children and duties of parents from issues related to spousal support and/or rehabilitation. Temporary or permanent spousal support needs which may require additional financial obligations on the non-custodial spouse are dealt with separately in these guidelines.

**SPOUSAL SUPPORT:** These guidelines intend that spousal support determinations occur within the context of the marginal income available to the parties after child support obligations are established and with the proviso that the disposable income of the non-custodial spouse in no case be reduced below 50% for any combination of child support and spousal support.

No schedule of percentages is developed for this purpose. Instead, a worksheet is suggested for use to clearly display the margin of available income which is left for the court to distribute if spousal support is needed between temporary and final orders or for a rehabilitative period after divorce.  
(See Worksheet #3)

**AGES OF CHILDREN:** Economic data shows that as children get older the percentage of family consumption budgets spent on children increases significantly enough to warrant the different age-specific schedules included. There are separate schedules for children 0-6, 7-15 and 16-17 years of age.

Where the ages of the children require use of more than one schedule, calculate the per child amounts from the appropriate family size column and add them together. The same family size column will always be the reference; for example, if there are two children, the per-child amount must always be a fraction of the "two-children" column on each schedule, if three children, always a fraction of the "three children" column, etc. See p. 11 of this booklet for examples.

**CHILD CARE EXPENSES:** Reasonable child care expenses actually being paid shall be considered by the court in determining the amount of support to be paid by the non-custodial to the custodial spouse. Whenever possible, child care costs should be awarded as a supplement to the basic award, pro-rated in the same manner as for basic support and treated as a

separate item in the order. (See optional portion of Worksheet #2)

LIMIT ON MAXIMUM SUPPORT TO BE ORDERED: The guidelines presume that as a rule the disposable income of the support obligor will not be reduced below 50%, regardless of the presumptive support level derived from the schedules. The rationale for this proviso is that reduction below 50% may have the effect of undermining an obligor's incentive to remain employed.

ANNUAL ADJUSTMENTS: The guidelines recommend that annual adjustment provisions be included in all orders of child support. The guidelines do not recommend a specific adjustment formula, but do recommend that orders specify the basic income and deductions information which must be exchanged between the parties for adjustment purposes.

Users of the schedule should be aware that one adjustment method is an annual reapplication of the schedule itself by the parties. This will accomplish adjustments to account for changes in total income of the parents, the pro-rata share each parent earns, and for changes in the ages of the children. The children's expected level of living will continue to be tied to that available to the parents and any changes in cost of living will affect them all equally.

VISITATION ADJUSTMENTS: During visitation periods of four to six weeks or longer, support payments by the obligor may ordinarily be abated by 50%. Consideration of visitation related or other direct cost-sharing by the obligor should be effected at the time of the decree within the ranges established in the schedule.

EFFECT OF NEW CHILDREN ON SUPPORT OBLIGATIONS: A parent's obligations for support of his or her children extends to all of that parent's natural or adopted children. Presumptively, the percentage-of-income obligation of a support obligor for children of a first marriage (or paternity determination) will decrease if there are new children born to the support obligor, and he or she does actually provide support for all the children.

CHILDREN OVER 17: These schedules and guidelines are not intended to apply to children who have reached the age of majority.

## DISPOSABLE INCOME COMPUTATION SHEET

	Custodial Spouse	Non-Custodial Spouse
1. Total income from all sources (except payments received for children of previous marriage)*	_____	_____
2. Deductions**		
a. Taxes***	_____	_____
b. FICA	_____	_____
c. Ind. Ins.	_____	_____
d. Union dues	_____	_____
e. Current support obligation for children of obligor (where proof is available about amount actually being paid)	_____	_____
TOTAL	_____	_____
3. Disposable Income	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

\*Court will require copies of last two years' tax returns to verify "total income" figures for non-wage income and copies of present wage stubs to verify present wage earnings.

\*\*All claimed deductions should be annualized and divided by 12 to arrive at monthly amounts.

\*\*\*Deductions for taxes will be based on the annualized income and the number of exemptions provided by law.

## BASIC CHILD SUPPORT LEVEL COMPUTATION SHEET

- A. Non-Custodial Parent Disposable Income (From Worksheet 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Custodial Parent Income (From Worksheet 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Total: Use This Figure for Applying Schedule
- D. Total Child Support From Schedule \_\_\_\_\_
- E. % of Total, Non-Custodial ( $A \div C$ ) \_\_\_\_\_
- F. % of Total, Custodial ( $B \div C$ ) \_\_\_\_\_
- G. Non-custodial Parent's Share ( $E \times D$ )
- H. Custodial Parent's Share ( $F \times D$ )
- 

## ADDITIONAL COSTS FOR PAID CHILD CARE

- I. Monthly Child Care Costs
- J. Non-Custodial Spouse Share ( $E \times I$ )
- K. Custodial Spouse Share ( $F \times I$ )

