Table of Fridays
And Calculation of Weekly Child Support Payments

by Kurt McKenzie

The following article, in its original form, and the original version of the Table of Fridays were first published in the October, 1989, issue of the Family Support FORUM. The Table of Fridays reproduced on the following pages has been revised and up-dated by Assistant Attorney General Jeanne Teter to bring it into the new century.

The article, revised only to reflect references to the updated Table, is reprinted here for the benefit of new and old IFSEA members.

If you enjoy calculating child support arrearages about as much as having your teeth drilled, or you believe there are 52 weeks in a year, the accompanying table can be of use to you.

Suppose an order required weekly support for two small children with payments beginning on December 30, 1983. The oldest child reached majority on December 31, 1999, and the father petitioned for modification the same day. The simplest approach for you is to say that one payment was due in 1983, and 52 payments were due each of the 16 years between 1984 and 1999, inclusive. Since the date of majority happens to be in the last week of the year, the arithmetic is simple. You add the one payment for 1983 to 16 times 52, or 832, and conclude that the father should have made 833 payments under the order. In fact, he should have made 836 payments, or three more than you figured.

The problem with your computation is that it is based on the fallacious belief, which we all learn as children, that there are 52 weeks in a year. In non-leap years there are about 52.14 weeks and in leap years there are about 52.28. In addition, your real interest is not in how many weeks are covered by an order, but in how many payment days are included. Regardless of the day of the week on which the payments are due, all years will have at least 52 payment days, but some will have 53. For the years covered by the accompanying [updated] table there were 53 Fridays in the years, 1982, 1988, 1993, 1999 and 2004.

The accompanying [updated] table is a condensation of the calendars from 1982 through 2009. It is not necessary to have the entire calendar for the year, as long as you have one day for each week as a reference. Of the days of the week, the most useful day is Friday. Once the Fridays were listed they were numbered. The numbering makes possible an extremely simple calcula-tion that accurately state payments due under a weekly support order. Similar tables have been in use for years within the Attorney General's Office, Public Aid Division. This one, however, covers a 28 year period that should include virtually all cases you encounter until the end of the year 2009.

The logic of listing Fridays is compelling. First of all, the most common payment day is Friday. No payments are made on weekends because the Circuit Clerks' offices are closed, and that makes Friday the end of the week. Since the purpose of this table is to establish a reference number for payments due any time during a week, the last day of the week should be used.

Recall the problem above in which you wanted to figure the number of weekly payments due between December 30, 1983 and December 31, 1999. From the table of Fridays you can see that December 30, 1983 was the Friday of the 105th week. You can also see that the last payment due under the order would have been on Friday, December 31, 1999, the Friday of the 940th week. Subtract,

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the number of the beginning week [105], from the number of the ending week, [940], and you get 835. To include both the first and the last payment due, you must add 1 to 835 to get the correct answer, 836.

You may remember that for this example using the apparently commonsense method of multiplying the number of years by 52 weeks led to the erroneous conclusion that there were 833 payments due, rather than the correct number. You have somehow "lost" 3 payments.

Part of the reason the commonsense calculation does not work is that you are trying to calculate the number of weeks which have elapsed during a given time, when what you really want to know is how many payment days have gone by. With the table of Fridays it is possible to be specific about the number of payment days, regardless of the day of the week on which the payments are due.

In the example given the payments were due on Friday. From the table you can see that only one payment was due in 1983. What is not obvious is that the years 1988, 1993 and 1999 each had 53 Fridays and that is why an apparently commonsense calculation causes a "loss" of 3 Fridays.

The table is equally accurate for payments due on days other than Fridays. From the list of Fridays you can extrapolate for any other day of the week.

A common situation is the need to calculate an arrearage under an order that has previously been modified. Suppose payments were ordered to begin June 30, 1983, and the order was modified effective April 3, 1986. You are trying to figure the arrearage which existed as of February 13, 1989.

From the table you can see that the payments began on Thursday, June 30, 1983. The reference number for that week is 79. The order was modified effective April 3, 1986. From the table you can see that April 3, 1986, was also a Thursday, but that is the date of the first payment under the modified order, so it cannot be the date for the last payment under the original order. The last payment under the original order was due a week earlier, or March 27, 1986, for which the reference number is 222. To find the number of payments due under the original order the calculation would be:

Ends:
March 27, 1986 –
Thursday of week 222
Begins:
June 30, 1983 –
Thursday of week <u>79</u>
143 + 1 = 144

The next question is the number of payments due under the modified order. The order was effective April 3, 1986, and the reference number for that date is 223. You want to know the arrearage as of February 13, 1989, and need to know how many payments were due up to that date. From the table you can see that February 13, 1989, was the Monday of week 373. But the last payment would have been on February 9, for which the reference number is 372. Once again the calculation is simple:

Ends:
February 9, 1989 –
Thursday of week 372
Begins:
April 3, 1986 –
Thursday of week <u>223</u>
149 + 1 = 150

The table on pages 7 and 8 tells you everything you need to know in order to figure arrearages correctly every time. And the use of the table is far simpler and much faster than other ways of doing it.