

FAMILY CODE CHAPTER 154. CHILD SUPPORT

FAMILY CODE

TITLE 5. THE PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP AND THE SUIT AFFECTING THE  
PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP

SUBTITLE B. SUITS AFFECTING THE PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP

CHAPTER 154. CHILD SUPPORT

SUBCHAPTER A. COURT-ORDERED CHILD SUPPORT

Sec. 154.001. SUPPORT OF CHILD. (a) The court may order either or both parents to support a child in the manner specified by the order:

(1) until the child is 18 years of age or until graduation from high school, whichever occurs later;

(2) until the child is emancipated through marriage, through removal of the disabilities of minority by court order, or by other operation of law;

(3) until the death of the child; or

(4) if the child is disabled as defined in this chapter, for an indefinite period.

(a-1) The court may order each person who is financially able and whose parental rights have been terminated with respect to a child in substitute care for whom the department has been appointed managing conservator to support the child in the manner specified by the order:

(1) until the earliest of:

(A) the child's adoption;

(B) the child's 18th birthday or graduation from high school, whichever occurs later;

(C) removal of the child's disabilities of minority by court order, marriage, or other operation of law; or

(D) the child's death; or

(2) if the child is disabled as defined in this chapter, for an indefinite period.

(b) The court may order either or both parents to make periodic payments for the support of a child in a proceeding in which the Department of Protective and Regulatory Services is named

temporary managing conservator. In a proceeding in which the Department of Protective and Regulatory Services is named permanent managing conservator of a child whose parents' rights have not been terminated, the court shall order each parent that is financially able to make periodic payments for the support of the child.

(c) In a Title IV-D case, if neither parent has physical possession or conservatorship of the child, the court may render an order providing that a nonparent or agency having physical possession may receive, hold, or disburse child support payments for the benefit of the child.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Amended by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 751, Sec. 39, eff. Sept. 1, 1995; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 556, Sec. 8, eff. Sept. 1, 1999.

Amended by:

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 268, Sec. 1.08(a), eff. September 1, 2005.

Sec. 154.002. CHILD SUPPORT THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION. (a) The court may render an original support order, or modify an existing order, providing child support past the 18th birthday of the child to be paid only if the child is:

(1) enrolled:

(A) under Chapter 25, Education Code, in an accredited secondary school in a program leading toward a high school diploma;

(B) under Section 130.008, Education Code, in courses for joint high school and junior college credit; or

(C) on a full-time basis in a private secondary school in a program leading toward a high school diploma; and

(2) complying with:

(A) the minimum attendance requirements of Subchapter C, Chapter 25, Education Code; or

(B) the minimum attendance requirements imposed by the school in which the child is enrolled, if the child is enrolled in a private secondary school.

(b) The request for a support order through high school graduation may be filed before or after the child's 18th birthday.

(c) The order for periodic support may provide that payments continue through the end of the month in which the child graduates. Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995. Amended by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 506, Sec. 1, eff. Aug. 30, 1999; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 38, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Sec. 154.003. MANNER OF PAYMENT. The court may order that child support be paid by:

- (1) periodic payments;
- (2) a lump-sum payment;
- (3) an annuity purchase;
- (4) the setting aside of property to be administered for the support of the child as specified in the order; or
- (5) any combination of periodic payments, lump-sum payments, annuity purchases, or setting aside of property.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Sec. 154.004. PLACE OF PAYMENT. (a) The court shall order the payment of child support to the state disbursement unit as provided by Chapter 234.

(b) In a Title IV-D case, the court or the Title IV-D agency shall order that income withheld for child support be paid to the state disbursement unit of this state or, if appropriate, to the state disbursement unit of another state.

(c) This section does not apply to a child support order that:

- (1) was initially rendered by a court before January 1, 1994; and
- (2) is not being enforced by the Title IV-D agency.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995. Amended by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 556, Sec. 9, eff. Sept. 1, 1999; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 1247, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Sec. 154.005. PAYMENTS OF SUPPORT OBLIGATION BY TRUST. (a) The court may order the trustees of a spendthrift or other trust to make disbursements for the support of a child to the extent the trustees are required to make payments to a beneficiary who is

required to make child support payments as provided by this chapter.

(b) If disbursement of the assets of the trust is discretionary, the court may order child support payments from the income of the trust but not from the principal.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Sec. 154.006. TERMINATION OF DUTY OF SUPPORT. (a) Unless otherwise agreed in writing or expressly provided in the order or as provided by Subsection (b), the child support order terminates on:

- (1) the marriage of the child;
- (2) the removal of the child's disabilities for general purposes;
- (3) the death of the child;
- (4) a finding by a court that the child:
  - (A) is 18 years of age or older; and
  - (B) has failed to comply with the enrollment or attendance requirements described by Section 154.002(a); or
- (5) if the child enlists in the armed forces of the United States, the date on which the child begins active service as defined by 10 U.S.C. Section 101.

(b) Unless a nonparent or agency has been appointed conservator of the child under Chapter 153, the order for current child support, and any provision relating to conservatorship, possession, or access terminates on the marriage or remarriage of the obligor and obligee to each other.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Amended by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 556, Sec. 9, eff. Sept. 1, 1999; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 38, Sec. 2, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Amended by:

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 972, Sec. 9(a), eff. September 1, 2007.

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1404, Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2007.

Sec. 154.007. ORDER TO WITHHOLD CHILD SUPPORT FROM INCOME.

(a) In a proceeding in which periodic payments of child support

are ordered, modified, or enforced, the court or Title IV-D agency shall order that income be withheld from the disposable earnings of the obligor as provided by Chapter 158.

(b) If the court does not order income withholding, an order for support must contain a provision for income withholding to ensure that withholding may be effected if a delinquency occurs.

(c) A child support order must be construed to contain a withholding provision even if the provision has been omitted from the written order.

(d) If the order was rendered or last modified before January 1, 1987, the order is presumed to contain a provision for income withholding procedures to take effect in the event a delinquency occurs without further amendment to the order or future action by the court.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.  
Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 911, Sec. 10, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

Sec. 154.008. PROVISION FOR MEDICAL SUPPORT. The court shall order medical support for the child as provided by Subchapters B and D.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.  
Amended by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1023, Sec. 3, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Sec. 154.009. RETROACTIVE CHILD SUPPORT. (a) The court may order a parent to pay retroactive child support if the parent:

(1) has not previously been ordered to pay support for the child; and

(2) was not a party to a suit in which support was ordered.

(b) In ordering retroactive child support, the court shall apply the child support guidelines provided by this chapter.

(c) Unless the Title IV-D agency is a party to an agreement concerning support or purporting to settle past, present, or future support obligations by prepayment or otherwise, an agreement between the parties does not reduce or terminate retroactive

support that the agency may request.

(d) Notwithstanding Subsection (a), the court may order a parent subject to a previous child support order to pay retroactive child support if:

(1) the previous child support order terminated as a result of the marriage or remarriage of the child's parents;

(2) the child's parents separated after the marriage or remarriage; and

(3) a new child support order is sought after the date of the separation.

(e) In rendering an order under Subsection (d), the court may order retroactive child support back to the date of the separation of the child's parents.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Amended by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1023, Sec. 4, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Sec. 154.010. NO DISCRIMINATION BASED ON MARITAL STATUS OF PARENTS OR SEX. The amount of support ordered for the benefit of a child shall be determined without regard to:

(1) the sex of the obligor, obligee, or child; or

(2) the marital status of the parents of the child.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Sec. 154.011. SUPPORT NOT CONDITIONED ON POSSESSION OR ACCESS. A court may not render an order that conditions the payment of child support on whether a managing conservator allows a possessory conservator to have possession of or access to a child.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 751, Sec. 40, eff. Sept. 1, 1995.

