

Changes are coming to child support in Ohio. What it means for your payments.

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COLUMBUS - Ohio just updated the way it calculates how much parents owe in child support – for the first time in 26 years.

How children are raised – from splitting parenting duties to paying for health insurance – has changed dramatically since 1992, when Ohio last revised its child support calculations. To make matters worse, lawmakers then were relying on economic data from the mid-1980s.

[Changes signed into law](#) by Gov. John Kasich Friday will update how child support payments are calculated and make it easier to adjust those numbers in the future.

What you pay or what you receive will depend on many factors, but here are some changes you can expect:

- **If you are paying the minimum monthly amount:** The minimum amount of child support per month would increase from \$50 to \$80 for new orders.

- **If you don't make much money:** You might pay less. If you make \$8,400 or less each year, you would pay the minimum monthly amount of \$80. If you make about \$14,000 or less each year, your child support payment cannot exceed your income or leave you without a buffer.
- **If you make more money:** You might pay more. How much more depends on the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, which will rewrite the table that serves as a starting point for payments.
- **If you split parenting time:** Your child support payment might decrease if you spend significant time with your child.
- **If you are paying child support to multiple people:** Your payments might go up. Under the changes, each child would get a similar amount to start. Currently, the first child whose parent files for support gets a larger amount.
- **If you pay for your child's health insurance:** Generally, the parent who receives child support will also be responsible for providing health insurance. Whoever pays for insurance could then deduct that cost from their income when calculating child support.
- **If you are paying for pricey childcare:** Child support will pay for daycare to a point, but there will be a cap on childcare expenses in calculating support payments.

Worried about the changes? You'll have some time to adjust.

The updates won't take effect for nine months. That should give Ohio Department of Job and Family Services time to roll out new payments based on updated economic data.

Even then, the changes aren't automatic: parents would need to update their payments through a [county child support enforcement agency or court](#). (New child support orders would follow these rules.)

The goal of these new rules – in addition to updating an antiquated system – was to collect more money for children.

Right now, collection rates depend greatly upon income. Parents who make between \$10,000 and \$40,000 a year paid 55 percent of the child support owed, [according to a 2013 review](#). The statewide average is closer to 66 percent.

"Some people are paying so much in child support that they don't have money to meet own bills," said Rep. Theresa Gavarone, a Wood County Republican. By lowering those payments, lawmakers hope to encourage compliance.

Still, groups that advocate for lower-income Ohioans worry that reducing payments might hurt children. For example, \$80 a month won't pay for any child's basic needs, said Graham Bowman of the Ohio Poverty Law Center.

Trying to strike a balance, the new law allows officials at the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services to make changes to calculating child support payments in the future rather than wait for legislators to pass another law.