



Department of Child Support Services (DCSS)

DCSS Works with Families to Ensure Fair, Equitable Support

Sue Philpott, Child Support Operations Manager

The Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) is continuing its efforts to work closely with parents when there is a major change in a family's circumstances to ensure they receive consistent monthly child support payments. In June, the Loma Linda office was open for extended hours on a Saturday to make it easier for those unable to visit the office during the week. It is indicative of the department's goal to engage parents to work together to make their children's lives and their own more rewarding. Guidelines used by the courts help to establish a child support order for financial and medical support for children.

DCSS not only assists families with the initial establishment of a support order, but also helps them to make an adjustment to that order when there is a significant change in circumstances for either parent. There may be changes in how much time the child spends with a parent or a change in income for either parent resulting from a promotion, loss of a job, or disability.

"When you involve parents in the process, they are more likely to participate because they have an increased sense of ownership in the case," says operations manager Brian Hocking. "We encourage parents to let us know immediately if there is a change of circumstances that may affect the amount of support they would be required to pay."

When the department becomes aware of a change in circumstances, a review is conducted to verify employment status, financial information, time spent with the child, and other information. The findings of the review are shared with the parents and can result in a request to increase or decrease the amount of child support being paid. The department educates parents about their options to resolve the matter and reach an agreement. If they come to an agreement on the new child support amount, they can sign a stipulation that is then filed with the court. If the parties are unable to reach an agreement, a hearing is set for the court to resolve the issue.

"We want to make sure that all child support orders are accurate so that the parent ordered to pay support is not hampered by an obligation they cannot reasonably pay," says Hocking. "When an order is fair and equitable, there is a greater chance that the parent owing support will consistently pay towards that obligation."

