

598.1 Definitions.

As used in [this chapter](#):

1. “*Best interest of the child*” includes but is not limited to the opportunity for maximum continuous physical and emotional contact possible with both parents, unless direct physical or significant emotional harm to the child may result from this contact. Refusal by one parent to provide this opportunity without just cause shall be considered harmful to the best interest of the child.

2. “*Dissolution of marriage*” means a termination of the marriage relationship and shall be synonymous with the term “*divorce*”.

3. “*Joint custody*” or “*joint legal custody*” means an award of legal custody of a minor child to both parents jointly under which both parents have legal custodial rights and responsibilities toward the child and under which neither parent has legal custodial rights superior to those of the other parent. Rights and responsibilities of joint legal custody include but are not limited to equal participation in decisions affecting the child’s legal status, medical care, education, extracurricular activities, and religious instruction.

4. “*Joint physical care*” means an award of physical care of a minor child to both joint legal custodial parents under which both parents have rights and responsibilities toward the child including but not limited to shared parenting time with the child, maintaining homes for the child, providing routine care for the child and under which neither parent has physical care rights superior to those of the other parent.

5. “*Legal custody*” or “*custody*” means an award of the rights of legal custody of a minor child to a parent under which a parent has legal custodial rights and responsibilities toward the child. Rights and responsibilities of legal custody include but are not limited to decision making affecting the child’s legal status, medical care, education, extracurricular activities, and religious instruction.

6. “*Minor child*” means any person under legal age.

7. “*Physical care*” means the right and responsibility to maintain a home for the minor child and provide for the routine care of the child.

8. “*Postsecondary education subsidy*” means an amount for educational expenses of a child who is between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two years if the child is regularly attending a course of career and technical training either as a part of a regular school program or under special arrangements adapted to the individual person’s needs; or is, in good faith, a full-time student in a college, university, or community college; or has been accepted for admission to a college, university, or community college and the next regular term has not yet begun.

9. “*Support*” or “*support payments*” means an amount which the court may require either of the parties to pay under a temporary order or a final judgment or decree, and may include alimony, child support, maintenance, and any other term used to describe these obligations. For orders entered on or after July 1, 1990, unless the court specifically orders otherwise, medical support is not included in the monetary amount of child support. The obligations shall include support for a child who is between the ages of eighteen and nineteen years who is engaged full-time in completing high school graduation or equivalency requirements in a manner which is reasonably expected to result in completion of the requirements prior to the person reaching nineteen years of age; and may include support for a child of any age who is dependent on the parties to the dissolution proceedings because of physical or mental disability.

[C71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §598.1; 82 Acts, ch 1250, §1]

84 Acts, ch 1088, §1; 86 Acts, ch 1245, §1495; 90 Acts, ch 1224, §41; 90 Acts, ch 1253, §120; 97 Acts, ch 175, §182 – 185, 200; 2016 Acts, ch 1108, §69; 2025 Acts, ch 57, §1, 5

Referred to in §8.89, 252B.1, 252B.13A, 252B.14, 252B.24, 252D.16, 633.425, 714I.4

2025 amendment to subsection 8 applies to a support order, decree, or judgment entered or pending on or after July 1, 2025; 2025 Acts, ch 57, §5

Subsection 8 amended