

Course Title: Child Support Calculation & Agreement Drafting for Mediators

Duration: 8 Hours

Audience: Mediators seeking proficiency in selecting the correct guideline, calculating child support, and drafting child support agreements.

Hour 1: Introduction – The Foundation of Child Support Calculations

- Objective: Gain a foundational understanding of child support calculations.
- Understanding the Income Share Model
- Determining the Monthly Basic Child Support Obligation
- Selecting the Correct Child Support Guideline
- Determining Gross Income & Income Adjustments

Activities:

1. Calculate Income Share
 - a. Hypothetical 3: The Artist and the Accountant
 - b. Hypothetical 5: The Maternal Grandmother's Financial Puzzle
2. Determining the Monthly Basic Child Support Obligation
 - a. Scenario 1: Calculating the Monthly Basic Child Support Obligation
 - b. Scenario 4: The Royal Courtroom Drama
 - c. Scenario 3: Minimum Income Level
3. Identify the Correct Guideline
 - a. Hypothetical 1: The Tale of Time and Custody
 - b. Hypothetical 2: The Custody Tango - A Week-by-Week Dance
 - c. Hypothetical 3: The Custody Chronicles: A Tale of Three Siblings
 - d. Hypothetical 4: A Whippet's Tale of Weekend Wonders with Gary and Hannah
 - e. Hypothetical 5: Holiday Harmony for Kyle
4. Gross Income & Adjustments
 - a. Hypothetical 1: Maintenance Mania: The Free Rent Riddle
 - b. Hypothetical 2: Pell Grant, SNAP Peas, and Peril: Georgia's College Cafeteria Chronicles
 - c. Hypothetical 3: Gears, Guardianship, and Unsettled Debts: Roberto's Juggling Act
5. Calculating Gross Income (Employment Income Scenarios)
 - a. Hypothetical 1: Paws and Shutter: Furry-tales Through the Lens
 - b. Hypothetical 2: The Child Support Latte Dilemma
 - c. Hypothetical 3: The Fertile Dilemma: Child Support in the Garden
 - d. Hypothetical 4: Mojitos and Math: Danny's Delightful Dilemma
 - e. Hypothetical 5: Watt's Fair: Calculating Mac's Monthly Gross Income

Hour 2: Sole Custody Guideline – Understanding and Calculating Support

- Objective: Learn how to apply the Sole Custody Guideline correctly.

- When to Use Sole Custody Guidelines
- Step-by-Step Sole Custody Calculation
- Discussing the payment of daycare costs by the Noncustodial Parent
- Special Considerations for Third-Party Caretaker Cases

Activities:

1. Calculate Sole Custody Where One Parent Has Sole Custody of the Children
 - a. Hypothetical 3: Dollars & Diapers: Balancing Budgets and Bedtimes in Metroville:
2. Calculate Sole Custody When the Noncustodial Parent Pays Daycare Costs
 - a. Go to Daycare & Child Support Scenarios: Hypothetical 4: Rolling Out the Dough: How Daycare Costs Shape Child Support
3. Calculate Sole Custody Where a Third-Party Caretaker Has Custody of the Children
 - a. Hypothetical 5: Grandma's Daycare Diaries: Adventures in Raising the Little Ones:

Hour 3: Shared Custody Guideline – Understanding and Calculating Support

- Objective: Learn how to apply the Shared Custody Guideline correctly.
- Understanding How to Calculate Custody Share
- How to Calculate the "Shared Support Need" by Using the 1.4 Multiplier
- Applying the 150% Poverty Guideline Test to Shared Custody

Activities:

1. Understanding the Basics of Shared Custody
 - a. Hypothetical 1: The Bear Necessities
2. Shared Custody Calculation
 - a. Hypothetical 2: The Science Experiments
 - b. Hypothetical 5: The Numerical Nook of Splitville
3. Applying the 150% Poverty Guideline Test
 - a. Hypothetical 3: The Soccer Star and the Artist

Hour 4: Split Custody Guideline – Understanding and Calculating Support

- Objective: Understand how to apply the Split Custody guideline and the reimbursement model.
- When to Use Split Custody Guidelines
- Understanding the Reimbursement Model
- Step-by-Step Split Custody Calculation

Activities:

1. Split Custody Basics
 - a. Hypothetical 1: The Artistic Duo and The Game Hosts
 - b. Hypothetical 2: Pickleball Prodigies and Diaper Duties: The Bolt Family Balancing Act
2. Addressing Split custody arrangements with third party caretakers

- a. Hypothetical 4: Green Smoothies and Game Trails: The Wholesome Hunt for Child Support

Hour 5: Daycare and Health Insurance Premium Costs

- Objective: Understand how daycare and health insurance premiums are incorporated into child support calculations.
- Daycare Cost Analysis
 - Handling Different Daycare Costs for Multiple Children
 - Dealing with Seasonal Daycare Costs
 - Health Insurance Premiums Cost Analysis
- Determining the Child's Share of the Health Insurance Premium
- Methods to separate the parent's cost from the child's cost

