

## *Child Support Calculation Overview*

The calculation of a child support obligation for parents can be simple or complex depending on a variety of factors. The resource page of our website, [mkhansenlaw.com](http://mkhansenlaw.com), provides you with a great deal of information regarding how child support is calculated, collected, and other related matters. Understanding how child support is calculated will be helpful to the mediation process.

In order to calculate child support, I will need the following information:

### **INCOME**

The Child Support Guidelines, "Guidelines", require that I discern the income of both parties derived from all sources, "except all means-tested public assistance benefits..." (§ 4-204) In order to determine both parents' income, I need copies of the last two years tax returns together with all attachments, *including* all 1099's and W2's and two recent paystubs from all sources of employment. The tax returns allow the parties to review and determine if there is income from other sources and/or if there are variations in income such as overtime, bonuses, dividends, self-employment income, etc. If the parties agree that the exchange of current paystubs would provide an accurate reflection of the parties' current earnings, then the parties may mutually agree that there is no need to exchange tax returns. Unless they agree that the tax returns should not be exchanged, I request that they be provided. All information provided to me will be shared with the other party as I believe that it is best to "trust and verify" the financial information relating to the child support calculation.

### **HEALTH INSURANCE**

The out-of-pocket expenses for the medical, dental, and vision insurance for the children is factored into the child support formula. The parent(s) providing medical, dental and/or vision insurance should obtain from their benefits office a printout showing the breakdown of the cost they incur for providing insurance for the child(ren). It is only the additional charge the parent incurs for having the child(ren) added to the policy that is considered. The amount deducted from a parent's pay is not necessarily an accurate reflection of the cost that is related to the child(ren)'s coverage, therefore, documentation showing the breakdown of the cost of the insurance coverage will assist in determining the child support obligation. (§ 4-215)

### **CHILD SUPPORT FOR OTHER CHILDREN**

The Guidelines take into consideration the support obligation for other children the parties have outside of the case at hand. If there is a Court Order relating to other children, I need a copy of the child support calculation and Support Order. I can obtain this information if you provide me with the county and a case number or names of the parties in that action. If there are children born to other relationships, but there is no Support Order in effect for the child(ren), I will discuss with you the information I need to complete the calculation.

Please note that your child support obligation is only one of several support obligations relating to the children. In addition, parents will share on a pro rata basis, the cost of work and school related childcare as well as certain medical, dental, and optical expenses. Other expenses such as school and extracurricular expenses may also be shared. These obligations will be discussed further during mediation.

### **I will need to following information to properly prepare your child support calculation:**

- Last two tax returns, including 1099's and W-2's (unless parties agree otherwise.)
- Two most recent paystubs from all income sources (including information about frequency of pay periods).
- A breakdown of the **additional** cost to provide medical, dental, and/or vision insurance for the children.
- The amount of child support paid for other children, if applicable.