

Child Support Report

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COMMISSIONER'S VOICE



Child support performance has never been stronger

The numbers are in, and I am very pleased to report to you that 2015 represents a new high water mark in child support program performance. Congratulations to all of you for your resilience and hard work! We have come through the economic downturn stronger than ever.

VOICE BLOG

The child support program continues to be highly effective for millions of children and their families, reducing child poverty and promoting family self-sufficiency. In 2015, we provided child support

services for 16 million children, more than 1 in 5 children nationwide, along with 22 million parents and caregivers. According to 2013 Census Bureau data, child support was 41 percent of the income of poor families that receive it, up from 29 percent in 1997.

Paternity, support order establishment, current collection, and arrears collection rates have never been higher, while cost-effectiveness remains high at \$5.26 collected for every \$1.00 spent.

And the really exciting news is that as states have begun to implement family-centered strategies on a broader scale, the current collection rate — which measures support order compliance and regular payments — is starting to rise. The last time we saw the current collection rate move this much was in the early 2000s. We also see an uptick in the arrears collection rate.

Over the past decade, we have made progress on every measure. Here are our FY 2015 national results:

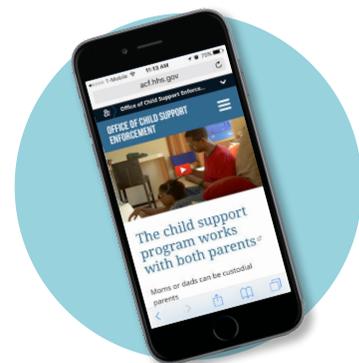
- We collected almost \$29 billion in IV-D cases receiving child support services, including over \$50 million in tribal child support collections, reflecting the growth of the tribal child support program. In 2006, we collected \$24 billion in child support.
- We collected an additional \$4 billion in payments made through income withholding orders for child support cases that did not receive child support services.
- The IV-D paternity establishment percentage was 100 percent and the statewide PEP was 95 percent, maintaining the high numbers from 2006.
- 86 percent of cases had a child support order. In 2006, the support order rate was 77 percent.
- We collected 65 percent of current support. In 2006, it was 60 percent.
- We collected 64 percent in arrears cases. In 2006, it was 61 percent.
- Our cost effectiveness rate of \$5.26 compares to \$4.58 in 2006.
- Our collections increased by nearly 20 percent since 2006, while our expenditures increased by 3 percent.

The data say we are headed in the right direction. I am proud of your commitment to strengthen and improve our program. Because of you, more families have what they need to make ends meet and more children have what they need most — parents who put them first.

Vicki Turetsky

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Performance and incentives: past, present, and future

Angela Ingram-Jones, OCSE

This is part one of a two-part series on performance measures. Part one reviews the history of incentives. Part two will look at the history of performance, discuss each incentive measure, and examine implications for the future.

More than 18 years ago, the [Child Support Performance and Incentive Act of 1998](#) (CSPIA) completely changed the program's incentive funding. CSPIA came out of a collaborative effort with states and helped establish clear performance-based expectations and indicators for earning financial incentives.

Before CSPIA — cost effectiveness

Before the performance-based system, officials based incentive funding solely on cost effectiveness. The cost effectiveness ratio compared how high a state's collections were in relation to its administrative costs. At the time, every state received a minimum payment regardless of whether performance was good or poor. Officials recognized that this system only encouraged achievement of one program goal — cost-effectiveness — so OCSE requested that Congress enact a new incentive funding system based on a balanced approach to overall program performance. CSPIA proved to be a historical turning point — one that significantly empowered the child support program to better assess performance and generate strategies to motivate and improve overall program operations at all levels.

The performance-based funding system has helped states double their child support collections in the last decade while helping millions of families reach self-sufficiency.

2000 and beyond — performance-based payments

Since the phased implementation of the performance system beginning in 1999, we have learned a lot about the system's strengths and limitations. The performance-based funding system has helped states double their child support collections in the last decade while helping millions of families reach self-sufficiency. Performance incentive funding helped fuel program innovation and leverage needed state investments in the program.

