



2022

National Parents Organization

2022 Child Support and Shared Parenting Report Card

About National Parents Organization

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Mission

National Parents Organization improves the lives of children and strengthens society by protecting every child's right to the love and care of both parents after separation or divorce. We seek better lives for children through family court reform that establishes equal rights and responsibilities for fathers and mothers.

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Introduction

[National Parents Organization \(NPO\)](#) advocates for children's true best interests after parental separation or divorce. We are working to improve the lives of children and strengthen society by protecting every child's right to the love and care of both fit parents after separation or divorce. We seek better lives for children by reforming the norms of separated parenting.

Shared parenting is adopted by the social sciences as the preferred living arrangement for children following divorce or separation. Poll after poll—both in the USA and abroad—show the public overwhelmingly supports this arrangement. However, improperly designed child support guidelines that fail to account for the economics of dual residency in a fair and neutral manner act as an impediment by providing perverse economic incentives and inducing needless litigation and parental conflict, often at the expense of children.

National Parents Organization here presents a report of the first ever study of the impact of the states' child support laws on shared parenting. Specifically, this report analyzes how child support guidelines in 50 states and the District of Columbia implement parenting time adjustments to inhibit or promote shared parenting.

It is important to understand the scope and limitations of this research. For a more complete account of this, please see the section below that is devoted to this issue. From the outset, though, it is vital to understand that this is not an evaluation of all aspects of states' child support laws but rather the specific aspect of the parenting time adjustment component in the guidelines. The states' laws were not evaluated on the model used (income shares, percent of obligor's income, Melson Formula, etc.), underlying methodology for estimating child costs, the statutory bases for deviations, or the handling of "add on" costs for health insurance and child care.

Furthermore, this evaluation was limited to the statutory provisions, ignoring policies and procedures even when these could promote or inhibit shared parenting.

Summary of Conclusions

The present study demonstrates that, to borrow words from a recent study for the National Bureau of Economic Research, "states use a hodge-podge of ad hoc mathematical formula adjustments" for handling shared parenting "resulting in complex child support guidelines with internal inconsistencies and unintended consequences." Only four states received grades in the 'A' range; eight more received grades in the 'B' range and six earned grades in the 'C' range. The majority of states received grades in the 'D' or 'F' range, 11 and 22 respectively. Nine of those failing grades were '0's. These states' guidelines have no parenting time adjustment at all; they provide no recognition of the direct expenses of the payer parent no matter how much time the children live in that parent's home. (For the full list of state grades, see Appendix I: States by Grade.)

For those who are concerned with the well-being of children of separated parents, the results of this study are both shocking and depressing. As a 2021 study for the National Bureau of Economic Research put it:

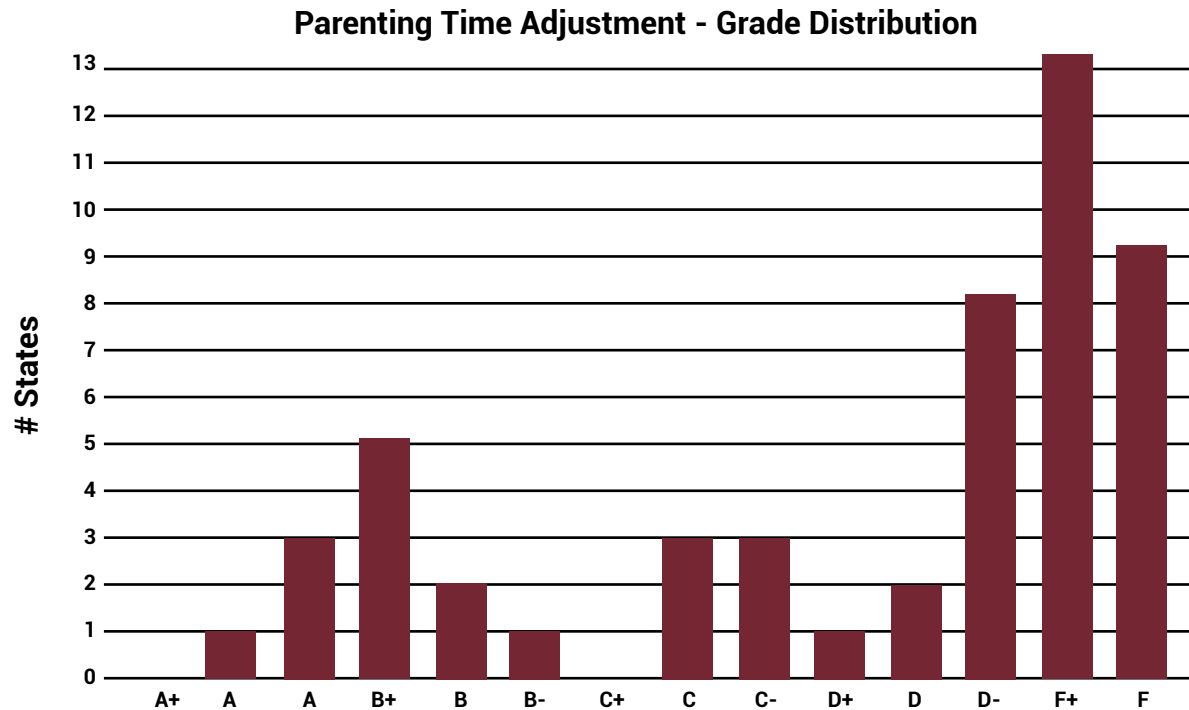
Surprisingly, a logical and internally consistent framework for dividing parental contributions and allocations under different parenting and family scenarios such as shared parenting and non-joint children does not exist. Instead, states use a hodge-podge of ad hoc mathematical formula adjustments for such situations, resulting in complex child support guidelines with internal inconsistencies and unintended consequences.¹

¹ Kulldorff, Martin and Jay Bhattacharya. (October, 2021). "A Child Support Framework Accounting for Parenting Time and Half-Siblings," National Bureau of Economic Research, Working Paper 29411 (<http://www.nber.org/papers/w29411>).

Summary of Conclusions

Many states whose guidelines did include a parenting time adjustment imposed an unreasonably high parenting time threshold before the adjustment took effect. Each of these states, and numerous other states, have guidelines that create consequential “cliff effects”—attaching a significant change in child support payments based on insignificant differences in parenting time. This is a recipe for parental conflict that ill-serves children.

While there are a few notable exceptions, overall the states' child support guidelines are failing to promote children's best interests. Indeed, they are creating unnecessary and harmful barriers to shared parenting—the arrangement for separated parenting that research shows is typically best for children.



A young girl with dark, curly hair, wearing a white top and a pink tutu, is kissing a woman on the cheek. The woman has her hair in a bun and is wearing a black top and a black choker. They are outdoors, possibly at a market or festival, with a blurred background of people and structures. The image is split into two vertical panels: the left panel is a dark red overlay with a grid of white dots, and the right panel shows the main scene.

The Report

Guiding Principles

In developing the metrics for evaluating and grading the states on their child support laws, National Parents Organization was guided by several foundational principles.

- ***Because children of separated parents flourish best when the parents share as equally as possible in the rearing of the children, child support laws and policies should facilitate and provide incentives for equally shared parenting.***

NPO's primary focus is the improvement of children's lives by the promotion of equal shared parenting when parents live apart. While [scientific research](#) strongly supports the conclusion that, in the overwhelming majority of cases, this arrangement best promotes children's mental and physical well-being, there are many state laws and policies that inhibit, rather than encourage, equal shared parenting.² Child support laws can be more or less favorable to shared parenting, which is the focus of this research.

- ***Financial support of children is a shared responsibility of the two parents in proportion to their financial ability.***

As the individuals who brought a child into the world, the parents both share primary responsibility for providing the financial resources necessary for the child to flourish in proportion to their ability to do so. To borrow some legal parlance, this is a "joint and several" responsibility, meaning that while both parents share the responsibility, if one is unable to fulfill it, the full responsibility falls on the other.

² See the 2019 NPO Shared Parenting Report Card for an evaluation of the degree to which states' custody laws promote or inhibit shared parenting.

- ***Child support guidelines should be based on reasonable estimates of child-related expenses.***

Child support should reflect the cost of raising children and not contain “hidden alimony” or “lifestyle support” for the other parent. While inaccurate estimates of child costs do not directly bear on the object of this study, they do so indirectly.

Overestimates of child costs exaggerate the errors resulting from an improper division of the combined child support obligations of the two parents between the children’s two households.

