State of Montana
Department of Public Health and Human Services
Early Childhood and Family Support Division
http://www.bestbeginnings.mt.gov

BEST BEGINNINGS CHILD CARE SCHOLARSHIP

ATTACHMENT H
GOOD CAUSE EXEMPTION

Child Support Compliance Requirement – Good Cause Exemption

CHILD SUPPORT COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENT

The Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship has a child support compliance requirement for any child (under 18) in a household with an absent parent. The child support compliance requirement can be met by requesting good cause for a child. You can request good cause for one or more child(ren) in a household. The child support compliance requirement can be met through three options: 1) Child Support Enforcement Division (CSED) case, 2) parenting plan, or 3) Good Cause exemption.

WHAT IS MEANT BY GOOD CAUSE?

If you have not met the child support compliance requirement through CSED or a parenting plan, you may request a good cause exemption. When you request a good cause exemption, you do not have to open and/or maintain a CSED case or have a parenting plan.

You may have good cause to seek an exemption from meeting the child support compliance requirement through a CSED case if you believe that complying would not be in the best interest of your child, and if you can provide evidence to support this claim. *Please read this form to find out what may qualify as good cause exemption.*

HOW AND WHEN YOU MAY CLAIM GOOD CAUSE

If you want to claim a good cause exemption, you must tell your Child Care Agency Eligibility Specialist that you think you have good cause. You can do this at any time you believe you should have a good cause exemption.

GOOD CAUSE CIRCUMSTANCES

You may claim to have a good cause exemption if you believe that cooperation with child support enforcement would not be in the best interest of your child. The following are circumstances under which the Early Childhood Services Bureau (ECSB) may determine that you have a good cause exemption:

- Cooperation is anticipated to result in serious physical or emotional harm to the child;
- Cooperation is anticipated to result in physical or emotional harm to you which is so serious it reduces your ability to care for the child adequately;
- The child was born after forcible rape or incest;
- Court proceedings are going on for adoption of the child; or
- You are working with an agency helping you to decide whether to place the child for adoption.

HOW TO REQUEST A GOOD CAUSE EXEMPTION

You must provide the Child Care Agency with documentation that supports the request for a good cause exemption. The Child Care Agency is not responsible to gather documentation for you.

- Documentation must be submitted to the Child Care Agency within 30 days after requesting good cause.
- An extension may be given if you cannot get the documentation during the 30 days. If you are having difficulty obtaining the documentation, please discuss this with the Child Care Agency.
- *Please refer to the list of acceptable documentation on page 2.*

HOW A REQUEST FOR A GOOD CAUSE EXEMPTION IS EVALUATED

The Child Care Agency will send the documentation to ECSB to be evaluated. ECSB will review documentation to see if it meets one of the *Good Cause Circumstances* (listed on Page 1).

EXAMPLES OF ACCEPTABLE DOCUMENTATION

The following are examples of acceptable kinds of documentation used to evaluate if good cause exists:

- Birth certificates, or medical or law enforcement records, which indicate that the child was conceived as the result of incest or forcible rape;
- Court documents or other records which indicate that legal proceedings for adoption are pending in court;
- Court, medical, criminal, child protective services, social services, psychological, or law enforcement records which indicate that the alleged or absent parent might inflict physical or emotional harm on you or the child;
- Medical records which indicate emotional health history and present health status of you or the child for whom support would be sought; or written statements from a mental health professional indicating a diagnosis or prognosis concerning the emotional health of you or the child;
- A written statement from a public or private agency confirming that you are being assisted in resolving the issue of whether to keep or give up the child for adoption; and
- Sworn statements from individuals, including friends, neighbors, clergymen, social workers, and medical professionals who might have knowledge of the circumstances providing the basis of your good cause claim.
    - ❖ When using sworn statements only, you must include another type of corroborated evidence from the remaining types listed above.
    - ❖ If you do not provide corroborated evidence with the sworn statements, then you must do the following:
        - All sworn statement must be notarized, and
        - The parent must explain why it is impossible to obtain medical records, law enforcement records or court documents as evidence.

APPLICANT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I have read this notice concerning my right to claim a good cause exemption.

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Signature of applicant/participant *Date*