

Child Support Temporary Reduction



On Feb. 1, 2021 the Washington State Division of Child Support implemented a new law. This law helps DCS invest in the long-term financial stability of parents who face barriers due to incarceration. Parents who are incarcerated face significant obstacles upon completion of their sentence, which can be barriers to their ability to pay child support. The law's intent is to support incarcerated parents with successful reentry into society, which may encourage consistent, sustained child support payments.

How it works:

The new law provides a temporary reduction in child support for incarcerated parents who:

- Are incarcerated on or after Feb. 1, 2021.
- Are incarcerated for or sentenced to at least six months in confinement.
- Do not have the ability to pay child support.
- Have a Washington state child support order that contains a section referencing abatement.

What does this mean?

DCS can temporarily reduce a parent's child support if they are currently incarcerated, their order has the required language and they do not have the ability to pay support during incarceration.



What can parents who are incarcerated expect from the abatement law?

- An eligible incarcerated parent (confined for or sentenced to at least six months and abatement language is included in the support order) may have their child support temporarily reduced to \$10 per month per child support order regardless of the number of children on that order.
- For child support orders that include abatement language, the child support amount will gradually increase back to the full ordered amount over the first year after release from confinement.
- If the support order does not contain the language needed to qualify for reduced child support payments, the order may be modified to include abatement language. For more information, please call 800-422-KIDS.

Both parties to the child support order have the right to a hearing about a reduction in child support.

DCS needs to be notified when a parent is incarcerated. If DCS learns of a parent's confinement only after they have completed their sentence, we cannot retroactively reduce their child support.

If you have questions, or need further assistance, please call us at 800-442-KIDS.



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