

February 19, 2007

HELPING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AT THE FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY OFFICE

As part of its commitment to make the Family Responsibility Office (FRO) work better for Ontario families, the government passed the Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Amendment Act in 2005. The legislation is being implemented over approximately 24 months and will strengthen enforcement, improve efficiency and increase fairness.

The latest changes to help children and their families get the support they deserve will allow the FRO to:

- Post pictures and information about defaulting support payors on the new FRO website to help locate parents who can't be found and are not living up to their family responsibilities, and
- Report defaulting support payors to professional and occupational organizations starting with the Law Society of Upper Canada and the Ontario Motor Vehicle Industry Council.

Pictures and information may be posted about defaulting payors on the website if:

- All other trace and locate tools have been exhausted
- It has been at least six months since the payor made their last support payment, and
- The support recipient has provided written consent to post the information and the picture.

Information about the support payor that may be posted on the new website includes:

- Their name and a photograph
- A physical description including height, weight, hair and eye colour
- Approximate age, and
- Their last known location and usual occupation.

Other enforcement measures to make the FRO work better for Ontario families include:

- Increasing the maximum jail term for failure to comply with court orders from 90 days to 180 days
- Ensuring that early release provisions under Section 28 of the Ministry of Correctional Services Act do not apply to jail terms ordered under the Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act, 1996
- Making it easier for the FRO to obtain a financial statement from a third party that is financially linked to a default payor, and
- Increasing the FRO's powers to demand personal information about payors in order to locate them.

The FRO has the legal authority to enforce court-ordered support payments and arrears and to take enforcement actions against those who do not meet their responsibilities.

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