- ***Child support guidelines should divide the combined child support obligation of the two parents between the child’s two households based on reasonable estimates of child-related expenses in each household. Child support guidelines should appropriately reflect the economic reality that, when parents are sharing physical custody of the children, both households incur direct child-related expenses.***

Child support is for the child; it should follow the child. We do not adequately support children by placing all of the parents’ combined child support funds in only one parent’s household when the children have two homes.

- ***Child support guidelines should avoid creating incentives for conflicts between parents.***

One thing that all researchers agree on is that parental conflict is harmful to children. Poorly designed child support guidelines can create incentives for parental conflict. The most obvious way that this happens is when the guidelines create “cliff effects”—making insignificant differences in parenting time the basis for very significant differences in the child support amount that one parent pays the other.

Terminology

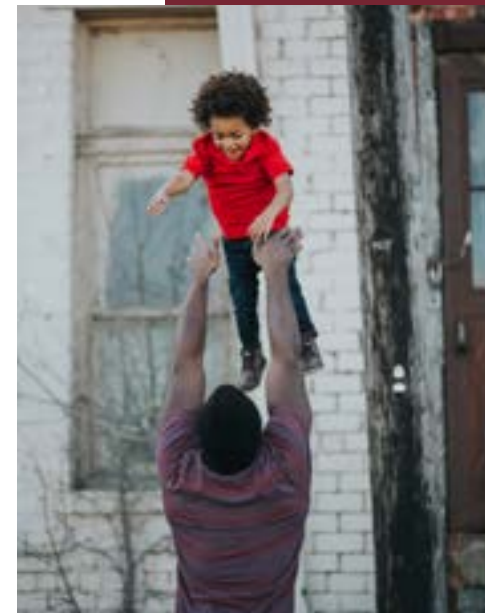
Definitions

NPO recognizes that support for children takes many forms and includes more than financial support. Throughout this report, though, we focus on financial support and we employ the following terminology:

'Child support' (CS) refers to the total child-related expenditures to maintain children of divorced or separated parents at a prescribed standard of living. It does not refer only to the financial resources transferred from one parent's household to the other's.

'Child support transfer payment' (CSTP) refers to the financial child support that is transferred from one parent's household to the other parent's household for the benefit of the child(ren).³

'Payer Parent' and 'Recipient Parent' refer, respectively, to the parent ordered to make a child support transfer payment to the other parent and to the parent who receives the CSTP.



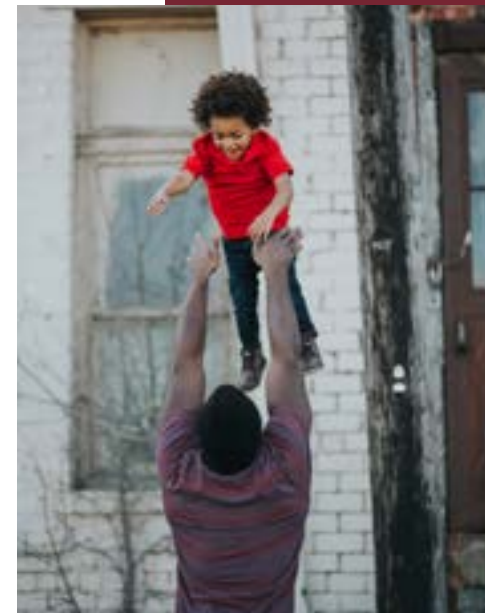
³ What we refer to as the 'child support transfer payment' is sometimes called simply 'child support'. This is misleading. When separated parents with equal incomes share parenting time equally, there is typically no child support transfer payment. But their children are financially supported. The same is true, of course, with respect to intact families. The financial support of children should not be confused with the payments made by one parent to the other for the benefit of the children.

Terminology

Definitions

'Parenting time adjustment' (PTA) refers to the adjustment that a state's basic child support calculation employs to determine an appropriate presumptive child support transfer payment when both parents are providing housing and providing direct financial support for their children. A PTA is also sometimes referred to as a 'parenting time offset' or a 'residential time credit'.

As noted, our usage of 'child support' deviates from what is standard. There is a good reason for this deviation. Using 'child support' to refer only to the child support transfer payment is dangerously misleading. It ignores the direct financial child support of each of the parents and it leads many to assume that increased child support transfer payments can seldom if ever be harmful to children. However, this is manifestly not true. The consensus of scientific research shows that the overwhelming majority of children of separated parents benefit from having, whenever feasible, two homes, one with each parent. This means that, while increased child support—the total financial resources available for the benefit of the children—is seldom if ever harmful to children, increased child support transfer payments can certainly be harmful as they can deprive children of financial resources in one of their homes.



Parenting Time and Child Well-being

Divorce or separation of parents is an [adverse childhood experience](#), which can, if not handled properly, contribute to long-term health and behavioral problems for children. There is a large and growing body of scientific evidence establishing that, when parents are living separately, the best strategy for minimizing the risk to children is to ensure that both parents are kept fully engaged in the children's lives, including being directly involved with the day-to-day child care responsibilities. (See the NPO website for citations and links to some of [the most recent, compelling research articles on shared parenting](#). NPO has also made available, at no cost, videos from the most significant conference ever held on child-well-being and separated parenting. These videos of world-renowned researchers reporting on the most important contemporary research—research that clearly demonstrates the benefits of establishing presumptions of equal shared parenting—are available at www.sharedparenting.net.)

What this research shows is that, while divorce is an adverse childhood experience, children of divorced parents who share physical custody in a substantially equal manner do not, on average, suffer long-term adverse effects. In fact, on all measures of child well-being, they score about as well as children of parents living together. And they score much higher than children raised in sole physical custody arrangements. The adverse effects of divorce for child well-being are caused largely not by parental separation but by parental deprivation.

This research confirms what common sense has always declared: when a child has two loving and fit parents, both parents matter! We harm our children by placing one parent in a secondary, and marginalized, role.

Scope and Limitations of this Research

This research is not an overall evaluation of states' child support laws and policies. A brief overview of the process of setting an order for a child support transfer payment will help to clarify the scope of this study.

The process begins with an estimate of child-related expenses based on the number of children involved and the family income.⁴ The next step involves the employment of an economic model for apportioning responsibility for a share of these expenses between the two parents.⁵ This results in what is termed the 'basic child support obligation' for one or both parents.⁶ To this basic child support obligation, the guidelines add and apportion the costs of medical insurance and child care to arrive at a presumptive child support obligation—a child support transfer payment presumption. This presumptive amount can be rebutted in court based on a variety of statutorily-specified factors.

In 41 states and also in the District of Columbia, the guidelines provide for the payer parent's child support obligation to be adjusted based on the amount of time the children spend in that parent's care. This is the parenting time adjustment (PTA). In the other 9 states, there is no PTA formula; in these states, the presumptive maldistribution of the combined child support funds of the family must be addressed via, often costly and time-consuming, deviation proceedings.

⁴ The plurality of states employ some version of the Betson-Rothbarth method for estimating child-related expenses. (Three states use BR-1, 12 states use BR-3, and four states use BR-4.) A variety of other methods are used in other states. (Six states use the Espenshade method, four use the van der Gaag method, three use the Melson method, two use USDA estimates, and several other methods are used in some states.) As was mentioned above, the degree to which a state's child support program encourages or discourages shared parenting is influenced not only by its child support guidelines but also by policies and practices of courts and the child support program. As was mentioned above, the degree to which a state's child support program encourages or discourages shared parenting is influenced not only by its child support guidelines but also by policies and practices of courts and the child support program.

⁵ Forty-one states employ an "Income Shares" model for calculating the basic child support obligations. Six states use a percentage of the obligor's income model. Three states use the Melson model and one state, New York, uses a hybrid model.

⁶ Under the Income Shares model, each parent has a child support obligation. In a sole custody situation, the child support of the custodial parent is presumed to be expended directly on the children and doesn't become part of a child support order—that is, the custodial parent's child support obligation is not relevant to determining the child support transfer payment.

Scope and Limitations of this Research

The states that do have PTAs vary widely in how they implement them. NPO's analysis and grading of the states for this project are based on whether the state has a PTA and, if so, the degree to which that PTA promotes or inhibits shared parenting. It looks only at the way in which each state's laws divide the parents' combined child support obligation between the two households when both parents are providing housing and directly supporting their children. In other words, it focuses on how each state handles the presumptive child support transfer payment when both parents provide homes for the child(ren). It is not a full evaluation of the states' child support guidelines, much less of the states' child support programs.⁷



⁷ As was mentioned above, the degree to which a state's child support program encourages or discourages shared parenting is influenced not only by its child support guidelines but also by policies and practices of courts and the child support program.

Methodology

Data Gathering and Analysis

A team of three NPO researchers collected and reviewed the child support guidelines for all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Each state's child support guidelines were analyzed and evaluated on eight metrics. The various metrics were weighted based on their expected effect on shared parenting arrangements.