In 2006, Congress made changes to the performance system by eliminating the authority to match incentive funds reinvested in the program — reducing the value of

performance funding by two-thirds. While full performance funding was temporarily restored in 2009 and 2010 to help states weather the economic downturn, the funding reductions went into effect permanently in 2011.

In recent years, there has been a compelling conversation going on across the country about the program's inclusion of family-centered strategies into the child support “toolbox.” Child support professionals have been discussing the need to reevaluate the incentive system to determine whether the existing measures and other features of the performance system reflect the new direction and future program goals.

Program evolution

The child support program was not originally established as a family support program 40 years ago; it was primarily a welfare cost-recovery program. As the mission and the caseload evolved to encompass income support to low-income families, the child support program has moved away from its cost-recovery role. In 2015, the child support program distributed 95 percent of collections to families, retaining only 5 percent as recovered public assistance costs. While the incentive system proved beneficial to states by incentivizing good performance, some state officials have questioned whether the current incentive system will continue to support program goals in the future.

Trying to develop a new system

In 2010, OCSE formed an incentive workgroup of federal staff and state and local child support directors. The group examined the existing incentive structure so that it could recommend whether to make changes to existing measures or develop additional ones.

Members who were struggling with the effects of the recession, including budget cuts, debated possible modifications to the existing system and new alternative measures, but decided to postpone moving forward with any proposals. Members felt many considerations needed to be addressed — including budgetary constraints and legislative hurdles — before they could propose any changes. They listed the costs associated with implementing new measures as a potential challenge. In addition, since the 1998 incentive act is a statute, they said any recommendations must be introduced through legislation.

In order to consider potential future change, we need to understand the impact of past incentives on national performance and state variations in performance. Next month, our article will cover the incentive measures currently in place and the program's record of performance from 2000 to 2015.

For information on performance measures and incentives, contact Angela Ingram-Jones at angela.ingramjones@acf.hhs.gov.

Redesigning our website with users in mind

Tristan Anderson, OCSE

Here today, gone tomorrow

Technology moves fast. What once was new can quickly become old and outdated. Although we redesigned and launched a new website in 2012, by 2014 it no longer fit our users' needs. In September 2012, only 12 percent of the people visiting our website did so on a mobile device. By September 2013, almost 25 percent were mobile users — a 102 percent increase in just 12 months! Each year we see a steady increase in the number of mobile users.

On average, about 35 percent of our visitors are on their mobile device. To keep up with demand, we decided to redesign our website and make it mobile-friendly. That means our site will re-adjust the content to fit the size of any device, whether it is a desktop computer, a smart phone, a tablet, or something else.

Considerations for developers

Define your audience — who needs to know what? Our site must meet the needs of a variety of audiences: from parents to child support professionals, employers, and other partners; all groups need accurate information specific to them.

Identify top tasks — why are people visiting our site and what do they need? To answer these questions, we went to frequent website visitors. User testing gave us insight into why people visit our website and how they navigate it. Based on feedback from our users, we developed the main sections of our site with clear menus and submenus to accommodate our users' top tasks.

Our site is “smart!”

It responds and provides information in a way that fits your screen. And now, we have organized our site with your top tasks in mind. Here are examples of the most popular reasons these audiences visit our website.

Parents

- [Learn how child support works](#)
- [Apply for child support](#)
- [Make a child support payment](#)

Child Support Professionals

- Stay up-to-date with news and featured items on our [state](#) and [tribal](#) agency pages
- [Search for federal policy](#)
- Read and subscribe to our [Child Support Report newsletter](#) and search for your favorite topic by keyword
- [Search our entire library](#)