WORKSHEET FOR SPOUSAL SUPPORT

NON-CUSTODIAL SPOUSE INCOME AND SUPPORT PAID

A. Non-Custodial Spouse Net Income:  
(From worksheet #2, line A) \_\_\_\_\_

B. Child Support  
(From worksheet #2, line G) \_\_\_\_\_

C. Marginal Income,  
After Support  
(A minus B) \_\_\_\_\_

D. 50% of Non-Custodial  
Spouse Net Income \_\_\_\_\_

E. Income Available  
for Spousal  
Support, Special  
Needs, etc.  
(C minus D) \_\_\_\_\_

CUSTODIAL SPOUSE INCOME AND SUPPORT RECEIVED

F. Custodial Spouse Net Income  
(From worksheet #2, line B) \_\_\_\_\_

G. Child Support from Non-  
Custodial (From line B) \_\_\_\_\_

H. Total Income for Family of  
\_\_\_\_\_, without spousal support  
(F + G)

SPOUSAL SUPPORT DISPLAY

I. Income of Non-Custodial  
Spouse Available for Spousal  
Support (Based on no more  
than 50% reduction)  
(From line E) \_\_\_\_\_

J. Spousal Support Proposed \_\_\_\_\_

REVISED INCOME OF PARTIES IF SPOUSAL SUPPORT ORDERED

K. Non-Custodial  
(C minus J)

L. Custodial Family, \_\_\_\_\_ persons  
(H + J)

WASHINGTON STATE ASSOCIATION OF SUPERIOR COURT JUDGES

CHILD SUPPORT GUIDELINE SCHEDULE

SCHEDULE B: CHILDREN 7-15 YEARS OF AGE

TOTAL GROSS INCOME (NGW)	ONE CHILD			TWO CHILDREN			THREE CHILDREN			FOUR CHILDREN		
	LOW	MED	HIGH	LOW	MED	HIGH	LOW	MED	HIGH	LOW	MED	HIGH
500	101	123	145	174	195	217	222	241	261	261	275	290
550	111	135	159	191	215	239	244	265	287	287	303	319
600	122	148	174	209	235	261	266	290	313	313	331	348
650	132	160	188	226	255	283	288	314	339	339	358	377
700	142	173	203	243	274	304	310	338	365	365	386	406
750	152	184	217	261	293	326	332	362	391	391	413	435
800	162	197	232	278	313	348	355	387	418	418	441	464
850	172	209	246	296	333	370	377	411	444	444	468	493
900	183	222	261	313	352	391	400	435	470	470	496	522
950	192	234	275	330	372	413	422	459	496	496	523	551
1000	206	250	294	362	407	452	483	525	568	568	596	627
1050	211	256	301	370	417	463	494	537	581	581	611	643
1100	215	261	307	379	427	474	505	549	594	594	626	659
1150	219	266	313	388	436	485	515	561	606	606	641	675
1200	224	272	320	396	445	495	526	573	619	619	656	691
1250	228	277	326	405	455	506	537	585	632	632	667	707
1300	233	283	333	414	465	517	548	597	645	645	686	722
1350	237	288	339	422	475	528	559	609	658	658	701	738
1400	241	293	345	431	485	539	570	620	670	670	716	754
1450	246	299	352	439	494	549	581	632	683	683	731	770
1500	251	304	358	448	504	560	592	644	696	696	747	786
1550	255	310	365	457	514	571	603	656	709	709	762	802
1600	260	315	371	466	524	582	613	667	721	721	776	817
1650	264	320	377	474	534	593	624	679	734	734	791	833
1700	269	326	384	483	544	604	635	691	747	747	807	849
1750	273	332	390	491	553	614	646	703	760	760	822	865
1800	278	337	397	500	562	625	657	715	773	773	837	881
1850	282	343	403	509	572	636	667	726	785	785	852	897
1900	287	349	410	518	582	647	678	738	798	798	866	912
1950	291	354	416	526	592	658	689	750	811	811	882	928
2000	295	359	422	535	602	669	700	762	824	824	897	944
2100	304	370	435	552	621	690	722	785	849	849	927	976
2200	314	381	448	570	641	712	744	809	875	875	958	1008
2300	323	392	461	587	661	734	765	833	900	900	987	1039
2400	332	403	474	604	679	755	787	857	926	926	1017	1071
2500	340	413	486	622	699	777	808	880	951	951	1048	1103
2600	349	424	499	639	719	799	830	904	977	977	1077	1134
2700	358	435	512	656	738	820	852	927	1002	1002	1108	1166
2800	367	446	525	674	758	842	874	951	1028	1028	1138	1198
2900	377	457	538	691	778	864	896	975	1054	1054	1168	1229
3000	386	468	551	708	798	885	917	998	1079	1079	1198	1261
3100	394	479	563	726	816	907	939	1022	1105	1105	1228	1293
3200	403	490	576	742	835	928	961	1045	1130	1130	1258	1324
3300	412	501	589	760	855	950	983	1069	1156	1156	1288	1356
3400	421	512	602	778	875	972	1004	1097	1181	1181	1319	1388
3500	430	523	615	794	894	993	1026	1116	1207	1207	1348	1419
3600	439	533	627	812	913	1015	1047	1140	1232	1232	1378	1451
3700	448	544	640	830	933	1037	1069	1164	1258	1258	1409	1483
3800	457	555	653	846	952	1058	1091	1187	1283	1283	1438	1514
3900	466	566	666	864	972	1080	1113	1211	1309	1309	1469	1546
4000	475	577	679	882	992	1102	1135	1235	1335	1335	1499	1578
4250	498	604	711	925	1040	1156	1188	1293	1398	1398	1574	1657
4500	520	632	743	968	1089	1210	1243	1352	1462	1462	1649	1736
4750	542	659	775	1011	1138	1264	1297	1412	1526	1526	1724	1815
5000	565	686	807	1054	1186	1318	1352	1471	1590	1590	1800	1895
5250	587	713	839	1098	1235	1372	1406	1530	1654	1654	1875	1974
5500	610	740	871	1142	1284	1427	1460	1589	1718	1718	1950	2053
5750	632	768	903	1185	1333	1481	1515	1648	1782	1782	2025	2132
6000	654	795	935	1228	1381	1535	1569	1708	1846	1846	2100	2211

