

Texas Reentry Center
Family Support & Child Support Guide
Staying Connected, Staying Stable, Staying Compliant

INTRO

Coming home is stressful enough. Add family expectations, parenting responsibilities, child support debt, co-parenting conflicts, and everyone's emotions running high, and it's easy to feel like you're going to snap.

This guide gives you practical steps to rebuild relationships, manage child support correctly, avoid legal trouble, and create healthy boundaries without blowing up the people you love.

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FAMILY & REENTRY BASICS

- Move slowly
 - Don't overpromise
 - Keep communication honest but light
 - Don't jump into old patterns
 - Protect your stability first
 - Your job is to improve your life, not play superhero
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RECONNECTING WITH CHILDREN

Kids react differently depending on age and history.

Tips:

- Keep first contact short and positive
- Let them ask the questions
- Don't pressure them to respond a certain way
- Stay consistent even if they aren't
- Never talk bad about the other parent
- Ask what they're comfortable with

Small steps > grand gestures.

CO-PARENTING AFTER RELEASE

- Focus on stability
- Keep communication short and predictable
- Don't fight through text
- Don't negotiate emotionally
- Document important conversations

Script to reduce drama:

"I'm focused on stability right now. I want to be consistent for our child. Let's keep communication simple and focused on their needs."

CHILD SUPPORT: THE BASICS

Texas child support is handled through the **Office of the Attorney General (OAG)**.

Payments cover:

- housing
- food
- clothing
- medical
- general support

Support is based on **income**, not emotions.

If you don't have income yet, you must take steps to avoid a violation.

HOW TEXAS CALCULATES CHILD SUPPORT

Standard guideline:

- 1 child: 20% of net income
- 2 children: 25%
- 3 children: 30%
- 4 children: 35%
- 5 children: 40%

If unemployed, the court **assumes minimum wage** unless modified.

ARREARS (BACK CHILD SUPPORT)

Arrears do NOT disappear.

But you *can* set up:

- payment plans
- arrears-only orders
- modified payment amounts
- settlements (in rare cases)

If arrears were built during incarceration, you may request an **arrears review**.

MODIFICATION REQUESTS

You can request modification if:

- you lost your job
- your income changed
- your health changed
- your living situation changed
- you were incarcerated
- you have new dependents

How to request modification:

Online:

<https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/child-support>

You will need:

- current income (or lack of)
 - housing info
 - employment search documentation
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ENFORCEMENT & AVOIDING VIOLATIONS

Texas can enforce child support through:

- wage garnishment
- license suspension
- tax refund seizure
- bank account seizure
- liens
- contempt charges
- probation violations

To avoid enforcement:

- request modification early
- stay in contact with OAG
- make ANY payment you can
- document job search
- keep your address updated

Communication prevents violations.

SUPPORT WHEN UNEMPLOYED OR IN REENTRY HOUSING

If you have ZERO income:

- request modification immediately
- document job search daily
- send monthly “zero income” updates
- ask Workforce Solutions for proof of active job search
- keep a folder with employment applications

If you live in transitional housing:

- request housing letter for OAG
 - provide residency confirmation
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ACCESS & VISITATION

Texas offers Access & Visitation services, including free co-parenting resources:

Texas Access & Visitation Directory:

<https://www.txaccess.org/>

They provide:

- supervised visitation centers
 - neutral pickup/drop-off points
 - co-parenting classes
 - conflict resolution
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SETTING BOUNDARIES WITH FAMILY

Boundaries keep you sane.

Examples:

- “I can’t lend money right now.”
- “I need notice before unexpected visits.”
- “I’m focused on work and stability.”
- “I’m not ready to talk about the past yet.”

Healthy boundaries = healthy reentry.

SCRIPTS FOR TOUGH CONVERSATIONS

A. To co-parent:

"I'm rebuilding. I want to be consistent for our child. Let's focus on communication that supports their stability."

B. To family member asking for money:

"I can't take on extra expenses. I'm rebuilding my finances."

C. To child:

"I missed a lot, and I'm here now. I want to move forward one step at a time."

D. To someone trying to drag you back into old habits:

"I'm focused on staying stable. I can't put myself in situations that mess up my progress."

SCAMS TO AVOID

- ✗ Paid "child support deletion services"
- ✗ Fake modification services
- ✗ People asking for "half upfront" to file your case
- ✗ Fake OAG emails or texts
- ✗ CashApp/Venmo child support demands (never valid)

Child support must be paid through official channels.

WHEN TO USE THE CHATBOT

Ask it for:

- child support modification steps
 - scripts for co-parenting
 - access & visitation links
 - guidance on arrears
 - job search templates for OAG compliance
 - how to communicate with a difficult co-parent
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LINKS & CONTACTS

Texas OAG Child Support Portal

<https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/child-support>

Access & Visitation Directory

<https://www.txaccess.org/>

Texas Workforce Solutions

<https://www.twc.texas.gov/directory-workforce-solutions-offices>

DFPS Parenting Help Line

<https://www.helpandhope.org/>