Sec. 154.012. SUPPORT PAID IN EXCESS OF SUPPORT ORDER.

(a) If an obligor is not in arrears and the obligor's child support obligation has terminated, the obligee shall return to the obligor a child support payment made by the obligor that exceeds the amount of support ordered, regardless of whether the payment was made before, on, or after the date the child support obligation terminated.

(b) An obligor may file a suit to recover a child support payment under Subsection (a). If the court finds that the obligee failed to return a child support payment under Subsection (a), the court shall order the obligee to pay to the obligor attorney's fees and all court costs in addition to the amount of support paid after the date the child support order terminated. For good cause shown, the court may waive the requirement that the obligee pay attorney's fees and costs if the court states the reasons supporting that finding.

Added by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 363, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1999.  
Amended by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1023, Sec. 5, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Sec. 154.013. CONTINUATION OF DUTY TO PAY SUPPORT AFTER DEATH OF OBLIGEE. (a) A child support obligation does not terminate on the death of the obligee but continues as an obligation to the child named in the support order, as required by this section.

(b) Notwithstanding any provision of the Probate Code, a child support payment held by the Title IV-D agency, a local registry, or the state disbursement unit or any uncashed check or warrant representing a child support payment made before, on, or after the date of death of the obligee shall be paid proportionately for the benefit of each surviving child named in the support order and not to the estate of the obligee. The payment is free of any creditor's claim against the deceased obligee's estate and may be disbursed as provided by Subsection (c).

(c) On the death of the obligee, current child support owed by the obligor for the benefit of the child or any amount described by Subsection (b) shall be paid to:

(1) a person, other than a parent, who is appointed as managing conservator of the child;

(2) a person, including the obligor, who has assumed actual care, control, and possession of the child, if a managing conservator or guardian of the child has not been appointed;

(3) the county clerk, as provided by Section 887, Texas Probate Code, in the name of and for the account of the child

for whom the support is owed;

(4) a guardian of the child appointed under Chapter XIII, Texas Probate Code, as provided by that code; or

(5) the surviving child, if the child is an adult or has otherwise had the disabilities of minority removed.

(d) On presentation of the obligee's death certificate, the court shall render an order directing payment of child support paid but not disbursed to be made as provided by Subsection (c). A copy of the order shall be provided to:

(1) the obligor;

(2) as appropriate:

(A) the person having actual care, control, and possession of the child;

(B) the county clerk; or

(C) the managing conservator or guardian of the child, if one has been appointed;

(3) the local registry or state disbursement unit and, if appropriate, the Title IV-D agency; and

(4) the child named in the support order, if the child is an adult or has otherwise had the disabilities of minority removed.

(e) The order under Subsection (d) must contain:

(1) a statement that the obligee is deceased and that child support amounts otherwise payable to the obligee shall be paid for the benefit of a surviving child named in the support order as provided by Subsection (c);

(2) the name and age of each child named in the support order; and

(3) the name and mailing address of, as appropriate:

(A) the person having actual care, control, and possession of the child;

(B) the county clerk; or

(C) the managing conservator or guardian of the child, if one has been appointed.

(f) On receipt of the order required under this section, the local registry, state disbursement unit, or Title IV-D agency shall disburse payments as required by the order.



Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1023, Sec. 6, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Sec. 154.014. PAYMENTS IN EXCESS OF COURT-ORDERED AMOUNT.

(a) If a child support agency or local child support registry receives from an obligor who is not in arrears a child support payment in an amount that exceeds the court-ordered amount, the agency or registry, to the extent possible, shall give effect to any expressed intent of the obligor for the application of the amount that exceeds the court-ordered amount.

(b) If the obligor does not express an intent for the application of the amount paid in excess of the court-ordered amount, the agency or registry shall:

(1) credit the excess amount to the obligor's future child support obligation; and

(2) promptly disburse the excess amount to the obligee.

(c) This section does not apply to an obligee who is a recipient of public assistance under Chapter 31, Human Resources Code.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1491, Sec. 2, eff. Jan. 1, 2002.  
Renumbered from Family Code Sec. 154.013 by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 1275, Sec. 2(52), eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Sec. 154.015. ACCELERATION OF UNPAID CHILD SUPPORT OBLIGATION. (a) In this section, "estate" has the meaning assigned by Section 3, Texas Probate Code.

(b) If the child support obligor dies before the child support obligation terminates, the remaining unpaid balance of the child support obligation becomes payable on the date the obligor dies.

(c) For purposes of this section, the court of continuing jurisdiction shall determine the amount of the unpaid child support obligation for each child of the deceased obligor. In determining the amount of the unpaid child support obligation, the court shall consider all relevant factors, including:

(1) the present value of the total amount of monthly periodic child support payments that would become due between the

month in which the obligor dies and the month in which the child turns 18 years of age, based on the amount of the periodic monthly child support payments under the child support order in effect on the date of the obligor's death;

(2) the present value of the total amount of health insurance premiums payable for the benefit of the child from the month in which the obligor dies until the month in which the child turns 18 years of age, based on the cost of health insurance for the child ordered to be paid on the date of the obligor's death;

(3) in the case of a disabled child under 18 years of age or an adult disabled child, an amount to be determined by the court under Section 154.306;

(4) the nature and amount of any benefit to which the child would be entitled as a result of the obligor's death, including life insurance proceeds, annuity payments, trust distributions, social security death benefits, and retirement survivor benefits; and

(5) any other financial resource available for the support of the child.

(d) If, after considering all relevant factors, the court finds that the child support obligation has been satisfied, the court shall render an order terminating the child support obligation. If the court finds that the child support obligation is not satisfied, the court shall render a judgment in favor of the obligee, for the benefit of the child, in the amount of the unpaid child support obligation determined under Subsection (c). The order must designate the obligee as constructive trustee, for the benefit of the child, of any money received in satisfaction of the judgment.

(e) The obligee has a claim, on behalf of the child, against the deceased obligor's estate for the unpaid child support obligation determined under Subsection (c). The obligee may present the claim in the manner provided by the Texas Probate Code.

(f) If money paid to the obligee for the benefit of the child exceeds the amount of the unpaid child support obligation remaining at the time of the obligor's death, the obligee shall hold the excess amount as constructive trustee for the benefit of the

deceased obligor's estate until the obligee delivers the excess amount to the legal representative of the deceased obligor's estate.

Added by Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1404, Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2007.

Sec. 154.016. PROVISION OF SUPPORT IN EVENT OF DEATH OF PARENT. (a) The court may order a child support obligor to obtain and maintain a life insurance policy, including a decreasing term life insurance policy, that will establish an insurance-funded trust or an annuity payable to the obligee for the benefit of the child that will satisfy the support obligation under the child support order in the event of the obligor's death.

(b) In determining the nature and extent of the obligation to provide for the support of the child in the event of the death of the obligor, the court shall consider all relevant factors, including:

(1) the present value of the total amount of monthly periodic child support payments from the date the child support order is rendered until the month in which the child turns 18 years of age, based on the amount of the periodic monthly child support payment under the child support order;

(2) the present value of the total amount of health insurance premiums payable for the benefit of the child from the date the child support order is rendered until the month in which the child turns 18 years of age, based on the cost of health insurance for the child ordered to be paid; and

(3) in the case of a disabled child under 18 years of age or an adult disabled child, an amount to be determined by the court under Section 154.306.

(c) The court may, on its own motion or on a motion of the obligee, require the child support obligor to provide proof satisfactory to the court verifying compliance with the order rendered under this section.

Added by Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1404, Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2007.

