Child Support

Child support is money paid by one parent to the other parent to help support the parties' children. The purpose of child support is to make income available to the children between both parents' homes.

The child support guidelines use a mathematical formula set by law, which the court follows to create the child support amount. The Court almost always sets the child support amount based on the figure determined by the guidelines, but there are some rare exceptions. Usually, but not always, the parent who has less time with the children owes child support to the other parent.

The guidelines consider a variety of factors, such as:

- Each parent's income,
- The number of children the parties have,
- How many overnights the children spend with each parent per the Parenting Plan,
- How much a parent pays for health insurance for themselves and the children,
- How much a parent is paying for childcare,
- Whether the parent pays child support or alimony in a prior court case, and

Any other considerations the court deems necessary.

Health Insurance and uncovered medical expenses of a child.

Court orders about children must state who will be responsible for obtaining health insurance for the children and how medical expenses will be shared. The court must also determine how the parents will share the financial responsibility of the child's uncovered medical expenses. A parent could be ordered to pay all the uncovered expenses, a portion of the expenses, or none of the expenses.

Life Insurance.

Courts can order one parent to carry a life insurance policy on their life, naming the child as a beneficiary. The purpose of this is to make sure that money is available to the children if the parent paying child support dies. Life insurance must be reasonably available to the parent required to carry the policy for the court to order it.

Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Dependency Exemption.

Courts may order one parent to allow the other parent to claim the children for income tax purposes. If you want a court order explaining who will claim the children for tax purposes, you will need to include a request in your petition. The forms located on the Florida Courts website do not include a selection for tax exemption information, so you will need to **add your request to the petition**.