SUPPORT OBLIGOR PAYS A PERCENTAGE OF THE SCHEDULE AMOUNT BASED ON PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL INCOME: IF THE OBLIGOR EARNS 65% OF THE TOTAL INCOME, SUPPORT TO BE PAID IS 65% OF THE SCHEDULE AMOUNT. SEE WORKSHEET #2.

WHEN CHILDREN ARE IN DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS, SEE PAGE 11

WASHINGTON STATE ASSOCIATION OF SUPERIOR COURT JUDGES

CHILD SUPPORT GUIDELINE SCHEDULE

SCHEDULE A: CHILDREN 0-6 YEARS OF AGE

TOTAL DISP. INCOME (H&W)	ONE CHILD			TWO CHILDREN			THREE CHILDREN			FOUR CHILDREN		
	LOW	MED	HIGH	LOW	MED	HIGH	LOW	MED	HIGH	LOW	MED	HIGH
500	86	105	123	148	166	185	189	205	222	222	235	247
550	95	116	136	167	183	203	207	226	244	244	257	271
600	104	126	148	178	207	222	226	246	266	266	281	296
650	112	136	160	192	216	240	245	266	288	288	305	321
700	121	147	173	207	233	259	266	288	311	310	329	345
750	129	157	185	222	249	277	283	308	333	333	351	370
800	138	167	197	237	266	296	302	328	355	355	375	395
850	147	179	210	251	283	314	320	349	377	377	398	419
900	155	189	222	266	300	333	339	369	399	400	422	444
950	164	199	234	281	316	351	359	390	422	422	446	469
1000	175	213	250	307	346	384	411	447	483	481	517	534
1050	179	218	256	315	355	394	420	457	494	492	520	547
1100	183	222	261	322	363	403	429	467	505	505	533	561
1150	186	226	266	330	371	412	439	477	516	517	545	574
1200	190	231	272	337	379	421	448	487	527	528	558	587
1250	194	235	277	344	387	430	456	497	537	541	571	601
1300	198	241	283	352	396	440	466	507	548	553	583	614
1350	202	245	288	359	404	449	475	517	559	565	597	628
1400	206	250	294	366	412	458	485	527	570	577	609	641
1450	209	254	299	374	420	467	494	537	581	589	622	655
1500	213	259	305	382	429	477	503	548	592	601	635	668
1550	217	264	310	389	437	486	513	558	603	614	648	682
1600	221	269	316	396	445	495	522	568	614	625	660	695
1650	225	273	321	403	454	504	530	577	624	638	674	709
1700	228	277	326	410	462	513	540	587	635	650	686	722
1750	232	282	332	418	471	523	549	598	646	662	699	736
1800	236	286	337	426	479	532	558	608	657	674	712	749
1850	240	292	343	433	487	541	568	618	668	687	725	763
1900	244	296	348	440	495	550	577	628	679	698	737	776
1950	248	301	354	447	503	559	587	638	690	711	750	790
2000	251	305	359	455	512	569	595	648	700	723	763	803
2100	259	315	370	470	528	587	614	668	722	747	788	830
2200	267	324	381	484	544	605	632	688	744	771	814	857
2300	274	333	392	499	562	624	651	709	766	796	840	884
2400	282	343	403	514	578	642	669	728	787	820	865	911
2500	290	352	414	529	595	661	688	748	809	844	891	938
2600	297	361	425	543	611	679	706	769	831	868	917	965
2700	304	370	435	558	628	698	725	789	853	893	942	992
2800	312	379	446	573	644	716	743	808	874	917	968	1019
2900	320	388	457	587	661	734	762	829	896	941	994	1046
3000	328	398	468	602	678	753	780	849	918	965	1018	1072
3100	335	407	479	617	694	771	799	870	940	989	1044	1099
3200	343	417	490	632	711	790	817	889	961	1013	1070	1126
3300	351	426	501	646	727	808	836	909	983	1038	1095	1153
3400	358	435	512	662	744	827	854	930	1005	1062	1121	1180
3500	366	445	523	676	760	845	872	949	1026	1086	1147	1207
3600	374	454	534	690	777	863	891	969	1048	1111	1172	1234
3700	381	463	545	706	794	882	910	990	1070	1135	1198	1261
3800	388	472	555	720	810	900	928	1010	1092	1159	1224	1288
3900	396	481	566	735	827	919	946	1030	1113	1183	1249	1315
4000	404	490	577	750	843	937	965	1050	1135	1208	1275	1342
4250	423	514	605	786	885	983	1011	1100	1189	1268	1339	1409
4500	442	537	632	823	926	1029	1057	1151	1244	1329	1403	1477
4750	461	560	659	860	967	1075	1103	1201	1298	1390	1467	1544
5000	480	583	686	897	1009	1121	1149	1251	1352	1450	1530	1611
5250	507	607	714	934	1050	1167	1196	1301	1407	1511	1595	1679
5500	519	630	741	970	1092	1213	1242	1351	1461	1571	1659	1746
5750	538	653	768	1007	1133	1259	1288	1401	1515	1632	1722	1813
6000	556	676	795	1044	1174	1305	1335	1452	1570	1693	1787	1881