SUBCHAPTER B. COMPUTING NET RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR PAYMENT OF  
CHILD SUPPORT

Sec. 154.061. COMPUTING NET MONTHLY INCOME. (a) Whenever feasible, gross income should first be computed on an annual basis and then should be recalculated to determine average monthly gross income.

(b) The Title IV-D agency shall annually promulgate tax charts to compute net monthly income, subtracting from gross income social security taxes and federal income tax withholding for a single person claiming one personal exemption and the standard deduction.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Sec. 154.062. NET RESOURCES. (a) The court shall calculate net resources for the purpose of determining child support liability as provided by this section.

(b) Resources include:

(1) 100 percent of all wage and salary income and other compensation for personal services (including commissions, overtime pay, tips, and bonuses);

(2) interest, dividends, and royalty income;

(3) self-employment income;

(4) net rental income (defined as rent after deducting operating expenses and mortgage payments, but not including noncash items such as depreciation); and

(5) all other income actually being received, including severance pay, retirement benefits, pensions, trust income, annuities, capital gains, social security benefits other than supplemental security income, unemployment benefits, disability and workers' compensation benefits, interest income from notes regardless of the source, gifts and prizes, spousal maintenance, and alimony.

Text of subsection as amended by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch.

767, Sec. 4

(c) Resources do not include:

- (1) return of principal or capital;
- (2) accounts receivable; or
- (3) benefits paid in accordance with federal public assistance programs.

Text of subsection as amended by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch.  
1118, Sec. 1

(c) Resources do not include:

- (1) return of principal or capital;
- (2) accounts receivable;
- (3) benefits paid in accordance with the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; or
- (4) payments for foster care of a child.

(d) The court shall deduct the following items from resources to determine the net resources available for child support:

- (1) social security taxes;
- (2) federal income tax based on the tax rate for a single person claiming one personal exemption and the standard deduction;
- (3) state income tax;
- (4) union dues; and
- (5) expenses for the cost of health insurance or cash medical support for the obligor's child ordered by the court under Section 154.182.

(e) In calculating the amount of the deduction for health care coverage for a child under Subsection (d)(5), if the obligor has other minor dependents covered under the same health insurance plan, the court shall divide the total cost to the obligor for the insurance by the total number of minor dependents, including the child, covered under the plan.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.  
Amended by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 751, Sec. 41, eff. Sept. 1, 1995.

Amended by:

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 363, Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2007.

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 620, Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2007.

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 87, Sec. 9.001, eff. September 1, 2009.

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 767, Sec. 4, eff. June 19, 2009.

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 834, Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2009.

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 1118, Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2009.

Sec. 154.063. PARTY TO FURNISH INFORMATION. The court shall require a party to:

(1) furnish information sufficient to accurately identify that party's net resources and ability to pay child support; and

(2) produce copies of income tax returns for the past two years, a financial statement, and current pay stubs.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Sec. 154.064. MEDICAL SUPPORT FOR CHILD PRESUMPTIVELY PROVIDED BY OBLIGOR. The guidelines for support of a child are based on the assumption that the court will order the obligor to provide medical support for the child in addition to the amount of child support calculated in accordance with those guidelines.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Amended by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1023, Sec. 7, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Sec. 154.065. SELF-EMPLOYMENT INCOME. (a) Income from self-employment, whether positive or negative, includes benefits allocated to an individual from a business or undertaking in the form of a proprietorship, partnership, joint venture, close corporation, agency, or independent contractor, less ordinary and necessary expenses required to produce that income.

(b) In its discretion, the court may exclude from self-employment income amounts allowable under federal income tax law as depreciation, tax credits, or any other business expenses shown by the evidence to be inappropriate in making the determination of income available for the purpose of calculating child support.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Sec. 154.066. INTENTIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT OR UNDEREMPLOYMENT. If the actual income of the obligor is significantly less than what the obligor could earn because of intentional unemployment or underemployment, the court may apply the support guidelines to the earning potential of the obligor.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Sec. 154.067. DEEMED INCOME. (a) When appropriate, in order to determine the net resources available for child support, the court may assign a reasonable amount of deemed income attributable to assets that do not currently produce income. The court shall also consider whether certain property that is not producing income can be liquidated without an unreasonable financial sacrifice because of cyclical or other market conditions. If there is no effective market for the property, the carrying costs of such an investment, including property taxes and note payments, shall be offset against the income attributed to the property.

(b) The court may assign a reasonable amount of deemed income to income-producing assets that a party has voluntarily transferred or on which earnings have intentionally been reduced.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Sec. 154.068. WAGE AND SALARY PRESUMPTION. In the absence of evidence of the wage and salary income of a party, the court shall presume that the party has wages or salary equal to the federal minimum wage for a 40-hour week.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Sec. 154.069. NET RESOURCES OF SPOUSE. (a) The court may

not add any portion of the net resources of a spouse to the net resources of an obligor or obligee in order to calculate the amount of child support to be ordered.

(b) The court may not subtract the needs of a spouse, or of a dependent of a spouse, from the net resources of the obligor or obligee.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Sec. 154.070. CHILD SUPPORT RECEIVED BY OBLIGOR. In a situation involving multiple households due child support, child support received by an obligor shall be added to the obligor's net resources to compute the net resources before determining the child support credit or applying the percentages in the multiple household table in this chapter.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

#### SUBCHAPTER C. CHILD SUPPORT GUIDELINES

Sec. 154.121. GUIDELINES FOR THE SUPPORT OF A CHILD. The child support guidelines in this subchapter are intended to guide the court in determining an equitable amount of child support.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Sec. 154.122. APPLICATION OF GUIDELINES REBUTTABLY PRESUMED IN BEST INTEREST OF CHILD. (a) The amount of a periodic child support payment established by the child support guidelines in effect in this state at the time of the hearing is presumed to be reasonable, and an order of support conforming to the guidelines is presumed to be in the best interest of the child.

(b) A court may determine that the application of the guidelines would be unjust or inappropriate under the circumstances.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Sec. 154.123. ADDITIONAL FACTORS FOR COURT TO CONSIDER. (a) The court may order periodic child support payments in an amount other than that established by the guidelines if the



evidence rebuts the presumption that application of the guidelines is in the best interest of the child and justifies a variance from the guidelines.

(b) In determining whether application of the guidelines would be unjust or inappropriate under the circumstances, the court shall consider evidence of all relevant factors, including:

- (1) the age and needs of the child;
- (2) the ability of the parents to contribute to the support of the child;
- (3) any financial resources available for the support of the child;
- (4) the amount of time of possession of and access to a child;
- (5) the amount of the obligee's net resources, including the earning potential of the obligee if the actual income of the obligee is significantly less than what the obligee could earn because the obligee is intentionally unemployed or underemployed and including an increase or decrease in the income of the obligee or income that may be attributed to the property and assets of the obligee;
- (6) child care expenses incurred by either party in order to maintain gainful employment;
- (7) whether either party has the managing conservatorship or actual physical custody of another child;
- (8) the amount of alimony or spousal maintenance actually and currently being paid or received by a party;
- (9) the expenses for a son or daughter for education beyond secondary school;
- (10) whether the obligor or obligee has an automobile, housing, or other benefits furnished by his or her employer, another person, or a business entity;
- (11) the amount of other deductions from the wage or salary income and from other compensation for personal services of the parties;
- (12) provision for health care insurance and payment of uninsured medical expenses;
- (13) special or extraordinary educational, health

care, or other expenses of the parties or of the child;

(14) the cost of travel in order to exercise possession of and access to a child;

(15) positive or negative cash flow from any real and personal property and assets, including a business and investments;

(16) debts or debt service assumed by either party;  
and

(17) any other reason consistent with the best interest of the child, taking into consideration the circumstances of the parents.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Sec. 154.124. AGREEMENT CONCERNING SUPPORT. (a) To promote the amicable settlement of disputes between the parties to a suit, the parties may enter into a written agreement containing provisions for support of the child and for modification of the agreement, including variations from the child support guidelines provided by Subchapter C.

