

Your Court Hearing

The Role of Child Support Services - Our role is to present the facts of each case to the court for both parties. Our goal is to have a Child Support Services (CSS) representative speak with each customer prior to the hearing; however, you will not be able to speak directly with the 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.

Matters in Front of the Court - Matters in front of the Court on the 5th floor are for CSS cases only. Only open CSS cases with issues related to child and medical support are heard in these courtrooms. CSS does not handle visitation matters. Court Commissioners conduct the hearings. Once the Commissioner is satisfied he/she has heard all the relevant facts, he/she will make a decision and a child support order is entered.

How Child Support Is Determined - Both parents have a legal duty to provide financial support for their children. California law requires courts to follow statewide guidelines (Guideline Calculator) when setting child support orders. The following are some of the factors the court may consider 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)
- Number of biological children living in each parent's home

To access the Guideline Calculator or to obtain a copy of the user guide containing all the factors in setting child support, access the California Department of Child Support Services website at <http://www.childsup.ca.gov/Resources/CalculateChildSupport.aspx>.

Continuances - 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, we will relay your request to the court, but there is no guarantee that it will be honored and the court may proceed without you. If you have been ordered by the court to appear, you should be in court unless you obtain permission from the court to be absent.

Getting Ready

Documents Needed - You will need to provide the documents listed below to CSS **at least two weeks prior to the court hearing** and bring a copy of the documents with you 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 are trained to provide guidance in completing forms sent to customers by our office. CSS does not fill out the forms for customers or offer any legal assistance.

- Assistance is offered in a group setting
- Customers are assisted on a first come, first serve basis
- If you need assistance, you must bring the documents listed above

**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
1-866-901-3212 or visit our website at:
www.css.ocgov.com

SmartForms to File Electronically - Orange County Superior Court is among the first to offer web access to forms using Adobe's SmartForm technology. The SmartForms are located on the Orange County Superior Court website at: www.occourts.org/forms.

Important: Email the courtesy confirmation you receive from Superior Court to CSS at CSS-SmartForm@css.ocgov.com.



Your Court Day

Before You Leave Home

- Dress in casual business attire
- Bring a pen or pencil
- Arrive to court early and park in visitor parking – parking fees apply (no validation provided)
- 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 Representative at the Information / Check-in Desk. Have your case information with you prior to check-in.

The Pre-Hearing Interview - You will have the opportunity to have a pre-hearing interview with a Child Support Representative. The goal of the interview is to obtain any updated information available after original documents were submitted to the court. Customers are seen on a first-come, first-serve basis. If you are represented by an attorney, please have your attorney present for the interview.

- The representative will meet with each parent to verify/obtain the 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 parents at the same time.
- Based on the facts of the case, the representative will offer both parents an opportunity to reach an agreement regarding the child support amount. If an agreement is reached, both parents will sign a Stipulation (a written agreement filed with the court) and be given further instructions. If an agreement is not reached, 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. Please have your attorney present for the interview.

During the Court Hearing

- Check in with the courtroom bailiff. The bailiff will provide instructions and information to everyone. Notify the bailiff if you need an interpreter or if there is an active restraining order.
- The Commissioner will ask the Child Support Services Attorney which parties are present and approximately how long the cases will take. This is referred to as the "General Calendar Call".
- After the calendar call, each case will be heard individually by the Commissioner and not necessarily in sequential order. When your case is called, stand at the front counsel table and remain standing until you have been sworn in.
- The Child Support Services Attorney will explain to the court the reason for the hearing. Be prepared to respond if you are asked to confirm or clarify any of the information.
- If a final decision is not reached, the Commissioner may continue the hearing to a later date.

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.

Contacting Us - You may need to contact us regarding your upcoming court date or 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. - 4:30 p.m.

Note: 7:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m. is reserved for appointments. To guarantee service, please arrive by 4:00 p.m.

Visit us online: www.css.ocgov.com
Phone (toll-free): (866) 901-3212
TTY (hearing impaired): (866) 399-4096