Activities:

1. Basic Daycare analysis:
 - a. Hypothetical 1: Revving Up Daycare Costs: The Price Tag of Child Support for Working Parents
2. Calculate Child Support for Different Daycare Costs for Multiple Children (Infant vs. School-Age Child)
 - a. Hypothetical 3: Bagging Groceries and Budgeting for Daycare: Child Support in the Aisle of Life
3. Account for Seasonal Daycare Costs in a Child Support Calculation
 - a. Hypothetical 5: Winter's Chill, Summer's Bill: The Seasonal Cost of Child Support and Daycare Basic
4. Health Insurance Cost Analysis
 - a. Hypothetical 3: Divvying Up the Healthcare Premiums: A Prescription for Fair Child Support
5. How should the situation be handled if the cost of a parent's health insurance premium is not known?
 - a. Hypothetical 4: Premium Guessing Game: Sarah's Missing Health Insurance Info

Hour 6: Child Support Arrears – Understanding and Calculating Back Support

- Objective: Equip mediators with the ability to accurately calculate arrears.
- Understanding How Arrears Accumulate
- Calculating Arrears for Initial Petitions
- Calculating Arrears for Modifications
- Complex Arrears Calculations: Handling Support Amount Changes Over Time

Activities:

1. Prorate the First Month's Arrears for an Initial Petition
 - a. Hypo: Effective June 15, 2024, John shall pay Mary \$250 per month.
2. Calculate Arrears for a Modification Case Using <https://arrearagecalculator.com>

- a. Hypo: John previously owed Mary \$450 per month. The court reduced the child support to \$250 per month effective June 15, 2024. As of May 31, 2024, John owed \$5000 in principal arrears and \$350 in interest. Since June 1, 2024, John has made one support payment in December 2024 in the amount of \$500.00.
3. Handle a Complex Arrearage Case Where Support Amounts Vary Between the Effective Date and the Arrears Calculation Date
 - a. Hypo: John previously owed Mary \$450 per month. The court reduced the child support to \$250 per month effective June 15, 2024. And on August 1, 2024, increased the support to \$375 due to a change in daycare. As of May 31, 2024, John owed \$5000 in principal arrears and \$350 in interest. Since June 1, 2024, John has made one support payment in December 2024 in the amount of \$500.00.

Hour 7: Drafting Agreements & Understanding DCSE (Division of Child Support Enforcement)

- Objective: Learn how to draft and complete a mediation-based child support agreement.
- Understanding Virginia's DC-631 Mediation Support Agreement
 - What information is required?
 - How to structure the agreement properly?
- Key Provisions in a Mediated Child Support Agreement
 - Setting the child support amount
 - Addressing arrears and payment schedules
 - Handling health insurance and daycare costs
 - Modifications and enforcement terms
- DCSE and Child Support Payment Processing
 - How payments are handled through DCSE?
 - What happens when a parent doesn't pay?
 - How to ensure proper documentation for enforcement?

Activities:

1. Review and Complete a Sample DC-631 Mediation Support Agreement
2. Draft a Mediation Agreement Based on a Hypothetical Case

Hour 8: Q&A and Child Support Jeopardy

- Objective: Reinforce learning through an interactive game and answer participant questions.
- Open Forum for Questions and Case-Specific Scenarios
- Child Support Jeopardy Game
 - Categories:
 - Guideline Selection
 - Income Calculations & Adjustments
 - Custody & Parenting Time
 - Daycare & Health Insurance Costs
 - Arrears & DCSE Procedures

Optional Training:

Social Security Benefits and Child Support

Objective: Understand how Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) impact child support calculations, including when benefits count as income, when they are excluded, and how dependent benefits affect a parent's support obligation.

- Understanding SSI in Child Support Calculations
- Understanding SSDI in Child Support Calculations
- How SSDI affects gross income calculations for child support.
- Dollar-for-dollar credit for noncustodial parents when a child receives derivative benefits.

Activities:

1. Understanding the difference between SSI & SSDI
 - a. Hypothetical 1: Leaves of Resilience: Nurturing Both Trees and Tots
2. Handling the derivative benefit
 - a. Hypothetical 2: Ann and Anthony's Financial Braiding
 - b. Hypothetical 4: Derivative Dollars and Disability Drama

Military Leave and Earnings Statement (LES) and Child Support Calculations

Objective: Understand how to analyze a Military Leave and Earnings Statement (LES) to determine gross income for child support calculations, ensuring all relevant pay, allowances, and entitlements are included accurately.