(b) If the court finds that the agreement is in the child's best interest, the court shall render an order in accordance with the agreement.

(c) Terms of the agreement pertaining to child support in the order may be enforced by all remedies available for enforcement of a judgment, including contempt, but are not enforceable as a contract.

(d) If the court finds the agreement is not in the child's best interest, the court may request the parties to submit a revised agreement or the court may render an order for the support of the child.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Amended by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Sec. 154.125. APPLICATION OF GUIDELINES TO NET RESOURCES.

(a) The guidelines for the support of a child in this section are specifically designed to apply to situations in which the obligor's monthly net resources are not greater than \$7,500 or the adjusted

amount determined under Subsection (a-1), whichever is greater.

(a-1) The dollar amount prescribed by Subsection (a) is adjusted every six years as necessary to reflect inflation. The Title IV-D agency shall compute the adjusted amount, to take effect beginning September 1 of the year of the adjustment, based on the percentage change in the consumer price index during the 72-month period preceding March 1 of the year of the adjustment, as rounded to the nearest \$50 increment. The Title IV-D agency shall publish the adjusted amount in the Texas Register before September 1 of the year in which the adjustment takes effect. For purposes of this subsection, "consumer price index" has the meaning assigned by Section 341.201, Finance Code.

(a-2) The initial adjustment required by Subsection (a-1) shall take effect September 1, 2013. This subsection expires September 1, 2014.

(b) If the obligor's monthly net resources are not greater than the amount provided by Subsection (a), the court shall presumptively apply the following schedule in rendering the child support order:

CHILD SUPPORT GUIDELINES

BASED ON THE MONTHLY NET RESOURCES OF THE OBLIGOR

1 child	20% of Obligor's Net Resources
2 children	25% of Obligor's Net Resources
3 children	30% of Obligor's Net Resources
4 children	35% of Obligor's Net Resources
5 children	40% of Obligor's Net Resources
6+ children	Not less than the amount for 5 children

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Amended by:

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 620, Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2007.

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 767, Sec. 5, eff. June 19, 2009.

Sec. 154.126. APPLICATION OF GUIDELINES TO ADDITIONAL NET RESOURCES. (a) If the obligor's net resources exceed the amount provided by Section 154.125(a), the court shall presumptively apply

the percentage guidelines to the portion of the obligor's net resources that does not exceed that amount. Without further reference to the percentage recommended by these guidelines, the court may order additional amounts of child support as appropriate, depending on the income of the parties and the proven needs of the child.

(b) The proper calculation of a child support order that exceeds the presumptive amount established for the portion of the obligor's net resources provided by Section 154.125(a) requires that the entire amount of the presumptive award be subtracted from the proven total needs of the child. After the presumptive award is subtracted, the court shall allocate between the parties the responsibility to meet the additional needs of the child according to the circumstances of the parties. However, in no event may the obligor be required to pay more child support than the greater of the presumptive amount or the amount equal to 100 percent of the proven needs of the child.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Amended by:

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 620, Sec. 3, eff. September 1, 2007.

Sec. 154.127. PARTIAL TERMINATION OF SUPPORT OBLIGATION.

(a) A child support order for more than one child shall provide that, on the termination of support for a child, the level of support for the remaining child or children is in accordance with the child support guidelines.

(b) A child support order is in compliance with the requirement imposed by Subsection (a) if the order contains a provision that specifies:

(1) the events, including a child reaching the age of 18 years or otherwise having the disabilities of minority removed, that have the effect of terminating the obligor's obligation to pay child support for that child; and

(2) the reduced total amount that the obligor is required to pay each month after the occurrence of an event described by Subdivision (1).

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Amended by:

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 972, Sec. 10, eff. September 1, 2007.

Sec. 154.128. COMPUTING SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN IN MORE THAN ONE HOUSEHOLD. (a) In applying the child support guidelines for an obligor who has children in more than one household, the court shall apply the percentage guidelines in this subchapter by making the following computation:

(1) determine the amount of child support that would be ordered if all children whom the obligor has the legal duty to support lived in one household by applying the schedule in this subchapter;

(2) compute a child support credit for the obligor's children who are not before the court by dividing the amount determined under Subdivision (1) by the total number of children whom the obligor is obligated to support and multiplying that number by the number of the obligor's children who are not before the court;

(3) determine the adjusted net resources of the obligor by subtracting the child support credit computed under Subdivision (2) from the net resources of the obligor; and

(4) determine the child support amount for the children before the court by applying the percentage guidelines for one household for the number of children of the obligor before the court to the obligor's adjusted net resources.

(b) For the purpose of determining a child support credit, the total number of an obligor's children includes the children before the court for the establishment or modification of a support order and any other children, including children residing with the obligor, whom the obligor has the legal duty of support.

(c) The child support credit with respect to children for whom the obligor is obligated by an order to pay support is computed, regardless of whether the obligor is delinquent in child support payments, without regard to the amount of the order.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Sec. 154.129. ALTERNATIVE METHOD OF COMPUTING SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN IN MORE THAN ONE HOUSEHOLD. In lieu of performing the computation under the preceding section, the court may determine the child support amount for the children before the court by applying the percentages in the table below to the obligor's net resources:

MULTIPLE FAMILY ADJUSTED GUIDELINES (% OF NET RESOURCES)								
Number of children before the court								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Number of	0	20.00	25.00	30.00	35.00	40.00	40.00	40.00
other	1	17.50	22.50	27.38	32.20	37.33	37.71	38.00
children for	2	16.00	20.63	25.20	30.33	35.43	36.00	36.44
whom the	3	14.75	19.00	24.00	29.00	34.00	34.67	35.20
obligor	4	13.60	18.33	23.14	28.00	32.89	33.60	34.18
has a	5	13.33	17.86	22.50	27.22	32.00	32.73	33.33
duty of	6	13.14	17.50	22.00	26.60	31.27	32.00	32.62
support	7	13.00	17.22	21.60	26.09	30.67	31.38	32.00

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Sec. 154.130. FINDINGS IN CHILD SUPPORT ORDER.

(a) Without regard to Rules 296 through 299, Texas Rules of Civil Procedure, in rendering an order of child support, the court shall make the findings required by Subsection (b) if:

(1) a party files a written request with the court not later than 10 days after the date of the hearing;

(2) a party makes an oral request in open court during the hearing; or

(3) the amount of child support ordered by the court varies from the amount computed by applying the percentage guidelines under Section 154.125 or 154.129, as applicable.

(a-1) If findings under this section are required as a result of the request by a party under Subsection (a)(1) or (2), the court shall make and enter the findings not later than the 15th day after the date of the party's request.

(b) If findings are required by this section, the court shall state whether the application of the guidelines would be unjust or inappropriate and shall state the following in the child support order:

"(1) the net resources of the obligor per month are

\$\_\_\_\_\_;

"(2) the net resources of the obligee per month are

\$\_\_\_\_\_;

"(3) the percentage applied to the obligor's net resources for child support is \_\_\_\_\_%; and

"(4) if applicable, the specific reasons that the amount of child support per month ordered by the court varies from the amount computed by applying the percentage guidelines under Section 154.125 or 154.129, as applicable."

(c) Repealed by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 767, Sec. 37, eff. June 19, 2009.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Amended by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1023, Sec. 8, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Amended by:

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 620, Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2007.

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 767, Sec. 6, eff. June 19, 2009.

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 767, Sec. 37, eff. June 19, 2009.

