

598.21B Orders for child support and medical support.

1. Child support guidelines.

a. The supreme court shall maintain uniform child support guidelines and criteria and review the guidelines and criteria at least once every four years, pursuant to the federal Family Support Act of 1988, Pub. L. No. 100-485. The initial review shall be performed within four years of October 12, 1989, and subsequently within the four-year period of the most recent review.

b. The guidelines prescribed by the supreme court shall incorporate provisions for medical support as defined in chapter 252E to be effective on or before January 1, 1991.

c. It is the intent of the general assembly that, to the extent possible within the requirements of federal law, the court and the child support recovery unit consider the individual facts of each judgment or case in the application of the guidelines and determine the support obligation accordingly. It is also the intent of the general assembly that in the supreme court's review of the guidelines, the supreme court shall do both of the following:

(1) Emphasize the ability of a court to apply the guidelines in a just and appropriate manner based upon the individual facts of a judgment or case.

(2) In determining monthly child support payments, consider other children for whom either parent is legally responsible for support and other child support obligations actually paid by either party pursuant to a court or administrative order.

d. The guidelines prescribed by the supreme court shall be used by the department of human services in determining child support payments under sections 252C.2 and 252C.4. A variation from the guidelines shall not be considered by the department without a record or written finding, based on stated reasons, that the guidelines would be unjust or inappropriate as determined under criteria prescribed by the supreme court.

2. Child support orders.

a. *Court's authority.* Unless prohibited pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1738B, upon every judgment of annulment, dissolution, or separate maintenance, the court may order either parent or both parents to pay an amount reasonable and necessary for supporting a child.

b. Calculating amount of support.

(1) In establishing the amount of support, consideration shall be given to the responsibility of both parents to support and provide for the welfare of the minor child and of a child's need, whenever practicable, for a close relationship with both parents.

(2) For purposes of calculating a support obligation under this section, the income of the parent from whom support is sought shall be used as the noncustodial parent income for purposes of application of the guidelines, regardless of the legal custody of the child.

(3) For the purposes of including a child's dependent benefit in calculating a support obligation under this section for a child whose parent has been awarded disability benefits under the federal Social Security Act, the provisions of section 598.22C shall apply.

c. *Rebuttable presumption in favor of guidelines.* There shall be a rebuttable presumption that the amount of child support which would result from the application of the guidelines prescribed by the supreme court is the correct amount of child support to be awarded.

d. Variation from guidelines. A variation from the guidelines shall not be considered by a court without a record or written finding, based on stated reasons, that the guidelines would be unjust or inappropriate as determined under the criteria prescribed by the supreme court.

e. Special circumstances justifying variation from guidelines. Unless the special circumstances of the case justify a deviation, the court or the child support recovery unit shall establish a monthly child support payment of twenty-five dollars for a parent who is nineteen years of age or younger, who has not received a high school or high school equivalency diploma, and to whom each of the following apply:

(1) The parent is attending a school or program described as follows or has been identified as one of the following:

(a) The parent is in full-time attendance at an accredited school and is pursuing a course of study leading to a high school diploma.

(b) The parent is attending an instructional program leading to a high school equivalency diploma.

(c) The parent is attending a vocational education program approved pursuant to chapter 258.

(d) The parent has been identified by the director of special education of the area education agency as a child requiring special education as defined in section 256B.2.

(2) The parent provides proof of compliance with the requirements of subparagraph (1) to the child support recovery unit, if the unit is providing services under chapter 252B, or if the unit is not providing services pursuant to chapter 252B, to the court as the court may direct. Failure to provide proof of compliance under this subparagraph or proof of compliance under section 598.21G is grounds for modification of the support order using the uniform child support guidelines and imputing an income to the parent equal to a forty-hour workweek at the state minimum wage, unless the parent's education, experience, or actual earnings justify a higher income.

3. Medical support. The court shall order as child medical support a health benefit plan as defined in chapter 252E if available to either parent at a reasonable cost. A health benefit plan is considered reasonable in cost if it is employment-related or other group health insurance, regardless of the service delivery mechanism. The premium cost of the health benefit plan may be considered by the court as a reason for varying from the child support guidelines. If a health benefit plan is not available at a reasonable cost, the court may order any other provisions for medical support as defined in chapter 252E.

4. Necessary content of order. Orders made pursuant to this section need mention only those factors relevant to the particular case for which the orders are made but shall contain the names, birth dates, addresses, and counties of residence of the petitioner and respondent.