

Changes to NJ Child Support Guidelines Would Reflect Tough Times

[By Donald Scarinci](#)

Child support guidelines are an integral part of many New Jersey divorce proceedings involving children. The forms are completed by both parents and are considered by the court when establishing or modifying child support.

To ensure that they accurately reflect the costs of rearing children, federal law mandates that [NJ child support guidelines](#) be reviewed every four years. Not surprisingly, the latest round of changes takes the recent tough economic times into account, reflecting the economic reality that many families have been forced to get by with less.

New Jersey's child support guidelines are based on the "Income Shares Model," which considers both parents' incomes when determining support obligations. It also presumes the child to be entitled to the same amount of expenditures as when the parents were married. The expenses considered in the guidelines reflect national data on household expenditures collected by U.S. Department of Labor, known as the federal Consumer Expenditure Survey ("CEX").

The latest changes would be the third major overhaul of the guidelines since they were first adopted in 1986. The Supreme Court's Family Practice Committee is tasked with overseeing any changes to the guidelines. However, its proposed changes are largely based on the analysis and recommendations set forth in the "[Rutgers School of Social Work, New Jersey Child Support Institute Quadrennial Review: Final Report - March 22, 2013.](#)" The report was prepared in consultation with the Office of Child Support Services (OCSS) and the New Jersey Child Support Institute (NJCSI).

Among the most significant changes, the amended child support guidelines would "for the first time captures spending in families over a twelve-year period," from 2000 through 2011, which "encompasses prosperous years, recession years and the current slow recovery years." The new guidelines also consider family outlays as opposed to family expenditures. As a result, mortgage principal payments would be taken into account for the first time.

The committee also proposed additional changes designed to address issues that often arose under the old system. For instance, the new guidelines address expenses incurred for vehicles primarily used by a child, cases involving multiple children with different parenting time schedules, and the treatment of Social Security Disability benefits.

The proposed changes are open for comment until May 10, 2013.

Read more at <http://www.politickernj.com/dscarinci/64911/changes-nj-child-support-guidelines-would-reflect-tough-times#ixzz2RbIjiEdy>