Sec. 154.131. RETROACTIVE CHILD SUPPORT. (a) The child support guidelines are intended to guide the court in determining the amount of retroactive child support, if any, to be ordered.

(b) In ordering retroactive child support, the court shall consider the net resources of the obligor during the relevant time period and whether:

(1) the mother of the child had made any previous attempts to notify the obligor of his paternity or probable paternity;

(2) the obligor had knowledge of his paternity or probable paternity;

(3) the order of retroactive child support will impose an undue financial hardship on the obligor or the obligor's family; and

(4) the obligor has provided actual support or other

necessaries before the filing of the action.

(c) It is presumed that a court order limiting the amount of retroactive child support to an amount that does not exceed the total amount of support that would have been due for the four years preceding the date the petition seeking support was filed is reasonable and in the best interest of the child.

(d) The presumption created under this section may be rebutted by evidence that the obligor:

(1) knew or should have known that the obligor was the father of the child for whom support is sought; and

(2) sought to avoid the establishment of a support obligation to the child.

(e) An order under this section limiting the amount of retroactive support does not constitute a variance from the guidelines requiring the court to make specific findings under Section 154.130.

(f) Notwithstanding any other provision of this subtitle, the court retains jurisdiction to render an order for retroactive child support in a suit if a petition requesting retroactive child support is filed not later than the fourth anniversary of the date of the child's 18th birthday.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Amended by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 392, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2001; Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 821, Sec. 2.14, eff. June 14, 2001; Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1023, Sec. 9, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Amended by:

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 972, Sec. 11(a), eff. September 1, 2007.

Sec. 154.132. APPLICATION OF GUIDELINES TO CHILDREN OF CERTAIN DISABLED OBLIGORS. In applying the child support guidelines for an obligor who has a disability and who is required to pay support for a child who receives benefits as a result of the obligor's disability, the court shall apply the guidelines by determining the amount of child support that would be ordered under the child support guidelines and subtracting from that total the amount of benefits or the value of the benefits paid to or for the



child as a result of the obligor's disability.

Added by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 891, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1999.

Sec. 154.133. APPLICATION OF GUIDELINES TO CHILDREN OF OBLIGORS RECEIVING SOCIAL SECURITY. In applying the child support guidelines for an obligor who is receiving social security old age benefits and who is required to pay support for a child who receives benefits as a result of the obligor's receipt of social security old age benefits, the court shall apply the guidelines by determining the amount of child support that would be ordered under the child support guidelines and subtracting from that total the amount of benefits or the value of the benefits paid to or for the child as a result of the obligor's receipt of social security old age benefits.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 544, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

#### SUBCHAPTER D. MEDICAL SUPPORT FOR CHILD

Sec. 154.181. MEDICAL SUPPORT ORDER. (a) The court shall render an order for the medical support of the child as provided by this section and Section 154.182 in:

(1) a proceeding in which periodic payments of child support are ordered under this chapter or modified under Chapter 156;

(2) any other suit affecting the parent-child relationship in which the court determines that medical support of the child must be established, modified, or clarified; or

(3) a proceeding under Chapter 159.

(b) Before a hearing on temporary orders or a final order, if no hearing on temporary orders is held, the court shall require the parties to the proceedings to disclose in a pleading or other statement:

(1) if private health insurance is in effect for the child, the identity of the insurance company providing the coverage, the policy number, which parent is responsible for payment of any insurance premium for the coverage, whether the coverage is provided through a parent's employment, and the cost of

the premium; or

(2) if private health insurance is not in effect for the child, whether:

(A) the child is receiving medical assistance under Chapter 32, Human Resources Code;

(B) the child is receiving health benefits coverage under the state child health plan under Chapter 62, Health and Safety Code, and the cost of any premium; and

(C) either parent has access to private health insurance at reasonable cost to the obligor.

(c) In rendering temporary orders, the court shall, except for good cause shown, order that any health insurance coverage in effect for the child continue in effect pending the rendition of a final order, except that the court may not require the continuation of any health insurance that is not available to the parent at reasonable cost to the obligor. If there is no health insurance coverage in effect for the child or if the insurance in effect is not available at a reasonable cost to the obligor, the court shall, except for good cause shown, order health care coverage for the child as provided under Section 154.182.

(d) On rendering a final order the court shall:

(1) make specific findings with respect to the manner in which health care coverage is to be provided for the child, in accordance with the priorities identified under Section 154.182; and

(2) except for good cause shown or on agreement of the parties, require the parent ordered to provide health care coverage for the child as provided under Section 154.182 to produce evidence to the court's satisfaction that the parent has applied for or secured health insurance or has otherwise taken necessary action to provide for health care coverage for the child, as ordered by the court.

(e) In this section, "reasonable cost" means the cost of health insurance coverage for a child that does not exceed nine percent of the obligor's annual resources, as described by Section 154.062(b), if the obligor is responsible under a medical support order for the cost of health insurance coverage for only one

child. If the obligor is responsible under a medical support order for the cost of health insurance coverage for more than one child, "reasonable cost" means the total cost of health insurance coverage for all children for which the obligor is responsible under a medical support order that does not exceed nine percent of the obligor's annual resources, as described by Section 154.062(b).

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Amended by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 449, Sec. 1, eff. June 5, 2001;

Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 610, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Amended by:

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 363, Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2007.

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 767, Sec. 7, eff. June 19, 2009.

Sec. 154.182. HEALTH CARE COVERAGE FOR CHILD. (a) The court shall consider the cost, accessibility, and quality of health insurance coverage available to the parties and shall give priority to health insurance coverage available through the employment of one of the parties if the coverage is available at a reasonable cost to the obligor.

(b) In determining the manner in which health care coverage for the child is to be ordered, the court shall render its order in accordance with the following priorities, unless a party shows good cause why a particular order would not be in the best interest of the child:

(1) if health insurance is available for the child through a parent's employment or membership in a union, trade association, or other organization at reasonable cost, the court shall order that parent to include the child in the parent's health insurance;

(2) if health insurance is not available for the child under Subdivision (1) but is available to a parent at reasonable cost from another source, including the program under Section 154.1826 to provide health insurance in Title IV-D cases, the court may order that parent to provide health insurance for the child; or

(3) if health insurance coverage is not available for

the child under Subdivision (1) or (2), the court shall order the obligor to pay the obligee, in addition to any amount ordered under the guidelines for child support, an amount, not to exceed nine percent of the obligor's annual resources, as described by Section 154.062(b), as cash medical support for the child.

(b-1) If the parent ordered to provide health insurance under Subsection (b)(1) or (2) is the obligee, the court shall order the obligor to pay the obligee, as additional child support, an amount equal to the actual cost of health insurance for the child, but not to exceed a reasonable cost to the obligor. In calculating the actual cost of health insurance for the child, if the obligee has other minor dependents covered under the same health insurance plan, the court shall divide the total cost to the obligee for the insurance by the total number of minor dependents, including the child covered under the plan.

(b-2) If the court finds that neither parent has access to private health insurance at a reasonable cost to the obligor, the court shall order the parent awarded the exclusive right to designate the child's primary residence or, to the extent permitted by law, the other parent to apply immediately on behalf of the child for participation in a government medical assistance program or health plan. If the child participates in a government medical assistance program or health plan, the court shall order cash medical support under Subsection (b)(3).

(b-3) An order requiring the payment of cash medical support under Subsection (b)(3) must allow the obligor to discontinue payment of the cash medical support if:

(1) health insurance for the child becomes available to the obligor at a reasonable cost; and

(2) the obligor:

(A) enrolls the child in the insurance plan; and

(B) provides the obligee and, in a Title IV-D case, the Title IV-D agency, the information required under Section 154.185.