Employers

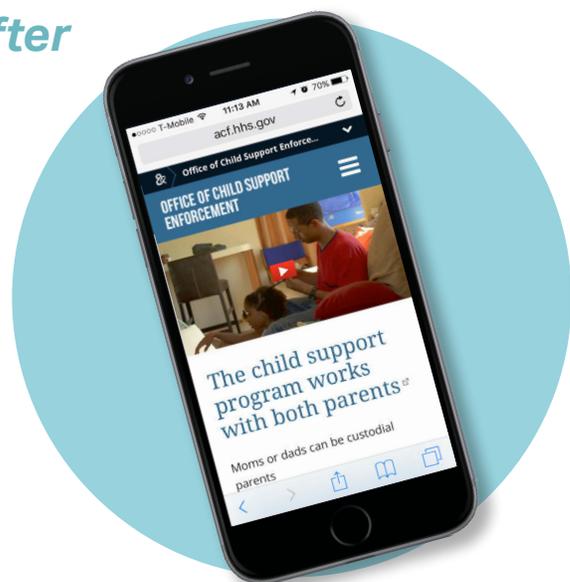
- [Understand employer responsibilities](#)
- [Learn about electronic and online services](#)
- [Find a complete list of federal forms](#) used by employers
- [Access state contact information and program requirements](#)

As more people visit websites using mobile platforms and as technology moves forward, you will see more updates and refinements. If you'd like to help test our site or have suggestions for improvements, contact Tristan Anderson at tristan.anderson@acf.hhs.gov.



Before

After



Determining continuing exclusive jurisdiction in modifications

Mary Dahlberg, Senior Associate, *Center for the Support of Families*

Editor's note: Families are more mobile today than they were decades ago. This can make changing a child support order difficult. A court or administrative tribunal in a particular state may have established a child support order for a set of parents, but years later, one or both parents may have moved to different states. Determining which state has the jurisdiction to modify the order can be a complex task. This article is a high-level synopsis of the relevant Uniform Interstate Family Support Act (UIFSA) statutes for child support professionals.

Anyone who works intergovernmental support cases must know how to determine the appropriate place to file a modification action, that is, which state has or can obtain continuing exclusive jurisdiction (CEJ) to modify the order. CEJ is a fundamental principle of [UIFSA](#) and a cornerstone to the primary principle that only one controlling child support order exists at a time.

Modification of a state order by the issuing state — UIFSA Section 205

A state has CEJ if it issued the controlling order and one of the individual parties or a child resides there.

The issuing state is the only state that can modify its order if one of the parties or a child resides there at the time an individual files a modification action. An issuing state also has CEJ — even if it is no longer the residence of an individual party or a child — if the parties have consented to the issuing state retaining CEJ.

The issuing state may not always have CEJ to modify its order even when a party or child resides in the state. Jurisdiction to modify may be moved to another state if the parties file a consent or otherwise record consent in the issuing tribunal. The other state must have personal jurisdiction over at least one of the parties or it must be the state where a child resides.

Modification of a state order by another state — UIFSA Sections 611 and 613

If the individual parties and the children moved from the issuing state to another state, a party may seek a modification in a state with personal jurisdiction over the other party, so long as it is not the state where the petitioning party resides. Usually that means seeking modification in the state where the other party resides. This is known colloquially as “playing away.” For example, the

parties and children move from the issuing state, state A, to two different states, states B and C. If the party residing in state B wants a modification, they cannot file the request in state B, but must file in state C where the other party resides or in any other state with personal jurisdiction over the other party.

There are two exceptions to the “play away” rule.

- The parties may consent to modification in a state that is the residence of the child or can assert personal jurisdiction over a party. The consent must be filed in the issuing state.
- A new state may modify the order and assume CEJ if all the individual parties reside in the new state and the child does not reside in the issuing state.

Effect of modification of issuing state's order — UIFSA Section 612

Once another state properly modifies the issuing state's order, the second state assumes CEJ and the modified order becomes the controlling order. The issuing state must recognize that modification.

International cases

If one of the parties resides in a foreign country, that will affect the analysis a child support official makes to determine the appropriate place for modification because there are different provisions for modification of a support order from a foreign country or modification of a U.S. order when one of the parties has left the United States.

Conclusion

Child support professionals must understand the principles of CEJ to make sure there is one controlling order for child support in a case. Tribunals must have accurate information about the residence of parties and children in order to apply CEJ rules properly.

For more information about UIFSA 2008, see OCSE's [Information Memorandum-16-02: 2008 Revisions to the Uniform Interstate Family Support Act](#). For information about modifying an interstate or international child support order, send an email to OCSE.DPT@acf.hhs.gov.

What is UIFSA?

