



MAKE SURE YOUR CHILDREN HAVE JOYFUL MEMORIES THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

by Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott

DURING THE HOLIDAYS, FAMILIES GATHER to honor traditions, give thanks and make memories. Unfortunately, it can also put a financial strain on parents as they purchase gifts or host families for a holiday meal. By paying your child support and being there for your children, you can help ensure the holidays are a memorable and joyful time of year.

Child support enables parents to put a roof over their children's heads, clothes on their backs and food on the table. During the holidays, these challenges are compounded as parents also try to provide gifts, a special meal or a trip to grandma and grandpa's house. That is why we are giving parents this special reminder to pay their child support.

The Attorney General's Child Support Division extends a heartfelt thank you to those parents who regularly pay their child support in full and on time. In the fiscal year that ended August 31, parents paid more than \$2.9 billion in child support, and since Attorney General Abbott took office in December 2002, more than \$18 billion in child support has been collected.

Sometimes circumstances arise, such as losing a job, that make it difficult to

meet one's child support obligation. For parents who are in a situation like this, contact the Child Support Division so we can work together to determine a course of action.

In partnership with the Texas Workforce Commission, the Child Support Division began the NCP Choices project that allows local judges to order unemployed and underemployed parents who are behind on their payments to receive employment services in order to help avoid jail time. The project operates in 17 locations across the state. Since 2005, NCP Choices has collected more than \$25 million from parents who were neither working nor paying child support when ordered into the program.

The Attorney General's Office strives to be accessible to all of its customers, who often need up-to-date information about their child support case. The Child Support Division provides 24-hour access to parents who are seeking information about their child support case. The agency's toll-free automated phone line is (800) 252-8014. Child Support Interactive, accessed from the main Attorney General website at www.texasattorneygeneral.gov, gives visitors

another avenue for obtaining general information about the child support program and applying for services.

Ultimately, what children need most is to know their parents care about them. The Office of the Attorney General helps parents who are having trouble getting access to their children. We awarded a grant to Legal Aid of Northwest Texas, which operates a statewide Access and Visitation Hotline. The hotline is staffed by attorneys who provide legal information and assistance about child custody, along with information about visitation, paternity and child support matters. The hotline's toll-free number, (866) 292-4636, is available Monday through Friday from 1 to 7 p.m.

Please help create joyful memories for your children this holiday season by being there for them and paying your child support. Your faithfulness will reap great rewards as you help your children remember the holidays as a time of provision rather than hardship.

The Office of the Attorney General wishes you and your family a safe and happy holiday season!

- December 2010

POINTS TO REMEMBER



CHILD SUPPORT AND THE HOLIDAYS

Parents should make a special effort to pay their child support during the holidays

- Because family expenses usually increase during the holidays.
- To show their children they are loved.
- Because it is their legal duty to do so.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL:

- Helps establish a child's paternity.
- Establishes and enforces child support orders.
- Reviews and adjusts child support payments.
- Collects and distributes payments.
- Partners with other agencies to help parents find jobs to meet their child support obligations.
- Works with groups that facilitate parental access and visitation.
- Encourages parental involvement in their children's lives.

APPLY FOR CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES BY:

- Visiting Child Support Interactive on the main Attorney General website at www.texasattorneygeneral.gov.
- Calling the 24-hour voice response system at (800) 252-8014



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
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