(c) In this section:

(1) "Accessibility" means the extent to which health insurance coverage for a child provides for the availability of

medical care within a reasonable traveling distance and time from the child's primary residence, as determined by the court.

(2) "Reasonable cost" has the meaning assigned by Section 154.181(e).

(d) Repealed by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 767, Sec. 37, eff. June 19, 2009.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 550, Sec. 2, eff. June 2, 1997;

Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 449, Sec. 2, eff. June 5, 2001; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 610, Sec. 2, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Amended by:

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 363, Sec. 3, eff. September 1, 2007.

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 363, Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2007.

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 620, Sec. 5, eff. September 1, 2007.

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 767, Sec. 8, eff. June 19, 2009.

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 767, Sec. 8, eff. September 1, 2009.

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 767, Sec. 37, eff. June 19, 2009.

Sec. 154.1826. HEALTH CARE PROGRAM FOR CERTAIN CHILDREN IN TITLE IV-D CASES. (a) In this section:

(1) "Health benefit plan issuer" means an insurer, health maintenance organization, or other entity authorized to provide health benefits coverage under the laws of this state.

(2) "Health care provider" means a physician or other person who is licensed, certified, or otherwise authorized to provide a health care service in this state.

(3) "Program" means the child health care program developed under this section.

(4) "Reasonable cost" has the meaning assigned by Section 154.181(e).

(5) "Third-party administrator" means a person who is

not a health benefit plan issuer or agent of a health benefit plan issuer and who provides administrative services for the program, including processing enrollment of eligible children in the program and processing premium payments on behalf of the program.

(b) In consultation with the Texas Department of Insurance, the Health and Human Services Commission, and representatives of the insurance industry in this state, the Title IV-D agency shall develop and implement a statewide program to address the health care needs of children in Title IV-D cases for whom health insurance is not available to either parent at reasonable cost under Section 154.182(b)(1) or under Section 154.182(b)(2) from a source other than the program.

(c) The director of the Title IV-D agency may establish an advisory committee to consult with the director regarding the implementation and operation of the program. If the director establishes an advisory committee, the director may appoint any of the following persons to the advisory committee:

(1) representatives of appropriate public and private entities, including state agencies concerned with health care management;

(2) members of the judiciary;

(3) members of the legislature; and

(4) representatives of the insurance industry.

(d) The principal objective of the program is to provide basic health care services, including office visits with health care providers, hospitalization, and diagnostic and emergency services, to eligible children in Title IV-D cases at reasonable cost to the parents obligated by court order to provide medical support for the children.

(e) The Title IV-D agency may use available private resources, including gifts and grants, in administering the program.

(f) The Title IV-D agency shall adopt rules as necessary to implement the program. The Title IV-D agency shall consult with the Texas Department of Insurance and the Health and Human Services Commission in establishing policies and procedures for the administration of the program and in determining appropriate

benefits to be provided under the program.

(g) A health benefit plan issuer that participates in the program may not deny health care coverage under the program to eligible children because of preexisting conditions or chronic illnesses. A child who is determined to be eligible for coverage under the program continues to be eligible until the termination of the parent's duty to pay child support as specified by Section 154.006. Enrollment of a child in the program does not preclude the subsequent enrollment of the child in another health care plan that becomes available to the child's parent at reasonable cost, including a health care plan available through the parent's employment or the state child health plan under Chapter 62, Health and Safety Code.

(h) The Title IV-D agency shall contract with an independent third-party administrator to provide necessary administrative services for operation of the program.

(i) A person acting as a third-party administrator under Subsection (h) is not considered an administrator for purposes of Chapter 4151, Insurance Code.

(j) The Title IV-D agency shall solicit applications for participation in the program from health benefit plan issuers that meet requirements specified by the agency. Each health benefit plan issuer that participates in the program must hold a certificate of authority issued by the Texas Department of Insurance.

(k) The Title IV-D agency shall promptly notify the courts of this state when the program has been implemented and is available to provide for the health care needs of children described by Subsection (b). The notification must specify a date beginning on which children may be enrolled in the program.

(l) On or after the date specified in the notification required by Subsection (k), a court that orders health care coverage for a child in a Title IV-D case shall order that the child be enrolled in the program authorized by this section unless other health insurance is available for the child at reasonable cost, including the state child health plan under Chapter 62, Health and Safety Code.

(m) Payment of premium costs for the enrollment of a child in the program may be enforced by the Title IV-D agency against the obligor by any means available for the enforcement of a child support obligation, including income withholding under Chapter 158.

(n) The program is not subject to any provision of the Insurance Code or other law that requires coverage or the offer of coverage of a health care service or benefit.

(o) Any health information obtained by the program, or by a third-party administrator providing program services, that is subject to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (42 U.S.C. Section 1320d et seq.) or Chapter 181, Health and Safety Code, is confidential and not open to public inspection. Any personally identifiable financial information or supporting documentation of a parent whose child is enrolled in the program that is obtained by the program, or by a third-party administrator providing program services, is confidential and not open to public inspection.

Added by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 767, Sec. 9, eff. June 19, 2009.

Sec. 154.1827. ADMINISTRATIVE ADJUSTMENT OF MEDICAL SUPPORT ORDER. (a) In each Title IV-D case in which a medical support order requires that a child be enrolled in a health care program under Section 154.1826, the Title IV-D agency may administratively adjust the order as necessary on an annual basis to reflect changes in the amount of premium costs associated with the child's enrollment.

(b) The Title IV-D agency shall provide notice of the administrative adjustment to the obligor and the clerk of the court that rendered the order.

Added by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 767, Sec. 9, eff. June 19, 2009.

Sec. 154.183. MEDICAL SUPPORT ADDITIONAL SUPPORT DUTY OF OBLIGOR. (a) An amount that an obligor is ordered to pay as medical support for the child under this chapter, including the



costs of health insurance coverage or cash medical support under Section 154.182:

(1) is in addition to the amount that the obligor is required to pay for child support under the guidelines for child support;

(2) is a child support obligation; and

(3) may be enforced by any means available for the enforcement of child support, including withholding from earnings under Chapter 158.

(b) If the court finds and states in the child support order that the obligee will maintain health insurance coverage for the child at the obligee's expense, the court shall increase the amount of child support to be paid by the obligor in an amount not exceeding the actual cost to the obligee for maintaining health insurance coverage, as provided under Section 154.182(b-1).

(c) As additional child support, the court shall allocate between the parties, according to their circumstances:

(1) the reasonable and necessary health care expenses, including vision and dental expenses, of the child that are not reimbursed by health insurance or are not otherwise covered by the amount of cash medical support ordered under Section 154.182(b)(3); and

(2) amounts paid by either party as deductibles or copayments in obtaining health care services for the child covered under a health insurance policy.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Amended by:

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 363, Sec. 5, eff. September 1, 2007.

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 620, Sec. 6, eff. September 1, 2007.

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 87, Sec. 9.002, eff. September 1, 2009.

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 767, Sec. 10, eff. June 19, 2009.

Sec. 154.184. EFFECT OF ORDER. (a) Receipt of a medical

support order requiring that health insurance be provided for a child shall be considered a change in the family circumstances of the employee or member, for health insurance purposes, equivalent to the birth or adoption of a child.

(b) If the employee or member is eligible for dependent health coverage, the employer shall automatically enroll the child for the first 31 days after the receipt of the order or notice of the medical support order under Section 154.186 on the same terms and conditions as apply to any other dependent child.

(c) The employer shall notify the insurer of the automatic enrollment.