Metrics

Because the goal of the research project was to determine the degree to which each state's child support guidelines encouraged or discouraged the sharing of physical custody of children when parents are living apart, states' guidelines were evaluated and graded on how their parenting time adjustment divided the combined child support funds between the children's two households when physical custody was shared.

The specific metrics on which the states' child support guidelines are evaluated are as follows:

1. Existence of a parenting time adjustment (PTA)

Nine states have no parenting time adjustment in their guidelines. Because federal law requires that a state's guideline amounts be considered presumptively correct, in these states a payer parent will presumptively owe the same amount of child support whether that parent never cares for the child, or has the child in their care 50% of the time—or more! An adjustment in the child support amount requires a payer parent to go to court and argue for overcoming the presumption that the CS amount is correct and for the court to provide a specific finding that “the application of the guidelines would be unjust or inappropriate in ... [the] particular case” to justify a deviation.

⁸ Section 103 of the Family Support Act of 1988 (Pub. L. 100-485).

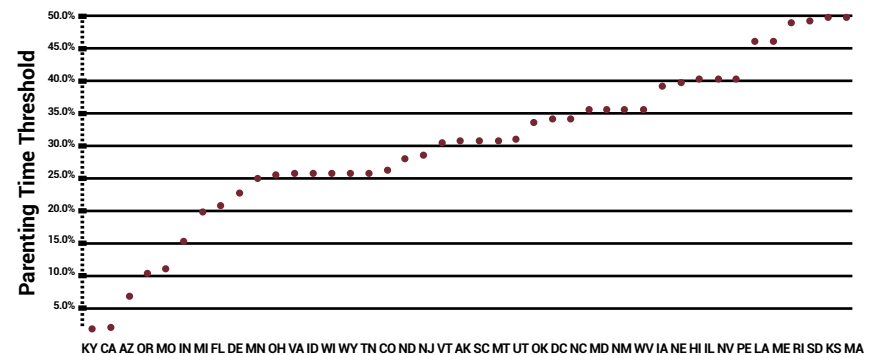
Methodology

The nine states without parenting time adjustments received a '0' in NPO's scoring, earning a grade of 'F'. Completely ignoring, in guideline calculations, the direct child-related expenses in one household, no matter how high those expenses are, creates an enormous barrier to shared parenting.

2. PTA Threshold

States' guidelines vary wildly on the issue of how many overnights the child(ren) must be with the payer parent in order for the PTA to kick in. In several states, it's as low as one overnight per year; several other state's PTAs do not apply unless the payer parent has the children 182 overnights a year—49.9% of the year! The average of all state's thresholds is 106.83 overnights per year and the median threshold is 110 overnights.

Time-Sharing Thresholds for Presumptive Parenting Time Adjustment (PTA) States



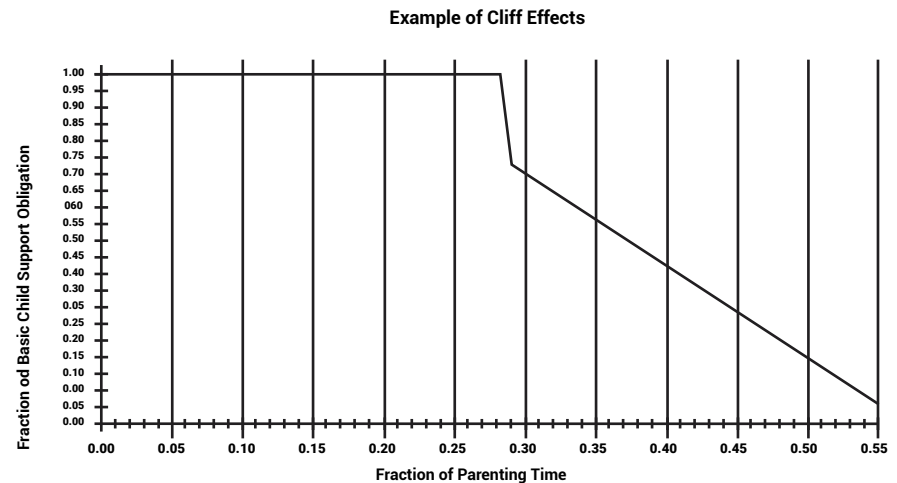
NOTE: Average= 29%, Median=30%, Standard Deviation=13%

Methodology

Obviously, a high threshold is a deterrent to many shared parenting arrangements and it presumptively deprives children of any of their parents' combined child support funds in one of their homes even if they are living with that parent a substantial portion of the year. NPO treats a low threshold as a positive component of child support guidelines that are aimed at promoting, and likely will promote, shared parenting and, so, the best interest of children.

3. Continuity of the PTA (absence of "cliff effects")

All of the states with high PTA thresholds in fact create cliff effects.⁹ But even states with low thresholds can fail to be continuous, creating cliff effects and, as a result, encouraging parental conflict over insignificant amounts of parenting time. NPO calculated the size and number of cliff effects and penalized states whose guidelines had significant discontinuities in their PTA.



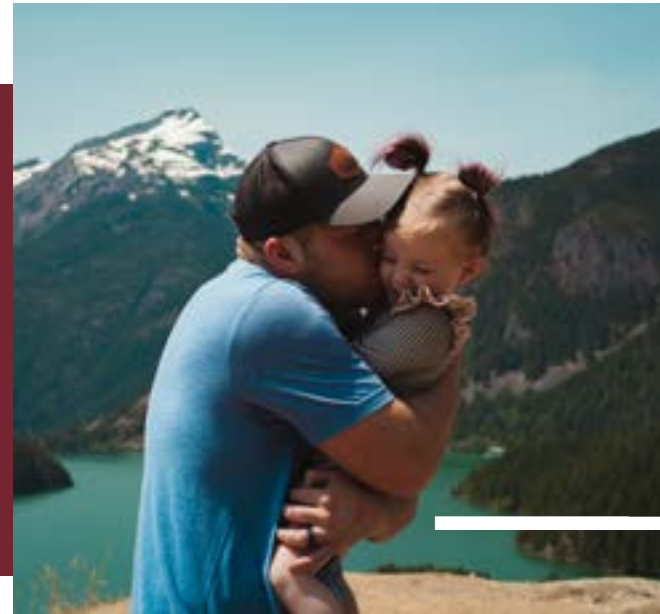
⁹ This does not have to be true for such states. A state could have a high PTA threshold but, from the point where it kicks in, create a completely smooth adjustment in the presumptive child support transfer payment based on time in the care of the payer parent. However, no state's child support guidelines do this.

Methodology

4. Appropriate recognition of fixed, duplicated costs of dual residency

When parents live apart, in almost all cases, the best arrangement for promoting the children's well-being is for the children to have homes with each of their parents and for both parents to be equally involved in raising the children. Two homes, though, cost more because of fixed, duplicated expenses such as housing and utilities.¹⁰ Estimates of these fixed, duplicated expenses vary widely from a low of about 20% to a high of about 50% of estimated total child-related expenses.

NPO estimates the fixed, duplicated expenses to be in the 28%-40% range and scored states' guidelines lower if those guidelines are based on assumptions that lie outside that range.



¹⁰ It is seldom recognized, but important to note, that there are also ways in which shared parenting is likely to reduce child related costs for the parents. For example, if both parents are fully involved in rearing their children, parenting schedules can often be created to minimize the time children need to be in daycare or other paid childcare. Given the cost of childcare, it is clear that these costs can be quite significant in many cases. However, they are variable, and it is impossible to calculate these savings based on a review of a state's child support guidelines.

Methodology

5. Constraint on the child support transfer payment under PTA (avoidance of a “shared parenting penalty”)

The child support transfer payment of a parent who is exercising parenting time should never exceed the child support transfer payment that parent would have if they were exercising no parenting time. While the direct child-related costs borne by the paying parent do not reduce the child-related costs of the recipient on a dollar-for-dollar basis, as the previous metric recognizes, they clearly *do not increase* those costs of the recipient parent. Surprisingly, the guidelines in eight states¹¹ violate this constraint, imposing under some conditions a higher child support transfer payment obligation on the payer parent who is sharing in physical custody than a parent who has no physical custody of the child. This is a (no doubt unintended) consequence of a state using a Multiplier Model to address the issue of the fixed, duplicated costs of shared parenting with a low parenting time threshold. It is a true “shared parenting penalty” and is completely without economic justification.