SUPPORT OBLIGOR PAYS A PERCENTAGE OF THE SCHEDULE AMOUNT BASED ON PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL INCOME: IF THE OBLIGOR EARNS 65% OF THE TOTAL INCOME, SUPPORT TO BE PAID IS 65% OF THE SCHEDULE AMOUNT. SEE WORKSHEET #2.

WHEN CHILDREN ARE IN DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS, SEE PAGE 11

WASHINGTON STATE ASSOCIATION OF SUPERIOR COURT JUDGES

CHILD SUPPORT GUIDELINE SCHEDULE

SCHEDULE C: CHILDREN 16-17 YEARS OF AGE

TOTAL DISP. INCOME (H&W)	ONE CHILDO			TWO CHILDREN			THREE CHILDREN			FOUR CHILDREN		
	LOW	MED	HIGH	LOW	MED	HIGH	LOW	MED	HIGH	LOW	MED	HIGH
500	117	142	167	200	225	250	255	278	300	300	316	333
550	128	156	183	220	247	275	281	305	330	330	349	367
600	140	170	200	240	270	300	306	333	360	360	380	400
650	152	184	217	260	292	325	332	361	390	390	411	433
700	163	198	233	280	315	350	357	389	420	420	444	467
750	175	213	250	300	337	375	383	416	450	450	475	500
800	187	227	267	320	360	400	408	444	480	480	506	533
850	198	241	283	340	382	425	434	472	510	510	530	567
900	210	255	300	360	405	450	459	500	540	540	570	600
950	222	269	317	380	427	475	485	527	570	570	601	633
1000	237	287	338	416	469	520	555	604	650	649	685	721
1050	242	294	346	426	479	532	568	618	666	665	702	739
1100	247	300	353	436	490	545	580	631	682	682	720	758
1150	252	306	360	446	501	557	592	645	697	698	737	776
1200	258	313	368	455	512	569	605	659	712	715	754	794
1250	262	319	375	466	524	582	617	672	726	731	771	812
1300	267	325	382	475	535	594	630	685	741	747	788	830
1350	273	332	390	486	546	607	643	699	756	764	807	849
1400	278	337	397	495	557	619	655	713	771	790	824	867
1450	283	343	404	506	569	632	667	726	785	796	841	885
1500	288	350	412	515	580	644	680	740	800	813	858	903
1550	293	356	419	526	591	657	693	754	815	829	875	921
1600	299	363	427	535	602	669	705	767	829	846	893	940
1650	304	369	434	545	613	681	717	781	844	862	910	958
1700	309	375	441	555	625	694	730	795	859	878	927	976
1750	314	382	449	565	635	706	742	808	873	895	944	994
1800	319	388	456	575	647	719	755	821	888	912	962	1013
1850	324	394	463	585	658	731	768	835	903	928	979	1031
1900	330	400	471	595	670	744	779	848	917	944	997	1049
1950	335	406	478	605	680	756	792	862	932	960	1014	1067
2000	340	413	486	615	692	769	805	876	947	976	1031	1085
2100	350	425	500	634	714	793	830	903	976	1010	1066	1122
2200	360	438	515	654	736	818	854	930	1005	1042	1100	1158
2300	371	451	530	674	759	843	880	957	1035	1075	1135	1195
2400	381	462	544	694	781	868	904	984	1064	1108	1169	1231
2500	391	475	559	714	804	893	930	1012	1094	1140	1204	1267
2600	402	488	574	734	826	918	955	1039	1123	1174	1239	1304
2700	412	501	589	754	849	943	979	1066	1152	1206	1273	1340
2800	422	513	603	774	871	968	1005	1093	1182	1239	1309	1377
2900	433	525	618	794	894	993	1029	1120	1211	1272	1342	1413
3000	443	538	633	814	916	1018	1054	1147	1240	1304	1377	1449
3100	454	551	648	834	938	1042	1080	1175	1270	1337	1412	1486
3200	463	563	662	854	960	1067	1104	1202	1299	1370	1446	1522
3300	474	575	677	874	983	1092	1130	1229	1329	1403	1491	1559
3400	484	588	692	894	1005	1117	1154	1256	1358	1435	1515	1595
3500	495	601	707	914	1028	1142	1179	1283	1387	1469	1550	1632
3600	505	613	721	934	1050	1167	1204	1311	1417	1501	1585	1668
3700	515	626	736	954	1073	1192	1229	1338	1446	1534	1619	1704
3800	526	638	751	974	1095	1217	1254	1364	1475	1567	1654	1741
3900	536	651	766	994	1118	1242	1279	1392	1505	1599	1688	1777
4000	546	663	780	1013	1139	1266	1304	1419	1534	1633	1723	1814
4250	572	694	817	1063	1196	1329	1367	1487	1608	1714	1810	1905
4500	598	726	854	1113	1252	1391	1429	1555	1681	1796	1896	1996
4750	624	757	891	1162	1308	1453	1491	1622	1754	1878	1993	2097
5000	650	789	929	1212	1363	1515	1554	1691	1828	1960	2069	2178
5250	675	819	964	1262	1420	1578	1616	1758	1901	2042	2156	2269
5500	701	851	1001	1312	1476	1640	1679	1827	1975	2124	2242	2360
5750	727	882	1038	1362	1532	1702	1741	1894	2048	2206	2328	2451
6000	752	914	1075	1411	1588	1764	1803	1962	2121	2298	2415	2542