(d) During the 31-day period, the employer and insurer shall complete all necessary forms and procedures to make the enrollment permanent or shall report in accordance with this subchapter the reasons the coverage cannot be made permanent.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Amended by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 341, Sec. 4.03, eff. Sept. 1, 1995; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 911, Sec. 11, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

Sec. 154.185. PARENT TO FURNISH INFORMATION. (a) The court shall order a parent providing health insurance to furnish to either the obligee, obligor, or child support agency the following information not later than the 30th day after the date the notice of rendition of the order is received:

- (1) the social security number of the parent;
- (2) the name and address of the parent's employer;
- (3) whether the employer is self-insured or has health insurance available;
- (4) proof that health insurance has been provided for the child;
- (5) if the employer has health insurance available, the name of the health insurance carrier, the number of the policy, a copy of the policy and schedule of benefits, a health insurance membership card, claim forms, and any other information necessary to submit a claim; and
- (6) if the employer is self-insured, a copy of the schedule of benefits, a membership card, claim forms, and any other

information necessary to submit a claim.

(b) The court shall also order a parent providing health insurance to furnish the obligor, obligee, or child support agency with additional information regarding health insurance coverage not later than the 15th day after the date the information is received by the parent.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Amended by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1023, Sec. 10, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Sec. 154.186. NOTICE TO EMPLOYER CONCERNING MEDICAL SUPPORT. (a) The obligee, obligor, or a child support agency of this state or another state may send to the employer a copy of the order requiring an employee to provide health insurance coverage for a child or may include notice of the medical support order in an order or writ of withholding sent to the employer in accordance with Chapter 158.

(b) In an appropriate Title IV-D case, the Title IV-D agency of this state or another state shall send to the employer the national medical support notice required under Part D, Title IV of the federal Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. Section 651 et seq.), as amended. The notice may be used in any other suit in which an obligor is ordered to provide health insurance coverage for a child.

(c) The Title IV-D agency by rule shall establish procedures consistent with federal law for use of the national medical support notice and may prescribe forms for the efficient use of the notice. The agency shall provide the notice and forms, on request, to obligees, obligors, domestic relations offices, friends of the court, and attorneys.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Amended by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 341, Sec. 4.04, eff. Sept. 1, 1995; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 911, Sec. 12, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 120, Sec. 1, eff. July 1, 2003.

Amended by:

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 972, Sec. 12, eff. September 1, 2007.

Sec. 154.187. DUTIES OF EMPLOYER. (a) An order or notice under this subchapter to an employer directing that health insurance coverage be provided to a child of an employee or member is binding on a current or subsequent employer on receipt without regard to the date the order was rendered. If the employee or member is eligible for dependent health coverage for the child, the employer shall immediately enroll the child in a health insurance plan regardless of whether the employee is enrolled in the plan. If dependent coverage is not available to the employee or member through the employer's health insurance plan or enrollment cannot be made permanent or if the employer is not responsible or otherwise liable for providing such coverage, the employer shall provide notice to the sender in accordance with Subsection (c).

(b) If additional premiums are incurred as a result of adding the child to the health insurance plan, the employer shall deduct the health insurance premium from the earnings of the employee in accordance with Chapter 158 and apply the amount withheld to payment of the insurance premium.

(c) An employer who has received an order or notice under this subchapter shall provide to the sender, by first class mail not later than the 30th day after the date the employer receives the order or notice, a statement that the child:

(1) has been enrolled in the employer's health insurance plan or is already enrolled in another health insurance plan in accordance with a previous child support or medical support order to which the employee is subject; or

(2) cannot be enrolled or cannot be enrolled permanently in the employer's health insurance plan and provide the reason why coverage or permanent coverage cannot be provided.

(d) If the employee ceases employment or if the health insurance coverage lapses, the employer shall provide to the sender, by first class mail not later than the 15th day after the date of the termination of employment or the lapse of the coverage, notice of the termination or lapse and of the availability of any conversion privileges.

(e) On request, the employer shall release to the sender

information concerning the available health insurance coverage, including the name of the health insurance carrier, the policy number, a copy of the policy and schedule of benefits, a health insurance membership card, and claim forms.

(f) In this section, "sender" means the person sending the order or notice under Section 154.186.

(g) An employer who fails to enroll a child, fails to withhold or remit premiums or cash medical support, or discriminates in hiring or employment on the basis of a medical support order or notice under this subchapter shall be subject to the penalties and fines in Subchapter C, Chapter 158.

(h) An employer who receives a national medical support notice under Section 154.186 shall comply with the requirements of the notice.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Amended by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 341, Sec. 4.05, eff. Sept. 1, 1995; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 911, Sec. 13, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 120, Sec. 2, eff. July 1, 2003.

Amended by:

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 767, Sec. 11, eff. June 19, 2009.

Sec. 154.188. FAILURE TO PROVIDE OR PAY FOR REQUIRED HEALTH INSURANCE. A parent ordered to provide health insurance or to pay the other parent additional child support for the cost of health insurance who fails to do so is liable for:

(1) necessary medical expenses of the child, without regard to whether the expenses would have been paid if health insurance had been provided; and

(2) the cost of health insurance premiums or contributions, if any, paid on behalf of the child.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Amended by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 295, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2001; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 610, Sec. 3, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Sec. 154.189. NOTICE OF TERMINATION OR LAPSE OF INSURANCE COVERAGE. (a) An obligor ordered to provide health insurance

coverage for a child must notify the obligee and any child support agency enforcing a support obligation against the obligor of the:

(1) termination or lapse of health insurance coverage for the child not later than the 15th day after the date of a termination or lapse; and

(2) availability of additional health insurance to the obligor for the child after a termination or lapse of coverage not later than the 15th day after the date the insurance becomes available.

(b) If termination of coverage results from a change of employers, the obligor, the obligee, or the child support agency may send the new employer a copy of the order requiring the employee to provide health insurance for a child or notice of the medical support order as provided by this subchapter.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.  
Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 911, Sec. 14, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

Sec. 154.190. REENROLLING CHILD FOR INSURANCE COVERAGE. After health insurance has been terminated or has lapsed, an obligor ordered to provide health insurance coverage for the child must enroll the child in a health insurance plan at the next available enrollment period.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Sec. 154.191. REMEDY NOT EXCLUSIVE. (a) This subchapter does not limit the rights of the obligor, obligee, local domestic relations office, or Title IV-D agency to enforce, modify, or clarify the medical support order.

(b) This subchapter does not limit the authority of the court to render or modify a medical support order to provide for payment of uninsured health expenses, health care costs, or health insurance premiums in a manner consistent with this subchapter.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Amended by:

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 767, Sec. 12, eff. June 19, 2009.

Sec. 154.192. CANCELLATION OR ELIMINATION OF INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR CHILD. (a) Unless the employee or member ceases to be eligible for dependent coverage, or the employer has eliminated dependent health coverage for all of the employer's employees or members, the employer may not cancel or eliminate coverage of a child enrolled under this subchapter until the employer is provided satisfactory written evidence that:

(1) the court order or administrative order requiring the coverage is no longer in effect; or

(2) the child is enrolled in comparable health insurance coverage or will be enrolled in comparable coverage that will take effect not later than the effective date of the cancellation or elimination of the employer's coverage.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Amended by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 341, Sec. 4.06, eff. Sept. 1, 1995.

Sec. 154.193. MEDICAL SUPPORT ORDER NOT QUALIFIED. (a) If a plan administrator or other person acting in an equivalent position determines that a medical support order issued under this subchapter does not qualify for enforcement under federal law, the tribunal may, on its own motion or the motion of a party, render an order that qualifies for enforcement under federal law.

(b) The procedure for filing a motion for enforcement of a final order applies to a motion under this section. Service of citation is not required, and a person is not entitled to a jury in a proceeding under this section.

