



Understanding Child Support

Georgia child support is set using two documents that work together: the Child Support Worksheet and the Child Support Addendum. Because the worksheet adjusts for each parent's parenting time, the parenting schedule is generally worked out first.

The Worksheet: the Calculator

- 1 Parenting Time First.** Each parent's number of overnights under the parenting plan is settled first, because it affects the final number.
- 2 Income.** Each parent's gross monthly income from all sources is entered, such as wages, bonuses, and self-employment income. Income can be imputed if a party is unemployed or under employed.
- 3 Basic Obligation.** Combined income and the number of children set a basic amount from the state's table, divided by each parent's share of the income.
- 4 Added Costs.** The children's health insurance premiums and work-related child care costs are factored in.
- 5 Parenting Time Adjustment.** Support is adjusted based on the parenting time each parent has.
- 6 Deviations.** Any other adjustments up or down, such as for extraordinary expenses, are shown and explained. The worksheet then shows the final number and exactly how it was reached.

The Addendum: the Order

Amount. The support amount and which parent pays.

Frequency. When payments are due and how they are made.

Duration. Generally until the child turns 18, or up to 20 if still in high school.

Additional Expenses. Who carries the children's insurance and how expenses like medical, extracurricular, and childcare are split.

What to keep in mind

Both documents are filed together. The worksheet explains the number, and the addendum makes it an enforceable order.

Accurate income documents matter. The result is only as good as the numbers entered.

Even though parenting time affects the calculation, support and parenting time are enforced separately. Neither can be withheld because of the other.

Support can generally be modified later if circumstances substantially change. Until then, the current order stays in effect.

This guide provides general information about child support in Georgia family law matters and is not legal advice about your specific case. Your attorney will explain how child support applies to your situation.

YOUR ROLE

Confirm the parenting schedule, provide current pay stubs, tax returns, and costs for the children's health insurance, child care, and activities, and let us know right away if your income changes.

QUESTIONS?

As always, all questions and requests should be directed to the team via email to team@pepitone.law.