6. Equal recognition of the effects of the PTA on both parent's households

NPO's research found a number of ways in which state guidelines treated the child related expenses in the two parent's households asymmetrically. One way this happens is for a state to adjust the payer parent's child support transfer payment downward for direct expenses on children only to the degree that this reduces the direct expenditures of the recipient of the child support transfer payment. So, for example, since the payer parent's expenditures on housing do not reduce the recipient parent's costs,

¹¹ The states whose PTA can impose this sort of “shared parenting penalty” are: Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

Methodology

Doing this treats the child's housing expenses in one of their homes as the shared responsibility of both parents and the child's housing expenses in the other parent's household as solely the responsibility of one parent, the payer parent. NPO believes that it is best for children to have two homes and both parents share the responsibility for promoting the children's best interest in proportion to their ability to do so. States' guidelines were penalized in NPO's scoring if they treated the child-related expenses of the two parents asymmetrically.

7. Incorporation of Changing Child Costs in Both Households

With increasing parenting time, child costs increase for the lower time parent and decrease for the higher time parent, albeit not necessarily on a one-to-one basis. Calculation of the child support transfer should therefore account for cost-shifting in both households. Surprisingly, 32% of presumptive PTA states do not satisfy this fundamental logical requirement with nine states' basic adjustments on child cost changes in only one household with an additional four states making any adjustment conditional on recipient parent income.

8. Implication for “Equal-time/Equal-income” cases

When parents are dividing physical custody of the children equally and have equal incomes, the PTA should imply that there is no child support transfer payment. Each parent is presumptively providing equal direct financial support of the child(ren) and the two parents have equal financial resources to do so. Of course, there can be idiosyncratic factors that require a deviation from this presumption but a state's PTA should create a presumption of 0 transfer payment under these conditions. Surprisingly, five states ran afoul of this obvious constraint on a justifiable PTA.¹²



¹² The states whose guidelines can result in a presumptive CSTP when parents have equal incomes and are sharing parenting time equally are: Indiana, Missouri, New Jersey, Ohio, and Pennsylvania.

Summary of Results

Our findings are alarming! Only 12 states (23% of the jurisdictions) are doing a good or excellent job of arranging presumptive child support transfer payments to ensure that children are appropriately supported in both of their homes, receiving 'A's or 'B's. In contrast, 22 states (43%) received grades of 'F' or 'F+'. These states either have no parenting time adjustment or an adjustment that is so flawed as to not constitute a serious effort to ensure that children are supported in both of their homes. They are, thus, creating significant barriers to the separated parenting arrangement that is usually best for children. The remaining 17 jurisdictions (33%)—those receiving 'C's and 'D's—have guidelines with significant, substantive shortcomings, some of which are very serious. These states' PTAs create barriers to shared parenting by imposing high thresholds, creating significant cliff effects, or making unreasonable estimates of fixed, duplicated costs.

These results are especially troubling because a program that has the nominal aim of promoting child well-being is, in most states, creating a barrier to the parenting arrangement research has shown to be in children's best interest.

Presumptive child support guidelines have been mandated since 1989. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the failure to correct clearly flawed child support calculations over the course of 32 years reflects indifference to the undue hardship on tens of millions of children and divorced/separated parents. This state of affairs is even more distressing in view of the mandated federal requirement to conduct quadrennial reviews on the economics underlying child support guidelines.

To achieve their goal of promoting the well-being of children of divorced or separated parents, most states need to significantly overhaul their child support guidelines. The guidelines need to encourage equal shared parenting when feasible and ensure that children are appropriately supported in both of their homes when parents are sharing the responsibility of raising them.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis famously said that the states are the “laboratories of democracy.” Unfortunately, with respect to state child support programs required under Title IV-D of the Social Security Act of 1975, these laboratories have been insufficiently regulated.

This has led to extreme variation in the child support guidelines of the states: different child cost estimates, different models based on different philosophical assumptions, different factors being included or excluded in the guidelines, and importantly, radically different presumptions about appropriate child support transfer payments based on the same scenario. (For a dramatic illustration of the variation in states' guideline child support transfer payments employing a single simple scenario, see “[Child Support and the Cost of Raising Children](#)” on NPO's website.) The child support program is unique among federally funded programs in the absence of federal regulations to ensure that the aims of the federal program are achieved.



¹³ New State Ice Co. v. Liebmann - 285 U.S. 262, 52 S. Ct. 371 (1932).

Conclusions and Recommendations

The focus of this study—how states' guidelines handle the situation of shared physical custody of children—presents a strong example of the unwarranted variability in states' child support guidelines and the unintended harmful effects that child support guidelines can have on child well-being by deterring shared parenting. On the vital question of the degree to which states' guidelines promote or inhibit shared parenting, the range of scores goes from 'F's—really a failure to even attempt to recognize both parents' direct financial contributions to their children—to an 'A-', earned by California. There is no reasonable justification for such disparate treatment of separated and divorced parents attempting to share in the raising of their children.

There is no justification for a federally mandated program to allow the arbitrary differences exhibited by the child support guidelines—especially when these variations work to the detriment of our children. The states have a responsibility to enact child support guidelines that promote and facilitate shared parenting. And the federal government has an oversight responsibility to ensure that state child support laws and policies are aligned with the goals of promoting child well-being and grounded on sound methodologies. It's fine for the states to be the "laboratories of democracy," but these laboratories need to be regulated based on the best research on how to achieve the ultimate objectives of the child support program.

State Level

Establishment of parenting time adjustments

Those states that currently have no parenting time adjustment should, with all deliberate speed, establish them. States should not be in the business of creating barriers to shared parenting, and failure to recognize the direct expenses on children of a parent who is incurring such expenses is precisely such a barrier.

Elimination of parenting time adjustment thresholds

Those states with significant thresholds to parenting time adjustments should eliminate them. PTA thresholds impose a minimum—and typically unjustifiably high—parenting time for the payer parent before any adjustment from sole custody award is allowed. Economists have long accepted the commonsense proposition that any parenting time allocation increases the direct child cost outlay by the parent paying the child support transfer payment while asymmetrically decreasing the child costs to the recipient. The use of thresholds distorts economic reality and places an economic barrier that often denies a child meaningful contact with the payer parent. We recommend a zero time threshold, which is increasingly being adopted by states.

Threshold proponents have argued that thresholds are necessary to reduce the alleged economic incentive of a payer parent to pursue shared parenting with the sole objective of reducing the child support award. This is fallacious reasoning. While the child support transfer payment does indeed decrease with increased parenting time, this is more than offset by the increase in direct child expenditures in the second household, actually making shared parenting a more expensive (or no less expensive, depending on state child support guidelines) cost proposition in terms of out-of-pocket expenses relative to sole custody.

Elimination of cliff effects

States with cliff effects in their parenting time adjustments should eliminate them. There is no economic rationale for significant discontinuities in parenting time adjustments. It is nonsensical to believe that a parent's direct expenses on children change significantly with the addition of a single overnight. Cliff effects in a parenting time adjustment are not harmless nonsense, though. These discontinuities encourage parents to argue over insignificant differences in parenting time because, attached to those insignificant differences in time are very significant differences in the presumed child support transfer payment.

Advocates of these discontinuities see them as the sort of “bright line” that courts can use in making child support calculations—a simplifying assumption. This is a specious consideration. Presumptive child support transfer payments are not calculated by hand and it's remarkably easy to create a program that calculates presumptive child support transfer payments without cliff effects, as is demonstrated by the states whose parenting time adjustments are completely smooth.

Research factors relevant to shared parenting

As part of their quadrennial reviews of their child support guidelines, states should conduct research on a number of factors that are relevant to shared parenting, including such matters as: the fixed, duplicated costs of shared parenting and the appropriate shape of the curve for the PTA. This research should be based on sound economic studies concerning family economics.

Federal Level

Implementation of incentives to include parenting time adjustments and remove unreasonable PTA thresholds and significant cliff effects

As part of its oversight responsibilities, the Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) should take concrete steps to encourage all jurisdictions to include parenting time adjustments as an integral part of their guidelines, and to avoid inappropriate thresholds and significant cliff effects. Title IV-D incentive funds should be employed to encourage states to make these changes.

Research on design and implementation of PTAs

OCSE should institute research projects by qualified economists to develop a theory of parenting time adjustments together with sample implementation models.

Mandatory Reporting of Parenting Time

As part of its mandated reporting structure, OCSE should require states to report parenting time orders that are in child support orders, including parenting time below any parenting time adjustment threshold.