(c) The employer or plan administrator is not a necessary party to a proceeding under this section.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 911, Sec. 15, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

#### SUBCHAPTER E. LOCAL CHILD SUPPORT REGISTRY

Sec. 154.241. LOCAL REGISTRY. (a) A local registry shall receive a court-ordered child support payment or a payment otherwise authorized by law and shall forward the payment, as

appropriate, to the Title IV-D agency, local domestic relations office, or obligee within two working days after the date the local registry receives the payment.

(b) A local registry may not require an obligor, obligee, or other party or entity to furnish a certified copy of a court order as a condition of processing child support payments and shall accept as sufficient authority to process the payments a photocopy, facsimile copy, or conformed copy of the court's order.

(c) A local registry shall include with each payment it forwards to the Title IV-D agency the date it received the payment and the withholding date furnished by the employer.

(d) A local registry shall accept child support payments made by personal check, money order, or cashier's check. A local registry may refuse payment by personal check if a pattern of abuse regarding the use of personal checks has been established. Abuse includes checks drawn on insufficient funds, abusive or offensive language written on the check, intentional mutilation of the instrument, or other actions that delay or disrupt the registry's operation.

(e) Subject to Section 154.004, at the request of an obligee, a local registry shall redirect and forward a child support payment to an address and in care of a person or entity designated by the obligee. A local registry may require that the obligee's request be in writing or be made on a form provided by the local registry for that purpose, but may not charge a fee for receiving the request or redirecting the payments as requested.

(f) A local registry may accept child support payments made by credit card, debit card, or automatic teller machine card.

(g) Notwithstanding any other law, a private entity may perform the duties and functions of a local registry under this section either under a contract with a county commissioners court or domestic relations office executed under Section 204.002 or under an appointment by a court.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Amended by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 751, Sec. 42, eff. Sept. 1, 1995; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 645, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Amended by:



Sec. 154.242. PAYMENT OR TRANSFER OF CHILD SUPPORT PAYMENTS BY ELECTRONIC FUNDS TRANSFER. (a) A child support payment may be made by electronic funds transfer to:

- (1) the Title IV-D agency;
- (2) a local registry if the registry agrees to accept electronic payment; or
- (3) the state disbursement unit.

(b) A local registry may transmit child support payments to the Title IV-D agency by electronic funds transfer. Unless support payments are required to be made to the state disbursement unit, an obligor may make payments, with the approval of the court entering the order, directly to the bank account of the obligee by electronic transfer and provide verification of the deposit to the local registry. A local registry in a county that makes deposits into personal bank accounts by electronic funds transfer as of April 1, 1995, may transmit a child support payment to an obligee by electronic funds transfer if the obligee maintains a bank account and provides the local registry with the necessary bank account information to complete electronic payment.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.  
Amended by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 597, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1996;  
Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 702, Sec. 2, eff. Jan. 1, 1998; Acts 1997,  
75th Leg., ch. 1053, Sec. 2, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 1999, 76th  
Leg., ch. 556, Sec. 10, eff. Sept. 1, 1999.

Sec. 154.243. PRODUCTION OF CHILD SUPPORT PAYMENT RECORD. The Title IV-D agency, a local registry, or the state disbursement unit may comply with a subpoena or other order directing the production of a child support payment record by sending a certified copy of the record or an affidavit regarding the payment record to the court that directed production of the record.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.  
Amended by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 556, Sec. 10, eff. Sept. 1,  
1999.

SUBCHAPTER F. SUPPORT FOR A MINOR OR ADULT DISABLED CHILD

Sec. 154.301. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "Adult child" means a child 18 years of age or older.

(2) "Child" means a son or daughter of any age.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Sec. 154.302. COURT-ORDERED SUPPORT FOR DISABLED CHILD.

(a) The court may order either or both parents to provide for the support of a child for an indefinite period and may determine the rights and duties of the parents if the court finds that:

(1) the child, whether institutionalized or not, requires substantial care and personal supervision because of a mental or physical disability and will not be capable of self-support; and

(2) the disability exists, or the cause of the disability is known to exist, on or before the 18th birthday of the child.

(b) A court that orders support under this section shall designate a parent of the child or another person having physical custody or guardianship of the child under a court order to receive the support for the child. The court may designate a child who is 18 years of age or older to receive the support directly.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1173, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

Sec. 154.303. STANDING TO SUE. (a) A suit provided by this subchapter may be filed only by:

(1) a parent of the child or another person having physical custody or guardianship of the child under a court order; or

(2) the child if the child:

(A) is 18 years of age or older;

(B) does not have a mental disability; and

(C) is determined by the court to be capable of

managing the child's financial affairs.

(b) The parent, the child, if the child is 18 years of age or older, or other person may not transfer or assign the cause of action to any person, including a governmental or private entity or agency, except for an assignment made to the Title IV-D agency.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1173, Sec. 2, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

Sec. 154.304. GENERAL PROCEDURE. Except as otherwise provided by this subchapter, the substantive and procedural rights and remedies in a suit affecting the parent-child relationship relating to the establishment, modification, or enforcement of a child support order apply to a suit filed and an order rendered under this subchapter.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Sec. 154.305. SPECIFIC PROCEDURES. (a) A suit under this subchapter may be filed:

(1) regardless of the age of the child; and

(2) as an independent cause of action or joined with any other claim or remedy provided by this code.

(b) If no court has continuing, exclusive jurisdiction of the child, an action under this subchapter may be filed as an original suit affecting the parent-child relationship.

(c) If there is a court of continuing, exclusive jurisdiction, an action under this subchapter may be filed as a suit for modification as provided by Chapter 156.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Sec. 154.306. AMOUNT OF SUPPORT AFTER AGE 18. In determining the amount of support to be paid after a child's 18th birthday, the specific terms and conditions of that support, and the rights and duties of both parents with respect to the support of the child, the court shall determine and give special consideration to:

(1) any existing or future needs of the adult child

directly related to the adult child's mental or physical disability and the substantial care and personal supervision directly required by or related to that disability;

(2) whether the parent pays for or will pay for the care or supervision of the adult child or provides or will provide substantial care or personal supervision of the adult child;

(3) the financial resources available to both parents for the support, care, and supervision of the adult child; and

(4) any other financial resources or other resources or programs available for the support, care, and supervision of the adult child.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Sec. 154.307. MODIFICATION AND ENFORCEMENT. An order provided by this subchapter may contain provisions governing the rights and duties of both parents with respect to the support of the child and may be modified or enforced in the same manner as any other order provided by this title.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Sec. 154.308. REMEDY NOT EXCLUSIVE. (a) This subchapter does not affect a parent's:

(1) cause of action for the support of a disabled child under any other law; or

(2) ability to contract for the support of a disabled child.

(b) This subchapter does not affect the substantive or procedural rights or remedies of a person other than a parent, including a governmental or private entity or agency, with respect to the support of a disabled child under any other law.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Sec. 154.309. POSSESSION OF OR ACCESS TO ADULT DISABLED CHILD. (a) A court may render an order for the possession of or access to an adult disabled child that is appropriate under the circumstances.

(b) Possession of or access to an adult disabled child is

enforceable in the manner provided by Chapter 157. An adult disabled child may refuse possession or access if the adult disabled child is mentally competent.

(c) A court that obtains continuing, exclusive jurisdiction of a suit affecting the parent-child relationship involving a disabled person who is a child retains continuing, exclusive jurisdiction of subsequent proceedings involving the person, including proceedings after the person is an adult. Notwithstanding this subsection and any other law, a probate court may exercise jurisdiction in a guardianship proceeding for the person after the person is an adult.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 751, Sec. 43, eff. Sept. 1, 1995.

Amended by:

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 453, Sec. 1, eff. June 16, 2007.