

What happens if my child has reached 18 and is still in school or otherwise dependent? How can I continue to receive child support?

The answer to this question depends a lot on the wording in the final order for child support. If the order is silent on the matter of the child being dependent past the age of eighteen, a supplemental petition to modify support must be filed and personally served on the other party in order to change the order to reflect the new circumstances. **If you are unable to determine for yourself how your support order addresses this issue, you will need to seek the services of a licensed attorney to interpret your court order for you.**

The modification process can be a lengthy one due to many factors, including busy court dockets. If you are advised that you must file a modification, start the court process as soon as possible. Do not wait until two months before the child's birthday as there will probably not be sufficient time to complete the process. The Florida Supreme Court has approved basic forms for the modification of child support procedure. These form packages can be obtained from the 6th Judicial Circuit's web page at:

www.jud6.org. Go to the "representing yourself in court" section. Package 3B is the child support modification package. Each package is fully indexed and includes a procedure checklist at the beginning of the package.

If you are unable to download your forms, packages can also be purchased from the Pinellas County Clerk of Court for a small fee. The addresses/phone numbers for the Civil Clerk's offices are:

South County:

545-1st Avenue North
St. Petersburg, FL. 33701
727-582-7771

North County:

315 Court Street
Clearwater, FL 33756
727-464-3267

***Office hours are: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Monday through Friday, except holidays.***

The Court's Information and Resource Center can be reached at 727-582-7200. Center staff can give you information on where to obtain approved forms and court filing procedures only. Legal advice is not available. If you are low income there may be a legal clinic available to assist you with filling out forms and answering your legal questions. All legal clinics are income limited, most have residency requirements, and all are only held on certain days of the week. Center staff can provide you information on how to contact the legal clinics that you may be qualified for.

If you are not eligible for the free clinics, your local bar association can often refer you to a lawyer for a short consultation for a fee. In Pinellas County you can obtain a 30 minute consultation with a lawyer for a fee. The St. Petersburg Lawyer Referral number is 727-821-5450, the Clearwater Lawyer Referral number is 727-461-4880.

Further information:

- Some Florida Statutes that address child support matters are Chapters 61, 88, 409, and 743.
- You may conduct research of Florida case law regarding child support matters in a law library.