



# Child support when you are on OW or ODSP

## Child support rules in family law

Family law says that all parents must support their “dependent” children.

Children are usually dependent until they are **at least 18 years old** and sometimes longer.

Parents must provide financial support even if they have **never lived** with their child. This is true even if the parents have never been married to each other or lived together.

When parents do not live together, it’s often the parent who the child lives with who has more expenses for the child.

The other parent must help by paying money to the parent the child lives with. This is called **child support**.

## Child support and the amount of money you get from OW or ODSP

Child support payments do **not** affect the amount of money you get from Ontario Works (OW) or the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP).

So, if you get child support, you get to keep that money plus your money from OW or ODSP.

But this rule does **not** apply to child support owed before:

- January 1, 2017, if you get income support from ODSP
- February 1, 2017, if you get financial assistance from OW

### Child support owed earlier

For any child support payments you get that were owed before those dates, you have to pay back OW or ODSP.

The time period that matters is when the child support was owed, not when you actually get the money.

So you must pay back OW or ODSP if you get a payment that was owed **before** the rule started.

## Getting child support

If you apply for or are getting assistance from OW or ODSP, they will not force you to try to get child support.

But if you do get child support payments, you must tell them.

For more information about applying for and collecting child support, go to [www.stepstojustice.ca/child-support](http://www.stepstojustice.ca/child-support).

## If you disagree with a decision

If you disagree with an OW or ODSP decision, you may be able to appeal to the Social Benefits Tribunal (SBT). The SBT can change the decision.

To appeal to the SBT, you must first ask OW or ODSP to give you:

- a decision in writing, and
- an internal review.

Usually, you must ask for an internal review within 30 days.

For more information about appealing a decision by OW, go to [www.stepstojustice.ca/disagree-OW-decision](http://www.stepstojustice.ca/disagree-OW-decision).

And for information about appealing a decision by ODSP, go to [www.stepstojustice.ca/disagree-ODSP-decision](http://www.stepstojustice.ca/disagree-ODSP-decision).

## Get legal help

If you have questions about OW or ODSP rules or do not agree with a decision OW or ODSP makes, contact your local community legal clinic.

To find the clinic nearest you, visit Legal Aid Ontario's website at [www.legalaid.on.ca/legal-clinics](http://www.legalaid.on.ca/legal-clinics).

Or call them:

**Toll-free:** 1-800-668-8258

**TTY use Bell's Relay Service:** 1-800-855-0511

Legal Aid Ontario may also be able to give you a certificate to get free legal advice about family law.



Visit **[www.stepstojustice.ca](http://www.stepstojustice.ca)** for more information about income assistance. This is general information for people in Ontario, Canada. It is not intended to be used as legal advice.

Vous pourriez avoir droit à des services en français devant les tribunaux ou auprès d'organismes gouvernementaux. Visitez **[www.justicepasapas.ca/droits-linguistiques-des-francophones](http://www.justicepasapas.ca/droits-linguistiques-des-francophones)**.