

Common Mistakes Identified from 2018 Case Sampling

Every four years the Georgia Child Support Commission conducts case sampling as part of a review of the state's child support guidelines statute (O.C.G.A. § 19-6-15) and Basic Child Support Obligation (BCSO) table (45 CFR 302.56(e)). The last review was conducted in 2018, and the next will be conducted in 2022. The most common mistakes identified in 2018 have been compiled below. In many instances, proofreading is the answer to avoiding these mistakes. We hope this information is useful. Visit <https://csc.georgiacourts.gov/training/>, for this and other training handouts.

A) Orders

- Some child support orders established payments based on how often a noncustodial parent was paid on their job. Always establish child support on a monthly basis and not on how often the noncustodial parent is paid on their job, as pay schedules vary from job to job. O.C.G.A. § 19-6-15(b)(7). (See D below.)
- Order failed to include child support amount. Do not rely on the worksheet as the only source for the child support amount.
- Final child support amount in order and worksheet must match exactly. See line 13 of the worksheet for the final amount.
- Examples of effective date issues: "the 1st of the month following release from jail" or "effective when mother/children vacate residence" are not dates easily determined. Always use a date from the calendar as the first due date for the child support.
- Noncustodial parent named in order was different in addendum and worksheet.
- Both the income and child support order amounts were different in the worksheet and order.
- No worksheet was filed with Temporary Order – guidelines apply. O.C.G.A. § 19-6-15(c).

B) Step-down or Multiple Children Worksheets – O.C.G.A. § 19-6-15(b)(12)

- The preexisting order in the second step-down worksheet was not removed when the child in that order emancipated. Use the training check list found at <https://csc.georgiacourts.gov/training/>.
- Failed to include the step-down amount of child support in the order. Always include all amounts and effective dates.

C) Calculator and Worksheet

- An unauthorized version of an Excel worksheet was used. The online child support calculator promulgated by the Child Support Commission is the only calculator that may be used in Georgia. O.C.G.A. § 19-6-15(m)(2).
- Future Uninsured percentage in worksheet not included in order. O.C.G.A. § 19-6-15(b)(10).
- Split parenting case – two worksheets are required and only one was prepared and filed. O.C.G.A. § 19-6-15(b)(11)
- Order does not explain Social Security payment for the child as reason child support was set at \$0.
- Social Security payment on custodial parent's disability account was included on line 12 of worksheet, when only Social Security payment on **noncustodial** parent's disability account is allowed by law. O.C.G.A. § 19-6-15(f)(3).

Schedule A

- Imputed income, as identified in order, was entered in wrong field. Always enter imputed income in field 41 on Schedule A and explain how imputed income was determined in box 41(a) or (b). O.C.G.A. § 19-6-15(f)(4)(A).

Schedule B – preexisting orders

- Must include date of initial order, name of county, and year of birth of each child. O.C.G.A. § 19-6-15(f)(5)(B).

Schedule B – qualified children

- Cannot include a child of current case also as a qualified child. O.C.G.A. § 19-6-15(f)(5)(C).

Schedule D - Health insurance in order and worksheet:

- Order required a parent to provide health insurance, but credit on Schedule D was extended to the other parent.
- Order stated health insurance not available at a reasonable cost to either parent, but the noncustodial parent was given credit for \$150 on Schedule D.
- Based on the order, Dental/Vision insurance costs were included as part of the health insurance on Schedule D. Dental/Vision costs are specific deviations and are only entered on Schedule E.
- Order stated custodial parent paid \$30 a month for health insurance, but \$25 a month was entered on Schedule D.

Schedule E – Low-Income Deviation:

- The low-income deviation was not used in any worksheet reviewed. Consider this deviation, O.C.G.A. § 19-6-15(i)(2)(B).

Schedule E - Specific/Non-specific Deviations:

- Parent's combined adjusted gross income was above \$30,000 a month, but worksheet did not include a high-income deviation. Consider a high-income deviation, O.C.G.A. § 19-6-15(i)(2)(A).

Schedule E - Questions B, C and D – Findings of Fact:

- Worksheet did not include answers to findings of fact questions for each requested deviation. Findings of Fact questions cannot be answered with just "yes, no, or in the best interest of the child." Guidelines require explanations of "why" in the answers. O.C.G.A. § 19-6-15(c)(2)(E) and O.C.G.A. § 19-6-15 (i)(1)(B) and (C).

D) Income Deduction Order

- Required Income Deduction Order (IDO) form authorized under USCR 24.12; no other form may be used. Obtain form at <https://georgiacourts.gov/ido/>. Also see USCR 24.11. *Alimony only* cases are not paid to the Family Support Registry.
- If multiple worksheets prepared and income deduction ordered, separate IDOs must be entered for each child support amount.