

Child Support - Sharing child related expenses between parents

Determining child support in mediation clarifies how child related expenses will be shared by both parents. When an agreement regarding child support is defined through mediation, the mediator will indicate in mediator notes or in a memorandum of understanding how the amount of child support was determined – whether by agreement of the parties, determined by an attorney, or by the child support enforcement office.

The method of determining the amount of funds necessary and how much will be exchanged between parents should be clearly understood by both parents. You have two basic options:

Option 1: The actual amount of child support is based on mutual agreement

Define and list all child related expenses incurred by each parent on a weekly or monthly basis, then determine how expenses will be shared by each parent. Include:

- Food
- Clothing
- child care
- medical care
- school related expenses
- transportation
- extra-curricular activities
- health insurance
- Incidentals including haircuts
- an allowance for housing, utilities, etc.

An additional aspect of planning to meet the needs of the children is to anticipate probable changes related to inflation and the child's changing needs. When should the agreement be reviewed or updated?

If this method is chosen to determine child support, both parties are encouraged to review the agreed plan with your attorneys to be assured of acceptability by the court.

Option 2: Use the North Carolina Child Support Guidelines

Identify the amount of child support according to the North Carolina Child Support Guidelines. Guidelines are available to the public through the Clerk of Court's office on the first floor of the court house and through attorneys' offices. Computation of child support is not done by the mediator.

Computation can be done by:

- The parties themselves
- An attorney
- The Child Support Enforcement Office at the Department of Children's Services (232-2621)