INFORMATION NEEDED TO CALCULATE CHILD SUPPORT

The calculation of a child support obligation for parents can be simple or complex. The resource page of my website, www.carlsonfamilylaw.com, provides you with some links to how information regarding how child support is calculated and collected. Understanding how child support is calculated will be helpful to the mediation process. In order to calculate child support, I will need the following information:

INCOME

The Child Support Guidelines ("Guidelines") require that " income" is derived from all sources, "except all means-tested public assistance benefits…". (§ 4-204) Copies of the last two years' tax returns together with all attachments, including all 1099's and W2's and two recent paystubs from all sources of employment are often used to determine income. The tax returns allow the parties to review and determine if there is income from other sources and/or if there are variations in income, such as overtime, bonuses, dividends, self-employment income, etc. If the parties agree that the exchange of current paystubs provides an accurate reflection of the parties' current earnings, the parties may agree that there is no need to exchange tax returns. All information provided will be shared with the other party.

HEALTH INSURANCE Health insurance (medical, dental, and/or vision) costs for the parents and children are factored into support, but in different ways. The cost of the children's insurance needs to be calculated separately from that of the parents. The employers HR department or the insurance company can provide a breakdown of the cost of the health insurance. If you will need to get your own insurance post-divorce, obtain information regarding the cost prior to mediation so you can be given credit for the cost.

CHILD SUPPORT FOR OTHER CHILDREN The Guidelines take into consideration the support obligation for other children. If support has been court ordered, a copy of the order and calculation is needed. I can obtain this information if you provide me names of the parties in that action. If there are other children but there is no Support Order in effect, we can discuss this in mediation.

OTHER OBLIGATIONS RELATING TO SUPPORT The child support obligation is only one of several support obligations relating to the children. Parents will share on a pro rata basis the cost of work and school related childcare, as well as out-of-pocket medical, dental, and optical expenses, and sometimes, extracurricular expenses as well. Parents with joint physical custody may share other expenses. These will be discussed during mediation.

In summary, at a minimum, I will need the following information to properly prepare your child support calculation:

• Last two tax returns, including 1099's and W-2's, unless parties agree otherwise.

• Two most recent paystubs from all income sources (including information about frequency of pay periods), and information relating to bonuses, commissions, etc.
• A breakdown of the cost for your health insurance (medical, dental, and vision) and the additional cost to provide insurance for the children.
• The amount of child support paid for other children, if applicable. Instructions for the Child Support Worksheet

CHILD SUPPORT WORKSHEET

Each party is to provide the following information and supporting documentation:

This information is provided by: _____
• Employer: _____
• Position: _____
(Note: if you are self-employed, up to 5 years of tax returns may be used to determine income. Variable income is often averaged over a three-year period, and sometimes over a five-year period.)
• Monthly gross pay (before taxes): _____
(Note: if you are unemployed or underemployed, income may be attributed to you.)
• Do you receive any of the following?
Bonuses: _____
Commissions: _____
Profit sharing: _____
Stock incentives: _____
Overtime: _____
Other (car, housing, per diem, etc.): _____
Details:_____
_____
_____
_____

• Income from all sources is to be considered. Do you ever receive income from other jobs, rental, business/farm interest, trust payments, disability, Worker's Compensation, retirement, VA benefits, etc? _____
Details: _____
• Do you have Health Insurance through your employment? _____
Medical Dental Vision • How much does it cost to insure just yourself (monthly)?
Medical _____ Dental _____ Vision _____
• Will you be providing health insurance for your child(ren)?
_____If so:
• What is the additional cost to you to insure the child(ren) (monthly)?
Medical _____ Dental _____ Vision _____
(For example, if insurance for you alone is $80 a month and for you and your children is $180, the additional cost for the children is $100.)
• Are there children from other relationships on your insurance plan? _____

Do you contribute to retirement? _____ If yes, what percentage of your pay do you contribute to retirement? _____% (Note: if your contribution is more than 4%, you will need documentation that the contribution is mandatory.)

- Do you have children not of this relationship who you support financially either directly or through child support payments? _____ If so, please provide:
    - Names and ages of the child(ren): _____
    - Monthly child support obligation? _____
    - What is the name of the other parent? _____
- Are you making payments on a school loan? _____ If so,
    - What is your total monthly payment amount? _____
    - When do the payments end? _____

    (Note: student loan payments may be a factor in determining child support.)