The [Uniform Interstate Family Support Act](#): Uniform state law adopted by all states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and territories of the U.S., applicable to intergovernmental and private interjurisdictional child and spousal support cases. It allows states to work together in their collection of child support.

GRANTS

CSPED collection successes in two Texas counties



William Minor, Manager,
Child Support Division, Texas
Office of the Attorney General

In 2012, OCSE selected Texas to participate in the National Child Support Noncustodial Parent Employment Demonstration (CSPED) grant. The Texas Child Support Division partnered with child support courts and the Texas Workforce system in Bell and Webb counties to implement a program called NCP Choices PEER. It provides a mix of employment, parenting, and supportive services to parents who are severely behind in paying child support and are unemployed or underemployed. It builds upon Texas' experience operating the NCP Choices program.

Dawn Baardsen is a managing attorney for the child support division of the local division of the Texas attorney general's office. In a March article in the [Temple Daily News Telegram](#), Baardsen said, "This [program] helps those who haven't paid any support in a long time remove some of the barriers they face when they are looking for employment." She went on to explain some of the barriers the parents face. "Many of them have criminal backgrounds and are having trouble finding employment because of that. Some of them have transportation issues and some of them have no skills and need training to obtain skills to find employment."

Of the nearly 550 parents served by this program, over 75 percent have found employment in less than three weeks. Child support payments followed shortly thereafter. Program participants have paid over \$2 million in child support to more than 1,300 children.

The participating parents also see a significant personal impact. They are relieved to find employment, get some stability in their lives, and receive the information and support they need to resolve co-parenting and involved-parenting issues they may have been facing with their families.

Both workforce and child support staffs are energized by the results and are committed to making ongoing improvements in the way they deliver services. Texas has already identified funding to continue this program once the demonstration ends.

For more information, contact William Minor at william.minor@texasattorneygeneral.gov.

Texas Attorney General's Disclaimer: The positions and opinions expressed are those of the presenter alone and should not necessarily be deemed to reflect those of the Attorney General of Texas or the Office of the Attorney General.

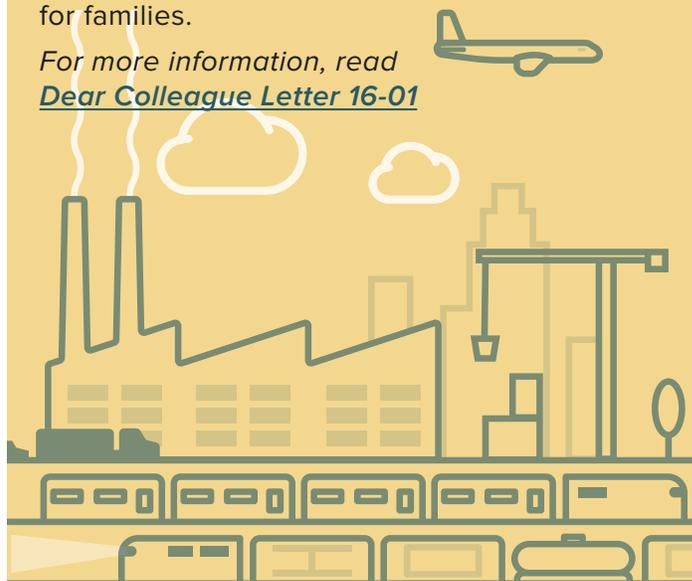
Verifying employment

In December 2015, Congress enacted the Fixing America's Surface Transportation [FAST Act](#) (Public Law 114-94) that will help state and local child support enforcement agencies. The new law eliminates barriers for child support agencies, employers, and third-party Verification of Employment (VOE) providers to effectively and efficiently provide employment information needed to establish, modify, and enforce support orders.

Child support staff members often request information from consumer reporting agencies when they are trying to determine the appropriate level of payments or enforce a child support order, award, agreement, or judgment. Section 80001 amends the section of the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) by eliminating a requirement that child support agencies must notify noncustodial parents at least 10 days before they request information from a consumer reporting agency. State agencies were previously required to provide a notice by certified or registered mail to the noncustodial parent's last known address telling the parent it would be requesting information from a consumer reporting agency. Under this amendment, child support agencies can send VOE requests directly to third-party providers without first sending notice to the noncustodial parent.