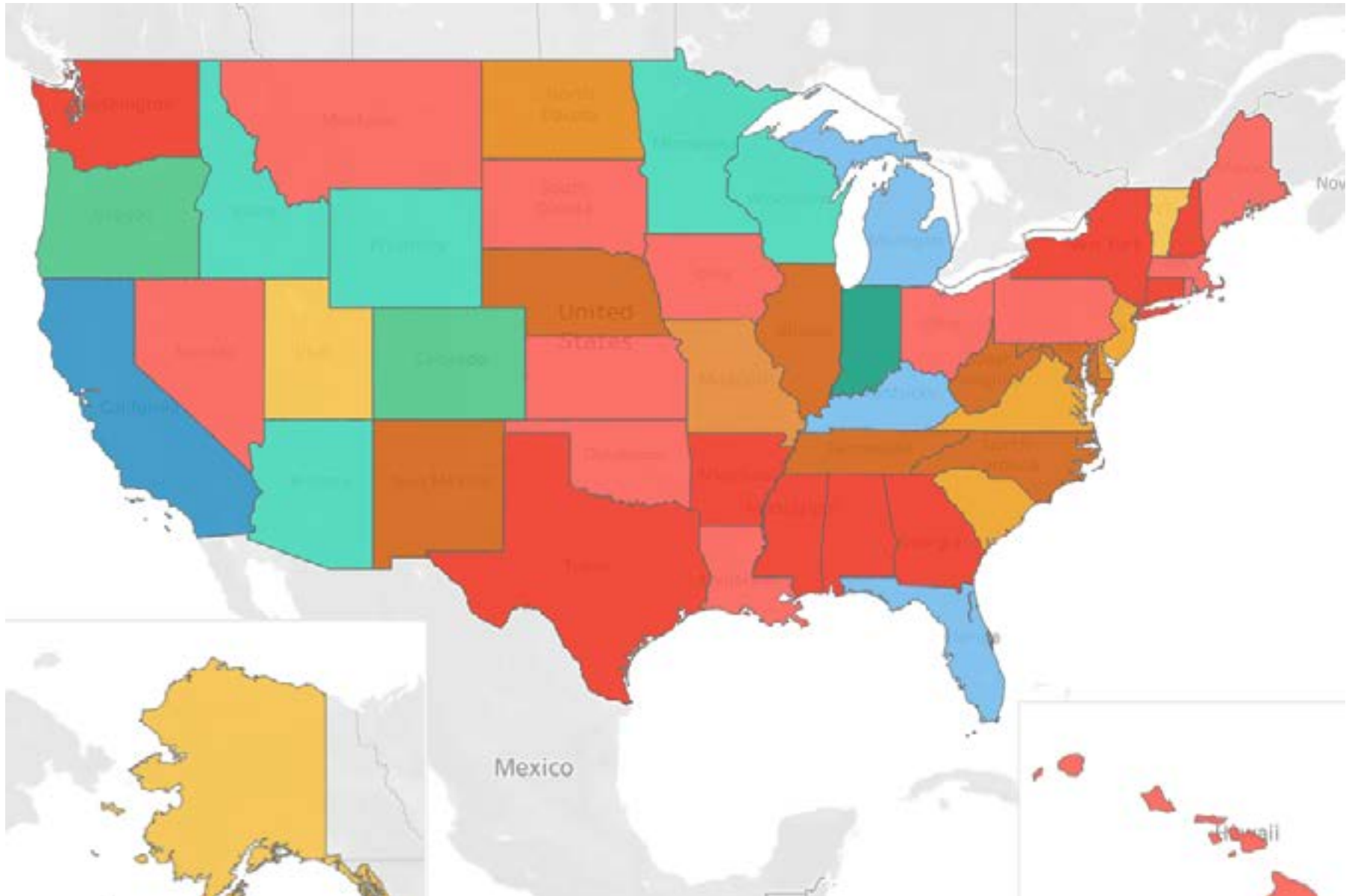
Appendices

Appendix I:

States by Grade

Parenting Time Adjustment State by Grade	
Grade	State
A+	
A	California
A-	Florida, Kentucky, Michigan
B+	Arizona, Idaho, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Wyoming
B	Colorado, Oregon
B-	Indiana
C+	
C	Utah, Vermont
C-	Alaska, New Jersey, South Carolina, Virginia
D+	Missouri
D	Delaware, North Dakota
D-	District of Columbia, Illinois, Maryland, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Carolina, Tennessee, West Virginia
F+	Hawaii, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Montana, Nevada, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota
F	Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Georgia, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New York, Texas, Washington

Appendix II: Map - Grades by State



Appendix III: State Details

Alabama	Grade	Positives	Negatives
Alabama Child Support Guidelines	F	None	Alabama is one of only 9 states lacking a presumptive parenting time adjustment formula; instead it relies on unnecessarily costly and lengthy court deviation procedures generally inaccessible to lower income parents. The lack of a presumptive PTA as an integral component of mandated presumptive child support guidelines arguably violates federal regulatory requirements.

Appendix III: State Details

Alaska	Grade	Positives	Negatives
Alaska Child Support Guidelines	C	<p>Alaska's PTA appropriately takes into account the effect of the PTA on both parents' households.</p> <p>Alaska's PTA appropriately results in no presumptive child support transfer payment when parental income and parenting time are both equal.</p>	<p>Alaska's PTA has an unjustifiably high threshold of 110 days.</p> <p>Alaska's PTA has a large discontinuity (or discontinuities), creating a large cliff effect or multiple cliff effects.</p> <p>Alaska's PTA overestimates the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p>

Appendix III: State Details

Arizona	Grade	Positives	Negatives
<p>Arizona Child Support Guidelines</p>	<p>B+</p>	<p>Arizona's PTA has a very low threshold of 20 days.</p> <p>Arizona's PTA appropriately results in no presumptive child support transfer payment when parental income and parenting time are both equal.</p>	<p>Arizona's PTA has a small discontinuity, creating a cliff effect.</p> <p>Arizona's PTA underestimates the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p> <p>Arizona's PTA does not take into account the effect on the payer parent's household.</p>

Appendix III: State Details

Arkansas	Grade	Positives	Negatives
Arkansas Child Support Guidelines	F	None	Arkansas is one of only 9 states lacking a presumptive parenting time adjustment formula; instead it relies on unnecessarily costly and lengthy court deviation procedures generally inaccessible to lower income parents. The lack of a presumptive PTA as an integral component of mandated presumptive child support guidelines arguably violates federal regulatory requirements.

Appendix III: State Details

California	Grade	Positives	Negatives
California Child Support Guidelines	A	<p>California's PTA has a very low threshold of 2 days.</p> <p>California's PTA is continuous, with no cliff effects.</p> <p>California's PTA appropriately takes into account the effect of the PTA on both parents' households.</p> <p>California's PTA appropriately results in no presumptive child support transfer payment when parental income and parenting time are both equal.</p>	<p>California's PTA overestimates the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p>

Appendix III: State Details

Colorado	Grade	Positives	Negatives
<p>Colorado Child Support Guidelines</p>	<p>B</p>	<p>Colorado's PTA has an appropriate adjustment to reflect the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p> <p>Colorado's PTA appropriately takes into account the effect of the PTA on both parents' households.</p> <p>Colorado's PTA appropriately results in no presumptive child support transfer payment when parental income and parenting time are both equal.</p>	<p>Colorado's PTA has an unjustifiably high threshold of 93 days.</p> <p>Colorado's PTA has a significant discontinuity (or discontinuities), creating a significant cliff effect or multiple cliff effects.</p> <p>Under certain circumstances, Colorado's PTA calculation can inappropriately result in a higher child support award than under sole custody.</p>

Appendix III: State Details

Connecticut	Grade	Positives	Negatives
Connecticut Child Support Guidelines	F	None	Connecticut is one of only 9 states lacking a presumptive parenting time adjustment formula; instead it relies on unnecessarily costly and lengthy court deviation procedures generally inaccessible to lower income parents. The lack of a presumptive PTA as an integral component of mandated presumptive child support guidelines arguably violates federal regulatory requirements.

Appendix III: State Details

Delaware	Grade	Positives	Negatives
Delaware Child Support Guidelines	D	Delaware's PTA appropriately results in no presumptive child support transfer payment when parental income and parenting time are both equal.	Delaware's PTA has a high threshold 80 days. Delaware's PTA has a large discontinuity (or discontinuities), creating a large cliff effect or multiple cliff effects. Delaware's PTA underestimates the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting. Delaware's PTA does not take into account the effect on the recipient parent's household.

