



Does child support cover extra-curricular activities?

Author: [Ben Smith](#)

Email: ben@smithfamilylaw.com.au

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Your child's extra-curricular activities such as sports or music lessons may be a significant part of their lives. This is particularly the case when such activities provide them with a release from the stresses they may be facing after parental separation. In this article, we explore how extra-curricular activities impact the amount of child support you may be obliged to pay or may be entitled to receive.

We look at the ways in which extra-curricular activities may be taken into consideration when an obligation to pay child support exists.

The child support formula

When the obligation to pay child support arises out of an administrative assessment by the Department of Human Services – Child Support (“the Child Support Agency”), the [amount payable is calculated by a formula](#).

This formula determines the costs of a child according to parental income and the number and age of children. As a result, the specific costs associated with an individual child, such as extra-curricular activities, do not influence the payable amount.

You can learn about administrative assessments and what the Child Support Agency considers when determining an application on our [“Child Support”](#) page.

Including extra-curricular activities in a Child Support Agreement

You may enter into a Child Support Agreement with the other party if you wish for expenses associated with extra-curricular activities to be included in child support payments. This may be something you consider if your child's extra-curricular activities are important to you.

Visit our blog [“Differences between a Binding Child Support Agreement and a Limited Child Support Agreement”](#) to learn more about how this can be done, as well as the different options available to you.

How are payments made under a Child Support Agreement?

Non-periodic payments

Non-periodic payments may be made under a Child Support Agreement. These are payments that do not occur at regular intervals and are not necessarily based on your financial situation and parental arrangements. For example, they may be made for costs including private school tuition, extra-curricular sports fees and equipment costs or lessons.

Non-periodic payments may be made as they fall due, or in another manner agreed upon by you and the other parent.

Lump-sum payments

Lump-sum payments may also be made under a Child Support Agreement. For example, you may make a contribution for certain extra-curricular expenses that occurred over a period of time, or ahead of time if you're aware of the upcoming expense.

Contributions under an Informal Child Support Agreement

You are able to make an Informal Child Support Agreement that deals with how your child's extra-curricular expenses may be paid for. You should, however, be aware that these agreements are not legally binding.

Informal Child Support Agreements are agreements you may have entered into which do not meet the requirements of a private agreement under the *Child Support (Assessment) Act 1989*. As a result, they are not legally binding.

Informal Child Support Agreements may be in writing or expressed verbally. There are several reasons why an Informal Child Support Agreement may be an inappropriate way to ensure that costs associated with your child's extra-curricular expenses are appropriately managed.

Risk of not having your payments credited against a child support liability (paying parent)

If you agree that you are going to pay for some of your child's extra-curricular expenses, you may want to have these contributions credited against the remainder of your child support liability.

In order for a payment to be credited against your child support liability, the Child Support Agency will often need to know that you and the other parent have agreed that the payment is to be considered a 'child support payment'.

Under an Informal Child Support Agreement, there is a risk that such contributions may give rise to a dispute as to the nature of the payment.

Liability for extra-curricular expenses if not formally documented (receiving parent)

If, on the other hand, you have agreed to receive money for your child's extra-curricular expenses, you may want to ensure that you have a formalised agreement in place so that you are not liable for these extra-curricular expenses.

A formalised agreement may help protect you in the event that there is a dispute as to who is responsible for your child's extra-curricular activity expenses.

How a family lawyer can help

Coming to an agreement about your child support arrangements that provide for all of your child's needs can be difficult. Smith Family Law will be able to help you reach an outcome that works for you.

Contacting Smith Family Law

[03 8625 8957](tel:0386258957)

info@smithfamilylaw.com.au

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