



31 Days of Child Support Facts

Fact Day #1: President Gerald Ford signed into law the Social Security Amendments of 1974, which, among its other provisions, created a state-federal child support enforcement program.

The purpose of this new partnership between the states and the federal government was directly tied to the existing federal program of cash assistance, or "welfare," under the Title IV-A, "Assistance to Families with Dependent Children" (AFDC).

Fact #2: The new IV-D Program was designed to accomplish two specific welfare system-related goals through enforcement of child support:

- 1. Cost recovery—recover the cost of public assistance**
- 2. Cost avoidance**
 - **Help families to get off of public assistance**
 - **Help families avoid having to turn to public assistance**

Fact Day#3: In 1981, Congress provided the IV-D program with an enforcement tool that has proved to be one of the most effective means of collecting past-due child support the program has ever had.

Under the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 the Secretary of the Treasury was required to withhold from refunds of personal income taxes any amounts certified as past-due child support owed; known as tax intercept.

Another important enforcement mechanism provided under this Act was withholding child support from unemployment insurance benefits.





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Fact Day #4: In 1984, Child Support Enforcement Amendments increased federal oversight and control of the child support program, propelling the process of "federalization."

The thrust of the amendments was to achieve some degree of uniformity among states.

- To see that "best practices" were used by all states,
- Ensure that state IV-D programs served public assistance and non-public assistance families equally well.

Fact Day #5: To increase trustworthiness of objective criteria for the setting of support amounts, the 1984 Act required each state to establish guidelines for determining support award amounts

Fact Day #6: In the 1988 Family Support Act, guidelines for setting current support amounts were made mandatory.

State IV-D agencies were required to review every 36 months each support order in their non-AFDC caseload and, if necessary, adjust the support amount in accordance with the state guidelines.

Fact Day #7: The Balances Budget Act of 1997 provided direct funding of tribal support programs for the first time.

Fact Day #8: In fiscal year 2024, preliminary data shows that \$50 million in child support was collected by 63 tribal programs nationwide and 97.1% of the money collected went to families.





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Fact Day #9: There are 11 federally recognized tribes in Wisconsin. Of those, nine operate their own child support program. Tribal child support programs provide services to Native American families consistent with tribal values and cultures.

Fact Day #10: Wisconsin has the second-highest number of state tribal child support programs. The state with the most tribal child support programs is Oklahoma, which has 10.

Fact Day #11: Each tribal child support program operates as a sovereign nation, following each tribe's specific court code and laws. This means that each tribe may have different standards.

Fact Day #12: In 2001, Wisconsin passed legislation eliminating percentage orders.

Fact Day #13: In 2007, Wisconsin changed to electronic disbursement for child support.

Before 2007, those not enrolled for direct deposit received paper checks. The state of Wisconsin began issuing child support and other support-related payments electronically to reduce costs associated with the printing and mailing of paper checks. In addition, electronic disbursement by direct deposit or debit card is a more secure and convenient transaction for our child support case participants.

Fact Day #14: In 2008, Administrative Rule DWD 40 was changed to provide special instructions for determining the child support obligation for low-income payers - Wisconsin DWD revised Appendix C

Fact Day #15: Did you know there used to be a fee for applying for child support in Wisconsin? The fee was eliminated as of Jan. 1, 2010.



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Fact Day #16: The Department of Children and Families is in the process of modernizing Wisconsin's child support program. The vision is to modernize the program in a manner that expands the ability of state and partner agencies to provide the most efficient and high-quality service to customers while ensuring that children and families receive financial and medical support.

Fact Day #17: Child support agencies encourage parental responsibility so that children receive the financial and medical support they need.

Children need financial, emotional, and medical support from both parents to thrive. The national child support program assures that assistance in obtaining support is available to children through:

- locating parents,
- establishing paternity,
- establishing and modifying support obligations to an appropriate amount, and
- monitoring and enforcing those obligations.

Wisconsin's 71 county child support agencies are dedicated to establishing paternity and obtaining child support to encourage the well-being of children and to recognize the essential role both parents have in supporting their children.





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Fact Day #18: Child support orders can be modified by a court.

If there has been a significant change of circumstances or placement of the child (ren), either parent can go to court and request that child support be increased, decreased, or even possibly eliminated. The change would need to be more than 15% of the current order or more than \$50 per month. The child support agency can assist with this process or the parents themselves can request a hearing for modification.

Fact Day #19: Wisconsin courts use guidelines to set child support payment amounts.

The child support guidelines that Wisconsin courts use to set child support payment amounts are called the Child Support Standard. This standard considers the income of the parents, the amount of time the child spends with each parent, and if the parents are supporting other children.

Fact Day #20: Custody refers to decision-making authority, and in accordance with law, the court is required to presume that joint legal custody is in the best interest of the children.

In joint custody, both parents share legal custody and neither parent's legal custody rights are superior. Parents are required to consult and attempt to reach an agreement while considering major decisions affecting the lives of the children. In sole custody, one parent has legal custody, or sole authority, to make decisions. The matter of custody is beyond the scope of the child support program.

Fact Day #21: The placement order addresses where and with whom the child spends time.

Placement refers to the right of a parent to have the child physically placed with them. The parent has the right and responsibility to make, during that placement, routine daily decisions regarding the child's care. The matter of placement is beyond the scope of the child support program.



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Fact Day #22: Wisconsin has 20,765 intergovernmental child support cases, which is roughly 5% of the total caseload. These are cases where one parent lives in Wisconsin and the other parent lives in another state. Wisconsin's top two trading partners are Illinois and Minnesota.

Fact Day #23: Wisconsin has 79 child support cases with other countries. Most of the international cases are with provinces in Canada.

Fact Day #24: Each year, the Wisconsin governor issues a proclamation in August commemorating Child Support Awareness Month in Wisconsin.

Fact Day #25: Each child support agency works with a child support attorney to provide legal services. Child support attorneys represent the state.

Fact Day #26: Wisconsin is one of 13 grantees taking part in the Safe Access for Victims' Economic Security (SAVES) demonstration to connect victims to child support services more safely. In Wisconsin, the program is called Wisconsin's Network for Safety (WINS).

Fact Day #27: Economic instability is a major reason why victims stay in or return to abusive relationships. Child support programs have a unique opportunity to help domestic violence victims safely establish financial independence.

Victims who feel safe participating in child support services are more likely to cooperate and respond to agency case processing actions.



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Fact Day #28: According to the federal Office of Child Support Services, more than 90% of women with current or former abusive partners want to pursue child support if they can do so safely.

Fact Day #29: ELEVATE stands for Empowering Lives through Vocational Assessment, Training & Employment.

The program is designed to offer engaging services, including case management, employment support, and parenting education, to participants across five counties. The goals of ELEVATE are to shift the mindset and culture from traditionally enforcement-focused to a more supportive and engaging approach and improving the lives of children to increase family social and economic well-being.

Fact Day #30: Wisconsin offers fatherhood training and feedback sessions for both counties and fathers, available through in-person events and virtual options. Led by individuals with lived experience, these sessions provide valuable insights to help counties engage with fathers and offer fathers the support and skills needed to strengthen their roles in their children's lives.

Fact Day #31: Wisconsin's Child Support Parent Advisory Group Held Its First Meeting in 2024.

Wisconsin's Child Support Parent Advisory Group began meeting in 2024. The group meets quarterly and serves as a forum for child support participants to share concerns and to provide input on the development of policy, procedures, and practices. The group elevates parent and caregiver voices, provides child support professionals with objective feedback to use in meeting parents "where they are at," and advises on policy and service delivery improvements.



Wisconsin Department of
Children and Families