Appendix III: State Details

District of Columbia	Grade	Positives	Negatives
<p data-bbox="331 483 533 542">DC Child Support Guidelines</p>	<p data-bbox="722 493 800 553">D-</p>	<p data-bbox="905 483 1283 607">District of Columbia's PTA appropriately takes into account the effect of the PTA on both parents' households.</p> <p data-bbox="905 639 1283 828">District of Columbia's PTA appropriately results in no presumptive child support transfer payment when parental income and parenting time are both equal.</p>	<p data-bbox="1371 483 1766 574">District of Columbia's PTA has an extraordinarily and unjustifiably high threshold of 123 days.</p> <p data-bbox="1371 607 1766 763">District of Columbia's PTA has an extremely large discontinuity (or discontinuities), creating an extremely large cliff effect or multiple cliff effects.</p> <p data-bbox="1371 802 1766 925">District of Columbia's PTA significantly overestimates the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p>

Appendix III: State Details

Florida	Grade	Positives	Negatives
Florida Child Support Guidelines	A-	<p>Florida's PTA has an appropriate adjustment to reflect the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p> <p>Florida's PTA appropriately takes into account the effect of the PTA on both parents' households.</p> <p>Florida's PTA appropriately results in no presumptive child support transfer payment when parental income and parenting time are both equal.</p>	<p>Florida's PTA has a high threshold of 73 days. Florida's PTA has a small discontinuity, creating a cliff effect.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Under certain circumstances, Florida's PTA calculation can inappropriately result in a higher child support award than under sole custody.

Appendix III: State Details

Georgia	Grade	Positives	Negatives
Georgia Child Support Guidelines	F	None	Georgia is one of only 9 states lacking a presumptive parenting time adjustment formula; instead it relies on unnecessarily costly and lengthy court deviation procedures generally inaccessible to lower income parents. The lack of a presumptive PTA as an integral component of mandated presumptive child support guidelines arguably violates federal regulatory requirements.

Appendix III: State Details

Hawaii	Grade	Positives	Negatives
Hawaii Child Support Guidelines	F+	Hawaii's PTA appropriately results in no presumptive child support transfer payment when parental income and parenting time are both equal.	<p>Hawaii's PTA has an extraordinarily and unjustifiably high threshold of 144 days.</p> <p>Hawaii's PTA has an extremely large discontinuity (or discontinuities), creating an extremely large cliff effect or multiple cliff effects.</p> <p>Hawaii's PTA doesn't recognize the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Hawaii's PTA does not take into account the effect on the payer parent's household.

Appendix III: State Details

Idaho	Grade	Positives	Negatives
<p>Idaho Child Support Guidelines</p>	<p>B+</p>	<p>Idaho's PTA has an appropriate adjustment to reflect the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p> <p>Idaho's PTA appropriately takes into account the effect of the PTA on both parents' households.</p> <p>Idaho's PTA appropriately results in no presumptive child support transfer payment when parental income and parenting time are both equal.</p>	<p>Idaho's PTA has a very high threshold of 92 days.</p> <p>Idaho's PTA has a significant discontinuity (or discontinuities), creating a significant cliff effect or multiple cliff effects.</p> <p>Under certain circumstances, Idaho's PTA calculation can inappropriately result in a higher child support award than under sole custody.</p>

Appendix III: State Details

Illinois	Grade	Positives	Negatives
<p>Illinois Child Support Guidelines</p>	<p>D-</p>	<p>Illinois's PTA appropriately takes into account the effect of the PTA on both parents' households.</p> <p>Illinois's PTA appropriately results in no presumptive child support transfer payment when parental income and parenting time are both equal.</p>	<p>Illinois's PTA has an extraordinarily and unjustifiably high threshold of 146 days.</p> <p>Illinois's PTA has an extremely large discontinuity (or discontinuities), creating an extremely large cliff effect or multiple cliff effects.</p> <p>Illinois's PTA significantly overestimates the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p>

Appendix III: State Details

Indiana	Grade	Positives	Negatives
Indiana Child Support Guidelines	B-	Indiana's PTA appropriately takes into account the effect of the PTA on both parents' households.	<p>Indiana's PTA has a threshold of 52 days.</p> <p>Indiana's PTA has a significant discontinuity (or discontinuities), creating a significant cliff effect or multiple cliff effects.</p> <p>Indiana's PTA overestimates the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p> <p>Indiana's PTA inappropriately results in a presumptive child support payment when parental income and parenting time are equal.</p>

Appendix III: State Details

Iowa	Grade	Positives	Negatives
<p>Iowa Child Support Guidelines</p>	<p>F+</p>	<p>Iowa's PTA appropriately results in no presumptive child support transfer payment when parental income and parenting time are both equal.</p>	<p>Iowa's PTA has an extraordinarily and unjustifiably high threshold of 128 days.</p> <p>Iowa's PTA has an extremely large discontinuity (or discontinuities), creating an extremely large cliff effect or multiple cliff effects.</p> <p>Iowa's PTA underestimates the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p> <p>Iowa's PTA does not take into account the effect on the payer parent's household.</p>

Appendix III: State Details

Kansas	Grade	Positives	Negatives
<p>Kansas Child Support Guidelines</p>	<p>F+</p>	<p>Kansas's PTA appropriately takes into account the effect of the PTA on both parents' households.</p> <p>Kansas's PTA appropriately results in no presumptive child support transfer payment when parental income and parenting time are both equal.</p>	<p>Kansas's PTA has an extraordinarily and unjustifiably high threshold of 182 days.</p> <p>Kansas's PTA has an extremely large discontinuity (or discontinuities), creating an extremely large cliff effect or multiple cliff effects.</p> <p>Kansas's PTA significantly overestimates the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p>

Appendix III: State Details

Kentucky	Grade	Positives	Negatives
Kentucky Child Support Guidelines	A-	<p>Kentucky's PTA has a very low threshold of 1 day.</p> <p>Kentucky's PTA is continuous, with no cliff effects.</p> <p>Kentucky's PTA appropriately takes into account the effect of the PTA on both parents' households.</p> <p>Kentucky's PTA appropriately results in no presumptive child support transfer payment when parental income and parenting time are both equal.</p>	<p>Kentucky's PTA doesn't recognize the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p>

Appendix III: State Details

Louisiana	Grade	Positives	Negatives
Louisiana Child Support Guidelines	F+	<p>Louisiana's PTA appropriately takes into account the effect of the PTA on both parents' households</p> <p>Louisiana's PTA appropriately results in no presumptive child support transfer payment when parental income and parenting time are both equal.</p>	<p>Louisiana's PTA has an extraordinarily and unjustifiably high threshold of 168 days.</p> <p>Louisiana's PTA has an extremely large discontinuity (or discontinuities), creating an extremely large cliff effect or multiple cliff effects.</p> <p>Louisiana's PTA significantly overestimates the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p>

Appendix III: State Details

Maine	Grade	Positives	Negatives
<p>Maine Child Support Guidelines</p>	<p>F+</p>	<p>Maine's PTA appropriately takes into account the effect of the PTA on both parents' households</p> <p>Maine's PTA appropriately results in no presumptive child support transfer payment when parental income and parenting time are both equal.</p>	<p>Maine's PTA has an extraordinarily and unjustifiably high threshold of 168 days.</p> <p>Maine's PTA has an extremely large discontinuity (or discontinuities), creating an extremely large cliff effect or multiple cliff effects.</p> <p>Maine's PTA significantly overestimates the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p>

Appendix III: State Details

Maryland	Grade	Positives	Negatives
<p>Maryland Child Support Guidelines</p>	<p>D-</p>	<p>Maryland's PTA appropriately takes into account the effect of the PTA on both parents' households.</p> <p>Maryland's PTA appropriately results in no presumptive child support transfer payment when parental income and parenting time are both equal.</p>	<p>Maryland's PTA has an extraordinarily and unjustifiably high threshold of 128 days.</p> <p>Maryland's PTA has an extremely large discontinuity (or discontinuities), creating an extremely large cliff effect or multiple cliff effects.</p> <p>Maryland's PTA significantly overestimates the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p>

Appendix III: State Details

Massachusetts	Grade	Positives	Negatives
Massachusetts Child Support Guidelines	F+	<p>Massachusetts' PTA appropriately takes into account the effect of the PTA on both parents' households.</p> <p>Massachusetts' PTA appropriately results in no presumptive child support transfer payment when parental income and parenting time are both equal.</p>	<p>Massachusetts' PTA has an extraordinarily and unjustifiably high threshold of 182 days.</p> <p>Massachusetts' PTA has an extremely large discontinuity (or discontinuities), creating an extremely large cliff effect or multiple cliff effects.</p> <p>Massachusetts' PTA significantly overestimates the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p>

Appendix III: State Details

Michigan	Grade	Positives	Negatives
<p>Michigan Child Support Guidelines</p>	<p>A-</p>	<p>Michigan's PTA is continuous, with no cliff effects.</p> <p>Michigan's PTA appropriately takes into account the effect of the PTA on both parents' households.</p> <p>Michigan's PTA appropriately results in no presumptive child support transfer payment when parental income and parenting time are both equal.</p>	<p>Michigan's PTA has a high threshold of 69 days.</p> <p>Michigan's PTA doesn't recognize the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p>

Appendix III: State Details

Minnesota	Grade	Positives	Negatives
<p>Minnesota Child Support Guidelines</p>	<p>B+</p>	<p>Minnesota's PTA is continuous, with no cliff effects.</p> <p>Minnesota's PTA appropriately takes into account the effect of the PTA on both parents' households.</p> <p>Minnesota's PTA appropriately results in no presumptive child support transfer payment when parental income and parenting time are both equal.</p>	<p>Minnesota's PTA has a very high threshold of 88 days.</p> <p>Minnesota's PTA doesn't recognize the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p>

Appendix III: State Details

Mississippi	Grade	Positives	Negatives
Mississippi Child Support Guidelines	F	None	Mississippi is one of only 9 states lacking a presumptive parenting time adjustment formula; instead it relies on unnecessarily costly and lengthy court deviation procedures generally inaccessible to lower income parents. The lack of a presumptive PTA as an integral component of mandated presumptive child support guidelines arguably violates federal regulatory requirements.