The revised FCRA language will improve child support agencies' ability to quickly verify a noncustodial parent's employment status and income, which will result in more child support for families.

For more information, read [Dear Colleague Letter 16-01](#)



IN FOCUS

Parentage laws for today's modern family

Diane Potts, Senior Associate, *Center for the Support of Families*



The modern family structure continues to evolve in the United States, with more children being raised by unmarried parents and same sex couples. As a result, state parentage laws are more important than ever as they define who is a parent and therefore entitled to all of the attendant rights and responsibilities that flow from a legally recognized parent-child relationship.

Earlier this year, the Uniform Law Commission convened a committee to revise the Uniform Parentage Act, and invited OCSE and the [National Child Support Enforcement Association](#) to participate as observers. The goals include revising the act to be gender neutral and consistent with the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, which recognized the constitutional right of same sex couples to marry.

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The act categorizes fathers depending on how the legal relationship was formed — recognizing them as either presumed, acknowledged, or adjudicated fathers. Legal parentage generally does not require proof of genetic paternity, yet the issue of a genetic connection stands out for same sex parents. In light of *Obergefell*, the commission and state legislatures around the country are faced with the challenge of how to incorporate same sex parents into the traditional parentage law construct. Another difficult question involves how to address multiple competing claims of parentage for a child.

In California, the legislature has empowered courts to adjudicate more than two persons as legal parents if recognizing only two parents would be detrimental to the child. In comparison, Georgia can order genetic testing of acknowledged fathers upon request, and must order testing in Title IV-D cases prior to an adjudication of parentage for an alleged father. Some state courts — Washington, for example — recognize “de facto” or “psychological” parents

when there is no genetic relationship, but many states — such as Illinois — do not.

At the heart of every parentage dispute is a child. If a parental bond has developed, the decision on legal parentage becomes even more important. As explained long ago by Justice Wendell Holmes: “[L]ike a tree in the cleft of a rock [a child] gradually shapes his roots to his surroundings, and when the roots have grown to a certain size, cannot be displaced without cutting at his life.” While the family structure has changed significantly, this concern for children remains and is worthy of consideration as the Uniformed Law Commission continues its important work on the Uniform Parentage Act.

For more information on this topic, contact Diane Potts at dpotts@csfmail.org.

Supporting Veterans

James Murray, OCSE

OCSE and 120 organizations participated in a two-day June summit on creating a national legal network to support service members and veterans, and their families, caregivers, and survivors. The network would support a variety of legal assistance that includes offering help with child support cases. Summit participants provided comprehensive, thoughtful information and perspectives. Their passion, dedication, and expertise offer a solid framework and foundation for this groundbreaking network.

OCSE recognizes the critical role that service members and veterans play as fathers and mothers in helping to support and raise their children. We support the group's mission of improving legal outcomes by increasing services, capacity, and connectivity at the local, state, and national levels. We look forward to the upcoming report on the summit's activities.

OCSE will continue to build partnerships with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the American Bar Association, and others to leverage resources and improve outcomes for the service members and veterans, and the families, caregivers and survivors that are an important part of our caseload.

For more information, contact James Murray at james.murray@acf.hhs.gov and visit the OCSE [Veterans and Military webpage](#).

PROMISING PRACTICES

ADAPT-ing to Flint's modern family structures

Tony McDowell, Staff Attorney, *Genesee County Friend of the Court*

Judge Duncan Beagle has seen the demographics of his family law cases change during his 20 years on the bench in Flint, Michigan — the number of divorces has fallen while the number of cases involving unmarried parents has gone up. As he watched this evolution in the nature of families, Judge Beagle did not see a corresponding evolution of the legal processes available to those families. Instead, he saw default orders, contested paternity, and delays in support paid. Knowing that a change was necessary, Judge Beagle asked his colleagues in child support to devise a new approach.

Staff from the child support program and the local hospital created a specialty court to speed up the legal process and assist modern families with paternity and support establishment by educating parents and preparing cases to be finalized when the baby is born. They called the project Acquiring DNA and Paternity Timely, or ADAPT.

