

# The Determination of Income for Child Support

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To Vickie

My editor in chief, my best friend, and my wife.

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### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Nick Bourdeau has been practicing in the area of forensic accounting since 1986. He has appeared in court over a hundred and fifty times on issues associated with the valuation of marital estates, businesses, child support, maintenance, pensions, fraud and damages. He has been a contract instructor for the State of Montana Child Support Enforcement Division on child support related issues and consulted with the Division's Guideline Revision Oversight Committee. He conducts regular Continuing Legal Education seminars for attorneys and paralegals. He serves as a mediator in the state of Montana, and is full member of the Montana Mediation Association as well as the Treasurer of that organization. In addition to being a Certified Public Accountant, Bourdeau is Accredited in Business Valuations by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and is a Certified Fraud Examiner under the provisions of the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners.

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# Introduction

This manual is designed for child support investigators. It is designed for those individuals who have the responsibility for determining the amount of income a parent has available to pay child support. The manual is for investigators in child support enforcement agencies, paralegals, private investigators, financial investigators, CPAs, and attorneys. The manual does not assume a high level of expertise on the part of the user. Each section starts with the basics and proceeds to the more complex. The goal was that anyone with a basic understanding of their own finances could use this manual to complete a child support investigation.

I am a veteran of over one thousand family law engagements and have provided testimony over one hundred and fifty times. I have been a contract instructor for child support enforcement agencies, teaching investigators how to determine the income of parents. I am a Certified Public Accountant (CPA), Accredited in Business Valuations (ABV), Certified in Financial Forensics (CFF), and a Certified Fraud Examiner (CFE). I have published and continue to develop software that computes child support. This manual takes the sum of my experience and training and focuses it on the subject of the determination of income for child support.

The underlying concept throughout the manual is the determination of economic income or income available for child support. The terms are used interchangeably. This income may differ significantly from taxable income, net income, positive cash flow, net revenue or any other number of terms used to indicate income. Economic income as it is pursued in this manual may differ from the income that is mandated by local regulations. Since it is not possible to address every difference in every regulation in this manual, it is the responsibility of investigators to know and understand the differences. Local regulations and case law take precedent over any economic theory.

The examples and the associated characters in this manual are fictitious. Any resemblance to real people or events is purely coincidental.