

Explanation of Child Support, Eligibility Requirements, Family Violence and Good Cause FAQs

This document answers common questions about eligibility requirements, child support, family violence, and good cause. Good cause is when a person has an acceptable reason for not complying with a program requirement.

Will the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) share information about my case to the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) Child Support Division?

HHSC will send information about your case if either:

- a child on your case gets TANF cash help; or
- an adult like a parent, stepparent, sibling, stepsibling, grandparent, uncle or aunt on your case gets TANF or Medicaid and they care for a child who:
 - Lives with them and
 - Is under 18 or is 18 and going to school full time.

What are the eligibility requirements when at least one parent gets TANF or Medicaid?

If the adult who takes care of the child gets TANF or Medicaid, they must:

- Give facts about any parent not living with the child.
- Help find any parent not living with the child.
- Help find out if a person is a legal parent.
- Go to court hearings or other meetings about child, medical or dental support.
- Tell the state about any payments they get from the parent not living with the child.
- If the adult caring for the child gets TANF, that parent also must give (assign) child, medical and dental support payments to the OAG's Child Support Division.
- If the child gets Medicaid, but the adult caring for the child doesn't get Medicaid, that adult can apply for child support services by going to www.TexasAttorneyGeneral.gov and selecting child support.

The OAG's Child Support Division tries to collect that money if the child got TANF before and money is still owed to the state for child, medical or dental support.

What kind of help can I get from the OAG Child Support Division?

You may get help with:

- Finding a child's parent.
- Finding out if a person is a legal parent.
- Getting child support payments.
- Getting medical support payments.
- Getting dental support payments.
- Finding out if the child can get some of the parent's benefits. For example, social security, military, veteran's benefits, health coverage, life insurance and inheritance.

What if I can't provide information about a parent?

If you cannot provide information about a parent, you need to show proof that you have a good reason, known as good cause, not to provide that information.

Reasons you might not be able to provide information about a parent and the type of proof HHSC needs.

- The child was born because of rape or incest. Proof: Birth certificates, medical records or legal records.
- The child is in the process of being adopted. Proof: Court files or a written statement from the social services agency.
- You're afraid that giving us facts about someone could put you or the child in physical danger or emotional harm. Proof: A Family Violence Exemption statement.

What happens after I show proof of good cause for not sharing information about a parent?

- HHSC will not contact that parent without checking with you first.
- Your TANF and Medicaid benefits will not change.
- The OAG's Child Support Division won't try to find that parent or confirm if a person is a legal parent and establish paternity.
- The OAG's Child Support Division will not try to collect child, medical or dental support.

What happens if I don't have a good reason for not giving information about a parent or if I don't work with the OAG's Child Support Division to get that information?

- You won't be able to get TANF.
- You won't be able to get Medicaid.
- The child will still get Medicaid if other program rules are met.

What would be considered physical danger or emotional harm to a parent or child?

Family violence is when one family or household member physically harms or emotionally abuses another family or household member. A spouse or a partner, male or female, can experience family violence. Family members, such as children, who witness family violence are also considered victims. Family violence can take different forms such as:

- Physical abuse such as hitting or using a weapon
- Sexual abuse such as rape or any unwanted sexual contact
- Emotional abuse such as threats or humiliation
- Financial abuse such as controlling a person's money without their permission
- Sexual harassment including unwelcome, unsolicited conduct of a sexual nature, which can be verbal, non-verbal or physical
- Stalking including harassment with unwanted and obsessive attention

Dating violence is when someone is violent or abusive toward their romantic or intimate partner. This type of abuse can happen to youth and adults. Dating violence can also take many forms, such as emotional and verbal abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse.

What happens if I'm afraid that giving information about a child's parent might put me or the child in danger?

- HHSC will give you information about your local family violence center.
- If you tell us, you are afraid of being hurt, we will not tell anyone without talking to you first, unless you are a child.
- If you are a child or tell us someone is hurting a child, we must tell the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.
- If you tell the OAG's Child Support Division you are afraid of being hurt, they will take steps to help keep you safe if you decide to ask for child, medical or dental support.

Family Violence Resources:

- You can speak with someone now to find out what help is available to keep you and your child safe. Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800-799-7233, text START to 88788, or chat with a live advocate at www.thehotline.org.
- Visit www.getchildsupportsafely.org, with questions about getting child support safely.
- Go to www.hhs.texas.gov/fvp-resources to learn more about family violence resources.

Call 2-1-1 or 877-541-7905 and after you pick a language, press 2 if you have questions or need help with this form.