

## How is Child Support calculated?

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Child support is one of the many issues that arise when couples with children separate. The goal of child support is to ensure that children are financially supported by both of their parents, despite their parents no longer living together.

Child support is typically calculated based on a few factors, including (1) the parenting arrangements, (2) how many children are involved, (3) the incomes of the parents, and (4) where the parents reside. In addition to the monthly amount of child support, there is typically an amount to be paid for special or extraordinary expenses.

### **Parenting Arrangements**

When the parenting arrangements are such that one parent has majority parenting time and the other parent has periods of parenting time, child support is money paid from the parent with periods of parenting time to the other parent with majority parenting time. This is because majority parenting time means that the child resides with that parent the majority of the time and, as a result, that parent is often incurring the majority of the expenses to care for the child.

When the parenting arrangements are such that both parents share time with their child or children (i.e., the child is with both parents 40% to 60% of the time), the higher earning parent typically pays the “set-off” amount to the lower earning parent. The “set-off” amount is the difference between what each parent would pay to the other based on their income and number of children.

### **Number of Children Involved**

Another factor that child support calculations consider is the number of children that are involved. The child support amount increases with the number of children that must be supported by the parents.

### **Parents’ Incomes**

Child support is calculated using the parents’ income, which includes any salary, wages, bonuses, commissions and other sources of income that the paying parent receives. In the case of self-employed individuals, a deeper analysis is often necessary to properly determine what that parent receives or has available to them for income.

Where it is reasonable to do so, the Court may impute a parent's income to determine their child support obligation. Imputation is the process of setting an individual's income at an amount that is appropriate based on past earnings, earning potential, or other factors.

### **Province of Residence**

Each province has a "Child Support Table" under the Federal Child Support Guidelines which set out the monthly amount of child support to be paid. The tables vary from province to province based on different tax rates. For the Manitoba Table, the amount is determined based on the paying parent's income and the number of children. For example, a paying parent living in Manitoba, earning \$40,000 per year, and paying support for two children, would pay the amount of \$568.00 per month.

### **Special or Extraordinary Expenses**

Special or extraordinary expenses are an amount in addition to the basic table amount for expenses that are special or extraordinary based on the family and the child. These can include childcare expenses, health or dental related expenses that are \$100 per year over any insurance coverage, primary or secondary school programs, post-secondary education expenses, and extra-curricular expenses.

If it is determined that such expenses are necessary and reasonable considering the family's means and circumstances, the parents share these expenses equally or proportionate to their income.

### **Other Considerations**

There can be further considerations in the calculation of child support that are not mentioned here, such as where the child is over the age of majority, where the parent earns over \$150,000 per year, or where there may be undue hardship. It is also important to remember that child support is often subject to review and variation due to changing circumstances such as incomes or parenting arrangements.

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