

Changes to the Federal Child Support Tables

By **Melanie Larock**

Law360 Canada (October 1, 2025, 9:45 AM EDT) -- The new Federal Child Support Guidelines will come into effect on Oct. 1, 2025. Under the *Divorce Act*, the Federal Child Support Guidelines apply for children of married or formerly married parents. In Ontario, given that the Ontario Child Support Guidelines mirror the Federal Child Support Guidelines, the new Tables will also apply for children of unmarried parents or married parents who are separating and have child support claims under the *Family Law Act*.

The child support Tables have not been updated since 2017. Changes were delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the child support formula and underlying guidelines and principles remain the same, the amounts in the Tables have now been updated to reflect current tax rules and hence a child support payor's current capacity to pay. The determination of a child support payor's true income remains the most challenging and contentious aspect of the Child Support Guidelines.



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The threshold level of income required to pay child support has increased from \$12,000 to \$16,000. Therefore, for payors with an annual income of less than \$16,000, the child support amount is \$0. The child support amounts for payors who have income levels between \$16,000 and \$45,000 have generally decreased from the previous Tables. For those with income levels above \$45,000 and one or two children, the amounts of child support have increased or decreased between one per cent and two per cent. In shared parenting situations, it may be that the changes have a neutral impact.



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The amended Child Support Tables come into force on Oct. 1. Until that time, the 2017 Tables continue to apply. The coming into force of the updated Tables may trigger a variation of child support from Oct. 1 and after, if the new Tables result in a different amount of child support.

The Department of Justice has announced that the amendments to the Tables are simply administrative in nature. There certainly will be increased costs to the administration of justice. The government anticipates that child support payors and child support recipients will update the amount of child support as of Oct. 1 and on a go-forward basis to align with the new Tables. However, this will necessitate amendments to written agreements and court orders, and increased legal fees and costs.

In turn, family courts will likely see an increase in variation proceedings to vary child support amounts even if made on consent. The Family Responsibility Office will be faced with processing an increased number of amended agreements or court orders with new child support amounts, and a concomitant delay in the enforcement of new child support amounts.

Family law lawyers should advise their clients of the implementation of the new Tables and recalculate the proper amount of child support as of Oct. 1 to ensure timely compliance with the Child Support Guidelines. Clients may be frustrated with having to pay more child support per month, but the government has not implemented the new amounts retroactively despite the passage of eight years since the previous Tables were updated. If child support payors do not comply with the new Tables, child support recipients may seek costs and interest.

If a child support payor and recipient have contracted out of the Child Support Guidelines in favour of a fixed and non-variable regime of child support, the amendments to the Tables arguably should have no impact. Time will tell whether the updated Tables lead to litigation in the context of a fixed and non-variable child support agreement.

Melanie is a partner and a family law litigator at Thomson Rogers. Melanie's expertise spans all areas of family law, with a particular emphasis on complex financial and legal issues and high conflict parenting disputes, including cases of alienation and family violence. She is well-versed in the intersection of family law with other areas of law such as torts, criminal law, trusts, estates, tax, contract, and business law. Melanie's writings have been featured in Money and Family Law, and she authors the blog "Coffee with Melanie: Recent Court of Appeal Family Law Cases."

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