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According to the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), about 41% of first marriages end in divorce. For second marriages, that number increases to 60% and for third marriages it increases even higher to 73%. When divorce involves children, there are numerous factors to consider. For single parents, it is important to know what your rights are in regards to the financial well being of your child, and how to obtain the financial support you need.

Child support, in family law, is an ongoing payment made by a parent for the financial benefit of a minor. Following the end of a marriage or other relationship, the custodial parent, or primary caregiver, has the legal right to file for child support. In Pennsylvania, both parents are responsible and liable for the support of their children and often times, child support will be arranged as part of a divorce. It is important to become familiar with the child support process in your state as you prepare for proceedings.When filing for child support, it is important to remember there are a number of factors to consider other than just income. Though the monthly net income of both parents act as a guide to determine the appropriate amount of money to be paid each month, child support may be adjusted by a variety of factors. These factors can include: the number of nights the child spends with each parent, health insurance, school tuition, mortgage payments, childcare costs, as well as any public assistance the parent may receive.

The higher the parentâ€™s annual income is, the more child support they will be required to pay. However, in times of financial hardship, most courts recognize and understand that individuals need to provide for their own needs, as well as support their child.The quality of life the child had before divorce also plays a role in determining child support payments. The court will look at the living conditions of the family prior to when the parents separated. If the standard of living was high, the parent responsible for paying child support may be required to help the child maintain that lifestyle.The court will also examine reasonable expenses associated with raising a child. For example, items like the cost of living in a city will be taken into consideration. If the parent lives in a city with a higher cost of living, the costs of raising a child might be higher than the costs of living in a lower-cost, rural area would be. The court will also consider the specific needs of the child. In cases where a child has special needs, the judge will take that into account when determining child support payments. In Pennsylvania, a parent may be required to continue child support payments even after the child reaches 18 years old and graduates high school, if the child has special needs or a medical condition.

When it comes to determining child support, every instance is unique. Just as families themselves are diverse, so are the circumstances that go into determining payments. It is sometimes difficult for individuals to avoid becoming side tracked due to the highly personal, emotionally charged nature of most family law matters. The help of an experienced family law attorney can help assure you get the best outcome for your child.

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