

Frequently Asked Questions regarding the *Equitable Outcomes in Child Support Collection Act*

[The *Equitable Outcomes in Child Support Act* \(P.L.2025, c.5\)](#) was signed into law by Governor Murphy on January 30, 2025. The law provides that “any current child support obligation or any unpaid outstanding arrears balance of a court-ordered child support obligation . . . which is owed to reimburse the Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCPP) for maintenance costs incurred while a child was in its care or custody, are deemed null and void and are to be vacated and discharged.” Therefore, if a parent owes child support payments, arrears, or has an unsatisfied civil judgment or outstanding lien entered against them due to DCPP having obtained custody of their child(ren) for a period of time, that debt is discharged, meaning you will not have to pay it. Please note that this law only applies to any obligation owed as of January 30, 2025, and does not apply to any child support payments made prior to the effective date of the law.

Why was the law enacted?

[The *Equitable Outcomes in Child Support Act* helps families by not charging parents of children in foster care for child support, thereby allowing them to direct their resources toward satisfying court and DCPP requirements toward reunification. It has been shown that requiring parents to pay child support to child welfare agencies may lengthen the time their child/ren remain/s in foster care. It has also been shown that government agencies’ efforts to collect child support from parents of children in foster care is fiscally inefficient, as the amount of money expended on collection efforts is often significantly more than what is collected, and may result in arrears, fines, liens, or other civil actions that further delay or disrupt efforts to reunify the family.](#)

I’m a Parent, what does this mean for me?

The former law required all parents to be assessed for and pay child support when their child/ren was placed in the custody of DCPP. This will no longer be the case. Parents of children in the custody of DCPP can focus on doing what it takes to get their children returned.

Which child support cases are impacted by the new law?

[The *Equitable Outcomes in Child Support Collection Act* affects child support obligations and arrears specifically owed to the Department of Children and Families, as of January 30, 2025, by parents of children who were placed into foster care by the DCF-Division of Child Protection and Permanency \(DCPP\). The law does not impact child support obligations owed by one parent to another parent or by a parent to an entity other than DCF.](#)

I’m a Parent, what does this mean for me?

If you’re paying child support to your child’s custodial parent, the new law does not address or adjust that child support case. The law is limited to child support owed to the Department of Children and Families, Division of Child Protection and Permanency.

If you owed arrears to a custodial parent before your child was placed in foster care by DCPP, you will still owe that child support money to the custodial parent.

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What is the effective date of the new law?

The *Equitable Outcomes in Child Support Collection Act* became effective on January 30, 2025.

What is the impact of the *Equitable Outcomes in Child Support Collection Act*?

Under the *Equitable Outcomes in Child Support Collection Act*, the following items are vacated (i.e., removed), if they are related to child support a parent owes to DCF for costs while a child was in foster care:

- any current child support obligation to DCF
- any unpaid outstanding arrears to DCF
- any portion of a judgment that imposes fees
- any unsatisfied civil judgments
- any warrants
- any court-imposed fines, fees, costs, or other monetary penalties
- any outstanding liens

I'm a Parent, what does this mean for me?

If your child is currently in DCPD custody and you're paying child support and/or arrears to DCF, your DCF child support case will be closed, and you will no longer be required to pay any child support or arrears owed to DCF as of January 30, 2025.

If your child is no longer in DCPD custody but you're still paying arrears on your DCF child support case, your DCF child support case will be closed, and you will no longer be required to pay any arrears or back payments owed to DCF as of January 30, 2025.

Whether your child is currently in DCPD custody or not, if you have any outstanding fees; judgments; warrants; court-imposed fines, fees, costs, or other monetary penalties; or liens, specifically related to your DCF child support case, they will be closed.

How will parents be notified that their case is closing because of the new law?

Beginning the week of February 10, 2025, parents whose cases are affected by the *Equitable Outcomes in Child Support Collection Act* will begin to receive notice of their cases being closed via mail.

Do parents need to take any action to close their DCF child support cases?

No; parents do not need to take any action. The Department of Children and Families, in collaboration with the Department of Human Services' Child Support Program, and the Administrative Office of the Courts-Probation Services are taking the necessary steps to close cases and vacate (i.e., remove) any related arrears, judgments, warrants, liens, and other items as quickly as possible.

How long will it take for cases affected by the *Equitable Outcomes in Child Support Collection Act* to close?

We expect all impacted cases to close by May 31, 2025.

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What if a parent's paycheck or other assets are garnished or seized for a DCF child support case after the effective date of the new law?

The Child Support Program will refund payments on all eligible cases as soon as possible. If you do not receive a refund to which you believe you are entitled, please contact the New Jersey Family Support Services Center at [1-877-NJKIDS1](tel:1-877-NJKIDS1) (877-655-4371).

Please be advised that any child support payments made *before* the law's effective date, January 30, 2025, will *not* be refunded.

What if a child support obligation and/or any arrears, liens (on bank accounts or legal settlements/awards), or warrants related to a DCF child support case that is impacted by the new law are not vacated (i.e., removed)?

If a child support obligation and/or any arrears, liens (on bank accounts or legal settlements/awards), or warrants related to a case impacted by the new law are not vacated by May 31, 2025, please contact the New Jersey Family Support Services Center at [1-877-NJKIDS1](tel:1-877-NJKIDS1) (877-655-4371) for assistance.

What if a judgment and/or a judgment lien related to a DCF child support case that is impacted by the new law are not vacated (i.e., removed)?

If any judgments and/or judgment liens (as distinguished from liens on bank accounts or legal settlements/awards) related to a case impacted by the new law is not vacated, please contact the [Clerk of the Superior Court's Customer Service](#) at 609-421-6100 for assistance.

Will parents be reimbursed for any child support payments made before the *Equitable Outcomes in Child Support Collection Act* took effect?

No. The *Equitable Outcomes in Child Support Collection Act* has prospective effect, only, meaning parents cannot be reimbursed for any child support payments made to DCF before the law's effective date of January 30, 2025.

I'm a Parent, what does this mean for me?

The new law does not change the past. If you paid child support to DCF or if you had money withheld to pay child support to DCF, prior to the new law going into effect, the money will not be returned.

Will child support cases initiated by the New Jersey Department of Children and Families that are being managed and enforced by agencies in other states close as a result of the new law?

Yes. The *Equitable Outcomes in Child Support Collection Act* law applies to cases initiated by the New Jersey DCF because a child came into foster care in New Jersey.

Frequently Asked Questions regarding the *Equitable Outcomes in Child Support Collection Act*

Will child support cases initiated by child welfare agencies outside of New Jersey that are being managed and enforced by the Child Support Program and Probation Services in New Jersey close as a result of the new law?

No. The *Equitable Outcomes in Child Support Collection Act* only applies to cases initiated by the New Jersey DCF when a child came into foster care in New Jersey. Questions concerning child support obligations owed to other state child welfare agencies outside of New Jersey should be directed to those agencies.