SUPPORT OBLIGOR PAYS A PERCENTAGE OF THE SCHEDULE AMOUNT BASED ON PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL INCOME: IF THE OBLIGOR EARNS 65% OF THE TOTAL INCOME, SUPPORT TO BE PAID IS 65% OF THE SCHEDULE AMOUNT. SEE WORKSHEET #2.

WHEN CHILDREN ARE IN DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS, SEE PAGE II



## HOW THE SCHEDULES WERE DERIVED

### Introduction

In 1980-1981, under the chairmanship of Judge Gerard M. Shellan, Superior Court Judge in King County, the Association of Superior Court Judges (ASCJ) Family Law Committee studied the question of formulating of a uniform child support guideline for Washington State and concluded that it would be a valuable undertaking. The Committee's report was endorsed by the full Association at its Annual Spring Conference at Port Ludlow, Washington, in the Spring of 1981. Thereafter, the Office of the Administrator for the Courts was requested to provide staff assistance. Judge Shellan's Committee had identified six major issues and features of a schedule to be included.

As staff work on the project got underway, it was learned that the State Bar Family Law Section Executive Committee was exploring bar members' opinions about uniform guidelines, and that a subcommittee of the Seattle-King County Bar Family Law Section was undertaking a re-examination of the popular King County schedule. Initial staff work on the project was devoted in large part to reviewing bench and bar opinions about guidelines, learning about major child support issues from the King County Committee and State Bar members, and studying features of schedules being used throughout the state and elsewhere in the nation. The Clark County, Washington schedule proved to be one which was gaining in popularity in the state, and it subsequently provided the basic format for the uniform schedule, although all the support amounts were altered based on the review of economic data discussed in the following. Judge James Roper took over the chairmanship of the Committee in September, 1981 and directed the project through to completion. A detailed account of the exploratory research and development attending this project, and some discussion of possible future research relating to child support guidelines, is available in the form of an internship research report authored by William E. Hewitt, Office of the Administrator for the Courts, Olympia, as part of a course of study in the Institute for Court Management, Court Executive Development Program, 1982.

### BASIC PRINCIPLES

The major issues and features to be addressed in the guidelines, as established by Judge Shellan's Committee, were as follows:

- A. Due consideration to be given to the earnings of both parents.
- B. The nature of the deductions that would be considered in arriving at "net earnings."

