

Quick Facts: Child Support and Domestic Violence

This Quick Facts guide provides information about the impact of domestic violence on child support establishment and enforcement.

The Child Support Enforcement Program¹ is a successful federal-state partnership whose mission is to promote economic stability for children whose parents live apart. For parents who are victims of domestic violence, child support establishment and enforcement presents both the opportunity for financial independence and the challenge of ensuring safety.

Domestic violence affects every social and economic group in the country. Because economic instability is a common reason victims return to their abusers, it is important for child support programs to facilitate ways for victims to safely receive child support sufficient to meet the basic needs of their families.

Best practices from around the country include child support programs:

- Collaborating with nationally recognized domestic violence organizations to develop safe policies and procedures to better serve victims of domestic violence and educate child support staff on issues unique to domestic violence cases
- Implementing policies that promote the voluntary disclosure of domestic violence
- Allowing multiple ongoing opportunities for victims to disclose past or current domestic violence and formulating an effective screening process to identify cases where domestic violence is an issue
- Providing victims with sufficient information and adequate notice when establishing or enforcing child support obligations
- Creating procedures that permit victims to delay enforcement actions or stop support services if they feel threatened or fearful of domestic violence
- Supporting the use of telephonic hearings where available and working with domestic violence advocates in court and local child support offices
- Raising public awareness about domestic violence

Domestic violence is a serious problem with real—sometimes deadly—consequences for recipients of child support services and their families. Awareness of this sensitive issue is paramount when dealing with cases involving domestic violence so that child support

¹ Created by Title IV-D of the Social Security Act





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programs can determine how best to help victims safely receive the financial help they need to support their children.

