



Statement from the Maryland Judiciary on Matters Concerning Children & Families

With schools closed and courthouses restricting operations to reduce exposure to COVID-19, custodians who live apart might be confused about changing family situations and their court orders. This statement is intended to clarify concerns you may have regarding these matters.

Custody and Parenting Time:

All court orders for a child's custody, parenting time, and child support **are still in effect**. In some situations, if permitted under the court order, custodians can **jointly** adjust their shared parenting responsibilities in ways that they agree are best for the children. If custodians are not able to agree, the court order controls.

Working with limited staff, the Circuit Courts are only hearing family law emergencies (custody, child access, visitation, and support) where there is a credible risk of imminent and substantial physical or emotional harm to a child or parent.

Child Support:

You must continue to pay your child support as ordered. If you have questions or need help, whether you are paying or receiving child support, please call the Department of Human Services' Customer Call Center at 1-800-322-6347.

Protective Orders, Peace Orders, and Extreme Risk Protective Orders (ERPO):

Pursuant to Maryland Court of Appeals Chief Judge Mary Ellen Barbera's Administrative Order issued March 25, 2020, all new protective, peace, and extreme risk protective order (ERPO) petitions will be handled by commissioners.

Interim Orders remain in effect until action is taken by the court.

If you are in need of protection and are seeking a peace or protective order, or an ERPO, call the District Court Commissioner in your county or Baltimore City. **Your request will be heard.** **Call first to provide information and for instructions on where to go.**

Maryland Courts Self-Help Centers:

To talk to a lawyer about your family law matter, call 410-260-1392 from 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., or speak to one by chat from 8:30 a.m. until 8:00 p.m.