

LAKES REGION TAX PREPARER DIRECTORY

The Dos and Don'ts of Claiming Dependents

Relationship changes and job loss can all affect who is living in your house and, therefore, claiming dependents on your tax return. Here are the most important rules that you need to know about claiming dependents before preparing your taxes this year.

Few things are more important than family. These are the people we share special memories with...the people we rely on when we hit tough spots.

However, sometimes you are the family member who helps others out. Maybe your grandmother couldn't live safely on her own anymore, so she moved in with you this year. Maybe your uncle lost his job so he's been staying with you.

This is what family is about – helping each other, regardless of the burden. But the extra expense of additional family members can put a financial strain on you. The rising costs of food, electricity, gas, and water can all add up quickly.

Special rules for claiming dependents on tax returns

There are a few rules to help you navigate claim-



ing dependents on tax returns – and decide who you should and shouldn't claim as tax dependents:

Who can I claim as a dependent?

You can only claim dependents who are either a qualifying child or a qualifying relative.

DO claim all qualifying children that were born or adopted within the tax year. Even if your child was born on December 31, your child may be able to be claimed as a dependent on your taxes. To

qualify as a dependent, the child must:

- Be under age 19, a full-time student under age 24 or permanently and totally disabled;
- Not provide more than one-half of the child's own total support; and
- Live with you for more than half of the year.

DO claim certain family members (such as parents, grandparents, aunts or uncles, nieces or nephews) as qualifying relatives. You should claim certain family members only if:

- You provided more than half of the person's total support for the year;
- They aren't yours or another taxpayer's qualifying child; and
- The relative's gross income is less than the personal exemption amount (which is \$4,200 for 2019).

All dependents must be a United States citizen, resident alien of the United States, or resident of Mexico or Canada (with certain adopted children as an exception) and can't file a joint return (unless

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it's to receive a claim of refund of taxes withheld or estimated taxes paid). You can't claim a dependent if you or your spouse (if filing jointly) could be claimed as a dependent by another taxpayer.

What should I avoid when claiming a dependent?

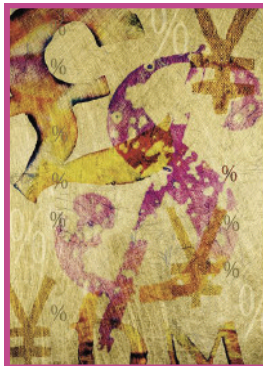
DON'T claim a child that has lived with you for less than six months of the year. Unless the child was born within the tax year, the child must have lived with you at least six months of the tax year to fall under the qualifying child rules. If you have a child that lives with each of the child's par-

ents separately for different portions of the year, the parent that cares for the child longer should claim the child as a dependent unless the custodial parent has a signed Form 8332. There is an exception to the six-month rule for claiming a qualifying relative, but only if the child can't be claimed as a qualifying child of any other taxpayer.

DON'T attempt to claim a child for whom you have paid child support, but lives with you for less than half the year unless you have a Form 8332 signed by the custodial parent.

Help is at your fingertips

For additional assistance with the tax rules for claiming a dependent, H&R Block has your back.



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BUSINESS



Dan Mack, right, plays records while serving as the DJ at Kettlehead Brewing in Tilton. Interest in vinyl records is at its highest point since the introduction of the compact disc. (Courtesy photo)

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much on new vinyl records when streaming services allow for instant access to just about any music, and for free in some cases? There's just no replacing the experience of listening to music on a vinyl record, said Dan Mack.

"Certain things open up and sound better," said Mack, a member of the Michael Vincent Band. He's been a vinyl aficionado for years, and over the past two years has sought to capitalize on the renewed interest in the centuries-old technology through his business, NH Vintage Vinyl, which buys and sells used vinyl records.

So far, Mack said he has sold nearly 5,000 records, most through the racks at Greenlaw's Music. Those racks were once full of CDs, but now half of the

retail space is dedicated to the media that the compact disc was developed to replace.

Dave Greenlaw, owner of Greenlaw's, said the vinyl records – they stock Mack's used records as well as new albums – attract young adults, people born after cassettes and CDs took over the market, who have no memory of the days when vinyl was king.

"These people never had this," Greenlaw said. "They come in here and see the album covers, and they think it's cool."

The vinyl listening experience is far less convenient than hitting "shuffle" on a digital music device, and Mack thinks that's precisely the point. First the listener has to hold the album in its sleeve, then pull it out, check for

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LaBelle Winery, La Crema Winery, Landmark Vineyards, Lange Estate Winery, Maine Mead Works, Merriam Vineyards, Michael David Winery, Moonlight Meadery, Morgan Winery, Mount Peak Winery and William Hill Winery, Neal Family Vineyards, Orin Swift, Peter Paul Wines, Proud Pour, Robert Sinskey Vineyards, R. Stuart & Co. Winery, Saintsbury, Serge Dore Selections, Silverado Vineyards, SIMI,

Ste. Michelle Wine Estates, Sweet Baby Vineyard, The Hess Collection, Trefethen, Viberti Giovanni, Vrankin and Pommery, Wente Vineyards, Wine-making Vintage Wine Estates, and Zorvino Vineyards.

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For more information about the New Hampshire Liquor Commission, visit www.LiquorandWineOutlets.com.