- C. Any such guidelines should provide a schedule of net income up to three to four thousand dollars per month. This for the reason that most existing schedules are several years old and have not taken into consideration the inflationary factor.
- D. Strong consideration should be given to utilizing a "range of support" with possible variations in the amount of support for different age groups of the children.
- E. Any such schedule should include both temporary and permanent support provisions so as to establish some uniformity between the award made at the preliminary hearing and later on in trial.
- F. Such schedule may also include a provision, in a separate column, for spousal maintenance, and if applicable, any adjustment to be made for the children's support by reason of such spousal maintenance.

Review of standard economic data, considerations of common sense and opinions of bench and bar members gleaned from various committee meetings and informal discussions, resulted in the following additional principles which were to be incorporated into the design of the schedules:

- 1. The expectations for support established in the schedule should be derived from what is known about what percentage of available income families actually do spend for those things considered basic to the level of living children will experience together with their parents. "Cost" is determined by expenditures, not the other way around.
- 2. Family size is a variable known to effect cost of raising a child, just as is total income. It will "cost" less to raise each child in a three child family than it will to raise each child in a two child family, when each family has the same income.
- 3. Costs of raising children vary enough with age to warrant some specific means of taking age into account when setting support obligations.

#### FAMILY EXPENDITURE DATA

The Bureau of Labor Statistics 1972-73 Consumer Expenditure Survey Series (C.E.S.) provided the base for capturing the first and second principles. It is a survey of actual expenditures, and it presents separate expenditure tables for 11 different income levels and for families of from one to four children. It

does not provide any basis for distinguishing such costs as a function of ages of children. Table 1 on page 15 shows the C.E.S. figures for average family after tax incomes, the basic actual average support-related expenditures, and their relationship expressed as the percentage the latter is of the former. Notice that for the first four income levels the data shows that the families actually spend more for these "necessities" than is shown to be available as after tax income.

The term "basic support expenditures" covers the following items which were extracted from the exceedingly detailed groupings found in the C.E.S. report. The summary tables had been prepared by Professor Eugene Silberberg, a Seattle economist, and were made available to the Seattle-King County Subcommittee and for use in this project.

FOOD  
CLOTHING  
TRANSPORTATION  
HEALTH  
HOUSING

PERSONAL  
RECREATION  
EDUCATION  
READING  
MISCELLANEOUS

Excluded from basic support expenditures were such things as costs for alcohol, tobacco, gifts and contributions.

#### APPORTIONING TOTAL FAMILY EXPENDITURES BETWEEN PARENTS AND CHILDREN

The expenditures of a family unit are measurable and are measured in such studies as the 1972-73 C.E.S. That portion of total family expenditures which each member of the family "consumes" is, arguably, not measurable at all. At least, it is certainly not measurable to any degree of precision nor by use of methods similar to those available to measure total family expenditures. Such things as housing, transportation, recreation and so on, are shared in by family members in ways which do not lend themselves to clear counting and cost determination procedures. The accepted method to deal with this problem is to use a per capita distribution. Thus items like per person housing and transportation costs are more influenced by family size than by age and sex of family member; food and clothing costs (which do admit of some better measurement methods) can be more directly measured in relation to age and sex.

In arriving at a methodology to use for apportioning total family expenditures into "parents' share" and "children's share", staff sought to use the simplest method consistent with a degree of precision appropriate to the task and the amount of research, education and explanation it would take to utilize highly detailed economic data and methods. The result was a decision to treat all family expenditures as equally divisible between the family members and use the resulting figures as the basis for

TABLE 1

## ONE CHILD FAMILIES

1. Annual Income After Taxes (1972-73)	3,388	4,287	5,153	5,878	6,764	7,965	9,489	11,428	14,499	18,326	29,369
2. Basic Support Expenditures (1972-73)	4,363	5,068	5,332	6,074	6,652	6,978	8,093	8,662	10,202	12,379	15,464
3. Basic Support As Percentage of Income After Taxes	129.0	118.0	103.0	103.0	98.0	88.0	85.0	76.0	70.0	68.0	53.0
4. Relative Income Level Adjusted to 1982 (Col. 1X2)	6,776	8,574	10,066	11,756	13,528	15,930	18,978	22,856	28,998	36,652	58,738
5. Monthly Income Col. 4 ÷ 12	565	715	839	980	1,127	1,328	1,582	1,905	2,417	3,054	4,895

## TWO CHILDREN FAMILIES

1. Annual Income After Taxes (1972-73)	3,409	4,335	5,055	5,968	6,860	7,990	9,552	11,589	14,628	18,390	28,787
2. Basic Support Expenditures (1972-73)	4,911	5,094	5,742	6,044	6,289	7,325	8,070	9,194	11,035	12,996	17,103
3. Basic Support As Percentage of Income After Taxes	144.0	118.0	114.0	101.0	92.0	92.0	85.0	79.0	75.0	71.0	59.0
4. Relative Income Level Adjusted to 1982 (Col. 1X2)	6,818	8,670	10,110	11,936	13,720	15,980	19,104	23,178	29,256	36,780	57,574
5. Monthly Income Col. 4 ÷ 12	568	723	843	995	1,143	1,332	1,592	1,931	2,438	3,065	4,799