Appendix III: State Details

Missouri	Grade	Positives	Negatives
Missouri Child Support Guidelines	D+	None	<p>Missouri's PTA has a threshold of 36 days.</p> <p>Missouri's PTA has a significant discontinuity (or discontinuities), creating a significant cliff effect or multiple cliff effects.</p> <p>Missouri's PTA significantly overestimates the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p> <p>Missouri's PTA takes into account the effect on the payer parent's household only conditional on the recipient parent's income.</p> <p>Missouri's PTA inappropriately results in a presumptive child support payment when parental income and parenting time are equal.</p>

Appendix III: State Details

Montana	Grade	Positives	Negatives
Montana Child Support Guidelines	F+	<p>Montana's PTA appropriately takes into account the effect of the PTA on both parents' households.</p> <p>Montana's PTA appropriately results in no presumptive child support transfer payment when parental income and parenting time are both equal.</p>	<p>Montana's PTA has an unjustifiably high threshold of 110 days.</p> <p>Montana's PTA has an extremely large discontinuity (or discontinuities), creating an extremely large cliff effect or multiple cliff effects.</p> <p>Montana's PTA doesn't recognize the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p>

Appendix III: State Details

Nebraska	Grade	Positives	Negatives
<p>Nebraska Child Support Guidelines</p>	<p>D-</p>	<p>Nebraska's PTA appropriately takes into account the effect of the PTA on both parents' households.</p> <p>Nebraska's PTA appropriately results in no presumptive child support transfer payment when parental income and parenting time are both equal.</p>	<p>Nebraska's PTA has an unjustifiably high threshold of 142 days.</p> <p>Nebraska's PTA has an extremely large discontinuity (or discontinuities), creating an extremely large cliff effect or multiple cliff effects.</p> <p>Nebraska's PTA significantly overestimates the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p>

Appendix III: State Details

Nevada	Grade	Positives	Negatives
<p>Nevada Child Support Guidelines</p>	<p>F+</p>	<p>Nevada's PTA appropriately results in no presumptive child support transfer payment when parental income and parenting time are both equal.</p>	<p>Nevada's PTA has an extraordinarily and unjustifiably high threshold of 146 days.</p> <p>Nevada's PTA has a large discontinuity (or discontinuities), creating a large cliff effect or multiple cliff effects.</p> <p>Nevada's PTA doesn't recognize the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p> <p>Nevada's PTA ignores the changing child costs in both households based on parenting time.</p>

Appendix III: State Details

New Hampshire	Grade	Positives	Negatives
New Hampshire Child Support Guidelines	F	None	New Hampshire is one of only 9 states lacking a presumptive parenting time adjustment formula; instead it relies on unnecessarily costly and lengthy court deviation procedures generally inaccessible to lower income parents. The lack of a presumptive PTA as an integral component of mandated presumptive child support guidelines arguably violates federal regulatory requirements.

Appendix III: State Details

New Jersey	Grade	Positives	Negatives
<p>New Jersey Child Support Guidelines</p>	<p>C-</p>	<p>New Jersey's PTA has an appropriate adjustment to reflect the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p>	<p>New Jersey's PTA has an unjustifiably high threshold of 102.2 days.</p> <p>New Jersey's PTA has a significant discontinuity (or discontinuities), creating a significant cliff effect or multiple cliff effects.</p> <p>New Jersey's PTA takes into account the effect on the payer parent's household only conditional on the recipient parent's income.</p> <p>New Jersey's PTA inappropriately results in a presumptive child support payment when parental income and parenting time are equal.</p>

Appendix III: State Details

New Mexico	Grade	Positives	Negatives
<p>New Mexico Child Support Guidelines</p>	<p>D-</p>	<p>New Mexico's PTA appropriately takes into account the effect of the PTA on both parents' households.</p> <p>New Mexico's PTA appropriately results in no presumptive child support transfer payment when parental income and parenting time are both equal.</p>	<p>New Mexico's PTA has an extraordinarily and unjustifiably high threshold of 128 days.</p> <p>New Mexico's PTA has an extremely large discontinuity (or discontinuities), creating an extremely large cliff effect or multiple cliff effects.</p> <p>New Mexico's PTA significantly overestimates the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p>

Appendix III: State Details

New York	Grade	Positives	Negatives
New York Child Support Guidelines	F	None	New York is one of only 9 states lacking a presumptive parenting time adjustment formula; instead it relies on unnecessarily costly and lengthy court deviation procedures generally inaccessible to lower income parents. The lack of a presumptive PTA as an integral component of mandated presumptive child support guidelines arguably violates federal regulatory requirements.

Appendix III: State Details

North Carolina	Grade	Positives	Negatives
<p data-bbox="323 483 653 542">North Carolina Child Support Guidelines</p>	<p data-bbox="726 493 806 552">D-</p>	<p data-bbox="894 477 1272 600">North Carolina's PTA appropriately takes into account the effect of the PTA on both parents' households.</p> <p data-bbox="894 639 1272 824">North Carolina's PTA appropriately results in no presumptive child support transfer payment when parental income and parenting time are both equal.</p>	<p data-bbox="1373 477 1751 574">North Carolina's PTA has an extraordinarily and unjustifiably high threshold of 123 days.</p> <p data-bbox="1373 607 1751 763">North Carolina's PTA has an extremely large discontinuity (or discontinuities), creating an extremely large cliff effect or multiple cliff effects.</p> <p data-bbox="1373 802 1751 925">North Carolina's PTA significantly overestimates the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p>

Appendix III: State Details

North Dakota	Grade	Positives	Negatives
North Dakota Child Support Guidelines	D	North Dakota's PTA appropriately results in no presumptive child support transfer payment when parental income and parenting time are both equal.	<p>North Dakota's PTA has a very high threshold of 100 days.</p> <p>North Dakota's PTA has a large discontinuity (or discontinuities), creating a large cliff effect or multiple cliff effects.</p> <p>North Dakota's PTA underestimates the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p> <p>North Dakota's PTA does not take into account the effect on the payer parent's household.</p>

Appendix III: State Details

Ohio	Grade	Positives	Negatives
Ohio Child Support Guidelines	F+	None	<p>Ohio's PTA has a high threshold of 90 days.</p> <p>Ohio's PTA has a significant discontinuity (or discontinuities), creating a significant cliff effect or multiple cliff effects.</p> <p>Ohio's PTA doesn't recognize the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p> <p>Ohio's 10% standard PTA ignores the effects of parenting time and relative parental incomes. It is unique among the states in this respect.</p> <p>Ohio's PTA does not take into account the effect on the payer parent's household.</p> <p>Ohio's PTA inappropriately results in a presumptive child support payment when parental income and parenting time are equal.</p>

Appendix III: State Details

Oklahoma	Grade	Positives	Negatives
Oklahoma Child Support Guidelines	F+	<p>Oklahoma's PTA appropriately takes into account the effect of the PTA on both parents' households.</p> <p>Oklahoma's PTA appropriately results in no presumptive child support transfer payment when parental income and parenting time are both equal.</p>	<p>Oklahoma's PTA has an extraordinarily and unjustifiably high threshold of 121 days.</p> <p>Oklahoma's PTA has an extremely large discontinuity (or discontinuities), creating an extremely large cliff effect or multiple cliff effects.</p> <p>Oklahoma's PTA significantly overestimates the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p> <p>Under certain circumstances, Oklahoma's PTA calculation can inappropriately result in a higher child support award than under sole custody.</p>

