

Oklahoma Statutes Citationized

Title 43. Marriage

Divorce and Alimony

Section 112 - Care, Custody, and Support of Minor Children

Cite as: 43 O.S. § 112 (OSCN 2015), Divorce and Alimony

A. A petition or cross-petition for a divorce, legal separation, or annulment must state whether or not the parties have minor children of the marriage. If there are minor children of the marriage, the court:

1. Shall make provision for guardianship, custody, medical care, support and education of the children;
2. Unless not in the best interests of the children, may provide for the visitation of the noncustodial parent with any of the children of the noncustodial parent; and
3. May modify or change any order whenever circumstances render the change proper either before or after final judgment in the action; provided, that the amount of the periodic child support payment shall not be modified retroactively or payment of all or a portion of the past due amount waived, except by mutual agreement of the obligor and obligee, or if the obligee has assigned child support rights to the Department of Human Services or other entity, by agreement of the Department or other entity. Unless the parties agree to the contrary, a completed child support computation form provided for in [Section 120](#) of this title shall be required to be filed with the child support order.

The social security numbers of both parents and the child shall be included on the child support order summary form provided for in [Section 120](#) of this title, which shall be submitted to the Central Case Registry as provided for in [Section 112A](#) of this title with all child support or paternity orders.

B. In any action in which there are minor unmarried children in awarding or modifying the custody of the child or in appointing a general guardian for the child, the court shall be guided by the provisions of [Section 112.5](#) of this title and shall consider what appears to be in the best interests of the child.

C. 1. When it is in the best interests of a minor unmarried child, the court shall:

- a. assure children of frequent and continuing contact with both parents after the parents have separated or dissolved their marriage, and
- b. encourage parents to share the rights and responsibilities of child rearing in order to effect this policy.

2. There shall be neither a legal preference nor a presumption for or against joint legal custody, joint physical custody, or sole custody.

3. When in the best interests of the child, custody shall be awarded in a way which assures the frequent and continuing contact of the child with both parents. When awarding custody to either parent, the court:

a. shall consider, among other facts, which parent is more likely to allow the child or children frequent and continuing contact with the noncustodial parent, and

b. shall not prefer a parent as a custodian of the child because of the gender of that parent.

4. In any action, there shall be neither a legal preference or a presumption for or against private or public school or home-schooling in awarding the custody of a child, or in appointing a general guardian for the child.

5. Notwithstanding any custody determination made pursuant to the Oklahoma Children's Code, when a parent of a child is required to be separated from a child due to military service, the court shall not enter a final order modifying an existing custody order until such time as the parent has completed the term of duty requiring separation. For purposes of this paragraph:

a. in the case of a parent who is a member of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps or Coast Guard, the term "military service" means a combat deployment, contingency operation, or natural disaster requiring the use of orders that do not permit any family member to accompany the member,

b. in the case of a parent who is a member of the National Guard, the term "military service" means service under a call to active service authorized by the President of the United States or the Secretary of Defense for a period of more than thirty (30) consecutive days under 32 U.S.C. 502(f) for purposes of responding to a national emergency declared by the President and supported by federal funds. "Military service" shall include any period during which a member is absent from duty on account of sickness, wounds, leave or other lawful cause, and

c. the court may enter a temporary custody or visitation order pursuant to the requirements of the Deployed Parents Custody and Visitation Act.

6. In making an order for custody, the court shall require compliance with [Section 112.3](#) of this title.

D. 1. Except for good cause shown, a pattern of failure to allow court-ordered visitation may be determined to be contrary to the best interests of the child and as such may be grounds for modification of the child custody order.

2. For any action brought pursuant to the provisions of this section which the court determines to be contrary to the best interests of the child, the prevailing party shall be entitled to recover court costs, attorney fees and any other reasonable costs and expenses incurred with the action.

E. Except as otherwise provided by [Section 112.1A](#) of this title, any child shall be entitled to support by the parents until the child reaches eighteen (18) years of age. If a child is regularly enrolled in and attending high school, as set forth in [Section 11-103.6 of Title 70](#) of the Oklahoma Statutes, other means of high school education, or an alternative high school education program as a full-time student, the child shall be entitled to support by the parents until the child graduates from high school or until the age of twenty (20) years, whichever occurs first. Full-time attendance shall include regularly scheduled breaks from the school year. No hearing or further order is required to extend support pursuant to this subsection after the child reaches the age of eighteen (18) years.

F. In any case in which provision is made for the custody or support of a minor child or enforcement of such order and before hearing the matter or signing any orders, the court shall inquire whether public assistance money or medical support has been provided by the Department of Human Services, hereafter referred to as the Department, for the benefit of each child. If public assistance money, medical support, or child support services under the state child support plan as provided in [Section 237 of Title 56](#) of the Oklahoma Statutes have been provided for the benefit of the child, the Department shall be a necessary party for the adjudication of the debt due to the State of Oklahoma, as defined in [Section 238 of Title 56](#) of the Oklahoma Statutes, and for the adjudication of paternity, child support, and medical insurance coverage for the minor children in accordance with federal regulations. When an action is filed, the petitioner shall give the Department notice of the action according to [Section 2004 of Title 12](#) of the Oklahoma Statutes. The Department shall not be required to intervene in the action to have standing to appear and participate in the action. When the Department is a necessary party to the action, any orders concerning paternity, child support, medical support, or the debt due to the State of Oklahoma shall be approved and signed by the Department.

G. In any case in which a child support order or custody order or both is entered, enforced or modified, the court may make a determination of the arrearages of child support.