## THREE CHILDREN FAMILIES

1. Annual Income After Taxes (1972-73)	3,486	4,382	5,228	6,154	6,771	8,072	9,686	11,732	14,666	18,678	31,458
2. Basic Support Expenditures (1972-73)	4,582	4,796	6,894	6,998	7,010	7,791	8,420	9,177	11,001	13,243	18,542
3. Basic Support As Percentage of Income After Taxes	131.4	109.4	131.9	113.7	103.5	96.5	86.9	78.2	75.0	70.9	58.9
4. Relative Income Level Adjusted to 1982 (Col. 1X2)	6,972	8,764	10,456	12,308	13,542	16,144	19,372	23,464	29,332	37,356	62,916
5. Monthly Income Col. 4 ÷ 12	581	730	871	1,026	1,129	1,345	1,614	1,955	2,444	3,113	5,243

## FOUR CHILDREN FAMILIES

1. Annual Income After Taxes (1972-73)	3,451	4,383	5,287	6,264	7,055	8,411	10,002	11,944	15,124	18,874	28,977
2. Basic Support Expenditures (1972-73)	4,762	5,232	5,960	6,755	6,691	8,262	8,808	10,108	11,763	14,023	18,446
3. Basic Support As Percentage of Income After Taxes	138.0	119.4	112.7	107.8	94.8	98.2	88.1	84.6	77.8	74.3	63.7
4. Relative Income Level Adjusted to 1982 (Col. 1X2)	6,902	8,766	10,574	12,528	14,110	16,822	20,004	23,888	30,248	37,748	57,954
5. Monthly Income Col. 4 ÷ 12	575	731	881	1,044	1,176	1,402	1,667	1,991	2,521	3,146	4,830

schedule amounts to be used for 16 and 17 year old children only.

The assumption of equal consumption or per capita apportionment (when members of the household are all adults or near-adults) appeals to common sense, is simple and understandable and does not yield results which appear to conflict in a significant way with other accepted methods for determining what percentage of a family's disposable income should go to support children of that age. Our method would suggest that in one, two, three and four child families, the per-child expenditures should be 33%, 25%, 20% and 17% when expenditures and income are equal and when children are sixteen to 17 years of age. Economist Philip Eden, who uses averages based on the U.S.D.A. Estimates of the Cost of Raising Children, would say that the percentages should be 29%, 25%, 21% and 18%. (See Table 3)

Table 2 on page 17 shows the percentages of family income which are determined to go to basic child support expenditures when the equal shares assumption is applied to the C.E.S. data given for the 11 income levels and four family sizes. Those eleven income level percentages were used as the basis for determining the correlation between increased income level and decreased support expenditure percentages for the various size families. The resulting correlation formula was used to generate the schedule amounts for 16-17 year old children. Other age group figures were reductions from those amounts.

#### ADJUSTMENTS TO SUPPORT AMOUNT CALCULATION FOR LOWER INCOMES

In analyzing the C.E.S. data for the purpose of capturing the decrease in support percentages as income goes up, the data was left untouched in spite of the fact that at low income levels the data shows expenditures to exceed income, and the schedule to be used by the court could not reasonably indicate a support expectation based on such a phenomenon. In order to include very low incomes in the schedules (as was the desire of the ASCJ Committee) and to preserve some continuity in method and assumptions, the "equal shares" assumption was maintained subject to the caveat that apportioning of support expenditure obligations would be based on disposable income, not on the percentage of that income which the C.E.S. data shows as actual expenditures. This means that the percentage of income required for support at income levels below approximately \$1,000 per month will be constant. Thus, in the 16-17 year old age group, which is the highest percentage of support expected and which has the previously described relationship to economic "facts", these percentages are 33%, 50%, 60% and 67%.

TABLE 2

APPLICATION OF EQUAL SHARES  
ASSUMPTION TO C.E.S. DATA

FORMULA:

(Total basic support expenditure percentage from C.E.S. data, Table 1) divided by (number of family members) times (number of children in family).

<u>ONE CHILD</u>		<u>TWO CHILD</u>		<u>THREE CHILD</u>		<u>FOUR CHILD</u>		
Mo.		Mo.		Mo.		Mo.		
Income	%	Income	%	Income	%	Income	%	
565	43.0	568	72.0	581	78.8	575	92.0	FAMILY Expendi- tures Exceed 100%
715	39.3	723	59.0	730	65.6	731	79.6	
839	34.3	843	57.0	871	79.1	881	75.1	
980	34.3	995	50.5	1,026	68.2	1,044	71.8	
1,127	32.7	1,143	46.0	1,129	62.1	1,176	63.2	
1,328	29.3	1,332	46.0	1,345	57.9	1,402	65.4	
1,582	28.3	1,592	42.5	1,614	52.1	1,667	58.7	
1,905	25.3	1,931	39.5	1,955	46.9	1,991	56.4	
2,417	23.3	2,438	37.5	2,444	45.0	2,521	51.9	
3,054	22.7	3,065	35.5	3,113	42.5	3,146	49.5	
4,895	17.7	4,799	29.5	5,243	35.4	4,830	42.4	