- Breakdown of the LES
- Understanding base pay, special and incentive pays, and allowances (BAH, BAS).
- Military Pay and Allowances as Gross Income
- Understanding how LES Deductions impact income adjustments for child support
- Verification and Accuracy

Activities:

1. Basic LES Analysis
 - a. Hypothetical 1: Deploying Support: Military Moms' Gross Income Recon
 - b. Hypothetical 2: Skydiving into Child Support: Navigating Free Fall Finances
2. Servicemember doesn't have his/her LES
 - a. Hypothetical 3: Felix's Forgetfulness: Fumbling with Finances

3. Retired Servicemember's LES/VA disability benefits
 - a. Hypothetical 5: Battle Over Benefits: A Child Support Dispute

Self-Employment Income

Objective:

Understand how to accurately calculate gross monthly income for a self-employed parent in child support cases by analyzing business income, reasonable business expenses, and applicable adjustments. This includes:

- Identifying Self-Employment Income
- Differentiating between child support expense analysis vs. tax liability calculations.
- Recognizing non-deductible expenses, including acquisition costs, depreciation, and mortgage principal payments for rental property.
- Analyzing IRS Form 1040 Schedule C
- Self-Employment Tax
- Addressing Income in the Gig Economy
- Mediation Best Practices for Self-Employment Income

Activities:

1. Basic to Self-Employment Schedule C
 - a. Hypothetical 2: Crunching the Numbers: How Schedule C Shapes Child Support and Gross Income Calculations
 - b. Hypothetical 3: Cutting Through the Numbers: A Barber's Guide to Schedule C and Child Support
2. Address Self-Employment Tax
 - a. Hypothetical 4: A Cut Above: Taylor's Approach to Self-Employment Tax Deductions

Imputing Income:

Objective:

Understand how to assess and calculate imputed income when a parent is unemployed or underemployed in child support cases. This includes:

- Determining When to Impute Income
- Methods for Determining Imputed Income
- Geographic Considerations for Imputation
- Imputing Income for Custodial Parents

Activities:

1. Imputation Basics
 - a. Hypothetical 1: Buoyant Notes, Sinking Income: A Maritime Engineer's Ballad of Passion and Child Support
 - b. Hypothetical 3: From Coding to Courtroom: A Tale of Tech, Health, and Child Support
2. How much to Impute
 - a. Hypothetical 4: Chillin' with Child Support: Mark's Cooling System
 - b. Hypothetical 5: From Couch to Courtroom: Alvin's Child Support Dilemma

Complex Guidelines

Objective:

Understand how to apply complex child support guidelines when custody arrangements involve a combination of shared, sole, and split custody. This includes:

- Multiple Shared Custody – Calculating support when the children who are in a shared custody arrangement have different parenting-time schedules.
- Sole-Shared Custody – Calculating support when there at least two children where one of the parents has sole custody of at least one children and the parents share custody of the other children
- Split-Shared Custody – Calculating support when at least three children are split between both parents, with one or more children in a shared custody arrangement.

Activities:

1. Multiple Shared Custody Custody
 - a. Hypothetical 1: The Epic Pet Showdown
2. Sole-Shared Custody
 - a. Hypothetical 2: Wired for Success: Navigating Autism and Custody in a Digital Age
3. Split-Shared Custody
 - a. Hypothetical 3: Custody Choreography: When Kids' Schedules Define Parenting

Interpolation

Objective:

Understand how to use the Virginia Child Support Guideline Schedule and apply interpolation when the parents' combined income falls between listed values. This includes:

- Understanding the Child Support Guideline Schedule – Identifying the monthly basic child support obligation based on combined gross income and the number of children.
- Applying Interpolation – Using mathematical estimation to determine an exact child support amount when income falls between two listed values.
- Ensuring Accuracy in Calculations – Following step-by-step interpolation methods to maintain fairness and consistency in support orders.

Activities:

1. Interpolating Basic Child Support Amounts

Hypothetical 1: Finding Support for One Child

Scenario: The combined monthly gross income of both parents is **\$5,575**. The table provides:

At **\$5,550**, the child support amount for **one child** is **\$794**.

At **\$5,600**, the child support amount for **one child** is **\$797**.

Exercise:

Use interpolation to calculate the exact basic monthly child support amount for **\$5,575**.

Hypothetical 3: Support for Three Children with Mid-Range Income

Scenario: The parents have three children and a combined gross income of \$8,225. The table provides:

At \$8,200, the support for three children is \$1,690.

At \$8,250, the support for three children is \$1,692.

Exercise:

Apply the interpolation formula to find the exact amount for \$8,225.

Discuss how rate of change per dollar of income is used in interpolation.

Final Thoughts

- ✓ Hour 8 now includes a Q&A session and a Jeopardy-style game to reinforce knowledge
- ✓ Step-by-step calculations for each guideline
- ✓ Mediators equipped to draft, enforce, and explain child support agreements

or additional resources!