Appendix III: State Details

Oregon	Grade	Positives	Negatives
<p>Oregon Child Support Guidelines</p>	<p>B</p>	<p>Oregon's PTA is continuous, with no cliff effects.</p> <p>Oregon's PTA appropriately results in no presumptive child support transfer payment when parental income and parenting time are both equal.</p>	<p>Oregon's PTA has a threshold of 33 days.</p> <p>Oregon's PTA doesn't recognize the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p> <p>Oregon's PTA takes into account the effect on the payer parent's household only conditional on the recipient parent's income.</p>

Appendix III: State Details

Pennsylvania	Grade	Positives	Negatives
Pennsylvania Child Support Guidelines	F+	None	<p>Pennsylvania's PTA has an extraordinarily and unjustifiably high threshold of 146 days.</p> <p>Pennsylvania's PTA has a large discontinuity (or discontinuities), creating a large cliff effect or multiple cliff effects.</p> <p>Pennsylvania's PTA underestimates the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p> <p>Pennsylvania's PTA does not take into account the effect on the payer parent's household.</p> <p>Pennsylvania's PTA inappropriately results in a presumptive child support payment when parental income and parenting time are equal.</p>

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Rhode Island	Grade	Positives	Negatives
<p>Rhode Island Child Support Guidelines</p>	<p>F+</p>	<p>Rhode Island's PTA appropriately results in no presumptive child support transfer payment when parental income and parenting time are both equal.</p>	<p>Rhode Island's PTA has an extraordinarily and unjustifiably high threshold of 178.85 days.</p> <p>Rhode Island's PTA has an extremely large discontinuity (or discontinuities), creating an extremely large cliff effect or multiple cliff effects.</p> <p>Rhode Island's PTA doesn't recognize the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p> <p>Rhode Island's PTA ingores the changing child costs in both households based on parenting time.</p>

Appendix III: State Details

South Carolina	Grade	Positives	Negatives
<p>South Carolina Child Support Guidelines</p>	<p>C-</p>	<p>South Carolina's PTA appropriately takes into account the effect of the PTA on both parents' households.</p> <p>South Carolina's PTA appropriately results in no presumptive child support transfer payment when parental income and parenting time are both equal.</p>	<p>South Carolina's PTA has an unjustifiably high threshold of 110 days.</p> <p>South Carolina's PTA has a large discontinuity (or discontinuities), creating a large cliff effect or multiple cliff effects.</p> <p>South Carolina's PTA overestimates the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p> <p>Under certain circumstances, South Carolina's PTA calculation can inappropriately result in a higher child support award than under sole custody.</p>

Appendix III: State Details

South Dakota	Grade	Positives	Negatives
South Dakota Child Support Guidelines	F+	<p>South Dakota's PTA appropriately takes into account the effect of the PTA on both parents' households.</p> <p>South Dakota's PTA appropriately results in no presumptive child support transfer payment when parental income and parenting time are both equal.</p>	<p>South Dakota's PTA has an extraordinarily and unjustifiably high threshold of 180 days.</p> <p>South Dakota's PTA has an extremely large discontinuity (or discontinuities), creating an extremely large cliff effect or multiple cliff effects.</p> <p>South Dakota's PTA significantly overestimates the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p>

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Tennessee	Grade	Positives	Negatives
Tennessee Child Support Guidelines	D-	Tennessee's PTA appropriately results in no presumptive child support transfer payment when parental income and parenting time are both equal.	<p>Tennessee's PTA has a very high threshold of 92 days.</p> <p>Tennessee's PTA has a large discontinuity (or discontinuities), creating a large cliff effect or multiple cliff effects.</p> <p>Tennessee's PTA doesn't recognize the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p> <p>Tennessee's PTA does not take into account the effect on the payer parent's household.</p>

Appendix III: State Details

Texas	Grade	Positives	Negatives
Texas Child Support Guidelines	F	None	Texas is one of only 9 states lacking a presumptive parenting time adjustment formula; instead it relies on unnecessarily costly and lengthy court deviation procedures generally inaccessible to lower income parents. The lack of a presumptive PTA as an integral component of mandated presumptive child support guidelines arguably violates federal regulatory requirements.

Appendix III: State Details

Utah	Grade	Positives	Negatives
<p><u>Utah Child Support Guidelines</u></p>	<p>C</p>	<p>Utah's PTA is continuous, with no cliff effects.</p> <p>Utah's PTA appropriately results in no presumptive child support transfer payment when parental income and parenting time are both equal.</p>	<p>Utah's PTA has an extraordinarily and unjustifiably high threshold of 111 days.</p> <p>Utah's PTA underestimates the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p> <p>Utah's PTA does not take into account the effect on the payer parent's household.</p>

Appendix III: State Details

Vermont	Grade	Positives	Negatives
<p>Vermont Child Support Guidelines</p>	<p>C</p>	<p>Vermont's PTA appropriately takes into account the effect of the PTA on both parents' households.</p> <p>Vermont's PTA appropriately results in no presumptive child support transfer payment when parental income and parenting time are both equal.</p>	<p>Vermont's PTA has an unjustifiably high threshold of 109 days.</p> <p>Vermont's PTA has a large discontinuity (or discontinuities), creating a large cliff effect or multiple cliff effects.</p> <p>Vermont's PTA overestimates the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p>

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Virginia	Grade	Positives	Negatives
Virginia Child Support Guidelines	C-	<p>Virginia's PTA has an appropriate adjustment to reflect the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p> <p>Virginia's PTA appropriately takes into account the effect of the PTA on both parents' households.</p>	<p>Virginia's PTA has a very high threshold of 91 days.</p> <p>Virginia's PTA has a large discontinuity (or discontinuities), creating a large cliff effect or multiple cliff effects.</p> <p>Under certain circumstances, Virginia's PTA calculation can inappropriately result in a higher child support award than under sole custody.</p> <p>Virginia's PTA takes into account the effect on the payer parent's household only conditional on the recipient parent's income.</p>

Appendix III: State Details

Washington	Grade	Positives	Negatives
Washington Child Support Guidelines	F	None	Washington is one of only 9 states lacking a presumptive parenting time adjustment formula; instead it relies on unnecessarily costly and lengthy court deviation procedures generally inaccessible to lower income parents. The lack of a presumptive PTA as an integral component of mandated presumptive child support guidelines arguably violates federal regulatory requirements.

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West Virginia	Grade	Positives	Negatives
<p>West Virginia Child Support Guidelines</p>	<p>D-</p>	<p>West Virginia's PTA appropriately takes into account the effect of the PTA on both parents' households.</p> <p>West Virginia's PTA appropriately results in no presumptive child support transfer payment when parental income and parenting time are both equal.</p>	<p>West Virginia's PTA has an extraordinarily and unjustifiably high threshold of 128 days.</p> <p>West Virginia's PTA has an extremely large discontinuity (or discontinuities), creating an extremely large cliff effect or multiple cliff effects.</p> <p>West Virginia's PTA significantly overestimates the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p>

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Wisconsin	Grade	Positives	Negatives
<p>Wisconsin Child Support Guidelines</p>	<p>B+</p>	<p>Wisconsin's PTA has an appropriate adjustment to reflect the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p> <p>Wisconsin's PTA appropriately results in no presumptive child support transfer payment when parental income and parenting time are both equal.</p>	<p>Wisconsin's PTA has a very high threshold of 92 days.</p> <p>Wisconsin's PTA has a significant discontinuity (or discontinuities), creating a significant cliff effect or multiple cliff effects.</p> <p>Under certain circumstances, Wisconsin's PTA calculation can inappropriately result in a higher child support award than under sole custody.</p>

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Wyoming	Grade	Positives	Negatives
Wyoming Child Support Guidelines	B+	<p>Wyoming's PTA has an appropriate adjustment to reflect the fixed, duplicated costs involved in shared parenting.</p> <p>Wyoming's PTA appropriately results in no presumptive child support transfer payment when parental income and parenting time are both equal.</p>	<p>Wyoming's PTA has a very high threshold of 92 days.</p> <p>Wyoming's PTA has a significant discontinuity (or discontinuities), creating a significant cliff effect or multiple cliff effects.</p> <p>Under certain circumstances, Wyoming's PTA calculation can inappropriately result in a higher child support award than under sole custody.</p>

Appendix IV: About the Authors

About the Authors

The principal authors of this study are:

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Appendix V: Acknowledgements

The authors are grateful for the assistance and advice received from the following child support experts:

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The authors also gratefully acknowledge the invaluable assistance of Lianna Mika, Director of Operations for National Parents Organization, in producing this report and the associated interactive web-based map, and the design work of graphic designer Mikayla Erbe.



Thank you |