DERIVATION OF THE RANGES - "HIGH", "MEDIUM" AND "LOW"

This schedule includes ranges of "high", "medium" and "low" for each age group. The "high" figures have the relationship to economic data which has been explained. The "low" figures were

30%, 20% 15% and 10% respectively, lower than the high figures in the one, two, three and four children families. The intent, based on a decision of the judges' Committee on January 15, 1982, was to capture a low figure which did not vary too greatly from the lower schedules presently in use within the state. A cursory comparison of support amounts which the schedule for 7-15 years of age children would have called for at the high range (at low-medium income levels), and support amounts called for in other schedules actually in use suggested variations exceeding 30% for one-child families and varying increasingly less for successively larger families.

During the formulation of the schedules there was considerable controversy regarding whether to include such ranges or not. Some argued that the ranges would simply promote controversy rather than expedite settlement. On the other hand, a criticism of schedules by bar members is that they tend to be applied unquestioningly by the bench. The decision to include ranges was, ultimately, made by the Committee in response to this latter problem. Furthermore, the "range" is designed to facilitate settlement by assisting counsel to present and explain to clients credible parameters of support obligations which are standard for the court.

#### REDUCTION TO DERIVE DIFFERENT AGE GROUP SCHEDULES

The "equal shares" assumption used to develop the 16-17 years of age figures was known at the outset not to be appropriate when children are younger, and some basis for adjustment was sought. The table developed by Philip Eden from U.S.D.A. estimates was used for this basis (Table 3, page 19).

All of the figures found in the 7-15 and 0-6 columns are the result of a straight application of 13 and 26 percent reductions, respectively, to the amounts derived for the 16-17 years of age column. These reductions were achieved by averaging the figures for the relevant age groups and calculating the percent decrease as shown in Table 3. Notice that it would have been possible to compute separate reductions for each size of family instead of using one aggregate average reduction. The effect of this, however, would have been to raise the single child support figures, lower them for four-child families and compress the differences between them. This was viewed as undesirable for ad hoc reasons relating to existing schedule practices.

#### SUMMARY

1. The C.E.S. data was summarized to establish patterns relating basic support expenditures by families as a function of varying incomes.

2. The equal shares assumption was applied to derive a schedule for 16-17 year old children.
3. The correlation formula was developed to extend the data to cover all income levels.
4. The low income figures were adjusted.
5. The amounts from the 16-17 years of age schedule were reduced to derive the amounts for the other age-group schedules.

TABLE 3

COST OF RAISING CHILDREN AS A PERCENTAGE OF FAMILY DISPOSABLE INCOME, BY NUMBER OF CHILDREN, INCOME LEVEL, REGION AND TYPE 1960 - 61

Age	All, up to and including Moderate Income		Regions	All	Type	All, excluding farm	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)		
	1 Child Estimated a)	Each of 2 Children	Each of 3 Children	Each of 4 Children	Each of 5 Children		
Under 1	23 %	18 %	14 %	11 %	10 %		
1	23	18	14	11	10		
2-3	24	19	15	12	10		
4-5	25	20	16	13	11		
6	25	20	17	14	12		
7-9	26	21	17	14	12		
10-11	27	22	18	15	13		
12	27	23	19	16	13		
13-15	28	24	20	17	14		
16-17	29	25	21	18	16		

AVERAGE = 17%  
 $\frac{23 - 17}{23} = 26\%$  reduction

AVERAGE = 20%  
 $\frac{23 - 20}{23} = 13\%$  reduction

AVERAGE = 23%

Source: Calculated from U.S. Department of Agriculture, Cost of Raising a Child, Derived from 1960-61 Survey of Consumer Expenditures, Sept. 1971, pp. 24-41, and 61.

a) Estimated by author on basis of interrelationships of larger size families.

## PLANS FOR REVISION

The judges' Committee recognizes that a major undertaking like the promulgation of recommended statewide uniform guidelines is riddled with complexity and differences of opinion. The ASCJ has distributed these guidelines as a suggested model for use by local jurisdictions with the intent of soliciting comments after approximately one year of use. The Family Law Committee will gather information about their use by local jurisdictions during the interim and after January 1, 1984 will undertake a full review of the form and substance of the guidelines and schedule amounts, in order to consider a revision in 1984. The Bar, as well as individual practitioners, are encouraged to make their comments known to the Committee at any time after the schedule has been in use for one year, and prior to June 30, 1984.

In the meantime, it is hoped that this initial effort will prove useful to bench, bar and public in this critical area affecting individual needs and highly important issues of public policy.

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