

Six Ways to Enforce Child Support

The basis for child support comes from the idea that both parents need to support their children. Most states use a set formula set by statute to set the child support amount. An [attorney](#) practicing [family law](#) can show the formula in a given state. The formula is based in part on the parents' income, whether the children have special needs, and the number and ages and of the children. It should be noted that child support obligations are independent of the noncustodial parent's visitation rights. The child support obligations typically continue until the child dies, turns 18, or gets married.

Child support obligations are enforced by filing a petition in court. An [attorney](#) practicing family law likely has filed several petitions with the court. The petition allows for several methods to collect, including civil contempt, criminal contempt, and other methods:

1. Civil contempt is used to enforce a court order. The person who is obligated to and is able to pay child support can choose to pay it or be incarcerated.
2. Criminal contempt is used to sentence the person who is obligated to pay child support and willfully refuses.
3. Child Support Recovery Act makes it a federal crime for a person who is obligated to and willfully chooses not to pay child support if the amount owed exceeds \$5,000 or extends more than 1 year in arrearages.
4. Tax refund proceeds can be used by the state against the person is obligated to pay child support and who owes \$500 or more.
5. Automatic wage withholding (wage garnishment) is used to require an employer to deduct the ordered sum from the person who is obligated to pay child support and to pay the court clerk the amount.
6. State license renewals, both professional and drivers licenses, can be contingent upon the person obligated to pay child support.

Above is a list of available options to enforce child support. If a parent needs help with any of the items listed, that parent should [contact](#) a [lawyer](#) who practices [family law](#).