The process

In the ADAPT program, Friend of the Court (FOC) staff assigned to the establishment of child support caseload team begin working with unmarried parents by reaching out to them before their baby is born. They tell soon-to-be parents at prenatal appointments and during community outreach events about their child support and paternity establishment options.

ADAPT offers the parents a speedy process. When they jointly decide to go into the program, FOC staff can help them prepare an Affidavit of Parentage or they can coordinate genetic testing. Staff can also help them address parenting time in advance. The preplanning means a quicker order for paternity and support because Judge Beagle can enter an order soon after the baby is born and genetic testing is completed.

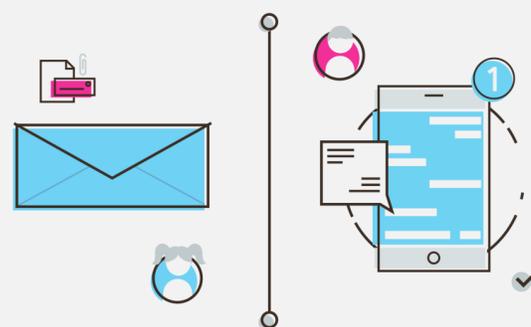
Data

In the past 18 months, the FOC has partnered with over 120 families. Parents requested genetic testing in 89 percent of the cases, which excluded the alleged father in 38 percent of the tested cases. In the cases with paternity confirmed, all of the orders have been entered in less than eight weeks from the time the parties requested services, and 97 percent of the moms and dads agreed to parenting time schedules. Researchers will try to determine which families benefited most from this program, and at what point in the pregnancy the families were the most receptive to information.

Results

Over the next six months, Michigan will work with Applied Predictive Technologies and the Brookings Institution to evaluate the impact of ADAPT. OCSE is funding part of the evaluation through a Section 1115 waiver to Michigan. The evaluation will test whether early intervention is successful in speeding up paternity and support establishment processes, raising family engagement with the child support program, improving prompt payment of support, and increasing the amount of support paid.

For more information about the ADAPT program, contact Tony McDowell at tmcdowell@co.genesee.mi.us. For more information about the Section 1115 waiver, contact Lissan Anfune at lissan.anfune@acf.hhs.gov.



Using behavioral science to improve child support

The Administration for Children and Families Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) has a new video on its work using behavioral science insights to improve child support outcomes. The video, [Applying Behavioral Science Insights to Increase Child Support Collections](#), is based on findings from OPRE's report [Nudges for Child Support: Applying Behavioral Insights to Increase Collections](#).

The impact report from the Behavioral Interventions to Advance Self-Sufficiency (BIAS) project presents findings from four tests of behavioral interventions intended to increase the percentage of parents who made child support payments and the dollar amount of collections per parent in Cuyahoga County, Ohio.

These findings demonstrate that low-cost, low-effort behavioral interventions can improve child support outcomes. However, interventions that are more intensive may be necessary to increase overall child support collection amounts, perhaps because some parents have a limited ability to pay.

Federal Parent Locator Service and child welfare: Iowa's experience

Kara Lynn Regula, Child and Family Services Review, IV-B, IV-E & Responsible Fatherhood Program Manager, Iowa Department of Human Services

Editor's note: In October 2013, OCSE and the Children's Bureau started a 12-month pilot that gave child welfare staff access to FPLS data through the Child Support Portal. The Children's Bureau oversees Title IV-E and IV-B child welfare programs.

Iowa was one of six states that participated in the pilot. We had four child welfare field staff use the FPLS for a short time to see if it helped them locate parents of children who were in foster care. After the staff signed confidentiality and non-disclosure agreements and participated in training, they were granted access to the FPLS. At the conclusion of the pilot, our staff said the FPLS did help them locate absent parents and relatives for children in foster care.

Since they thought having ongoing access to the FPLS would be a useful tool in their work, we decided to move forward with granting our staff direct access to the FPLS. We thought it would help us achieve a permanent home for children, including those who are in long term foster care.

Working together, both child welfare and child support staffs can make a difference in the lives of children and families we serve. We hope other states will consider utilizing the FPLS in their child welfare systems as well.

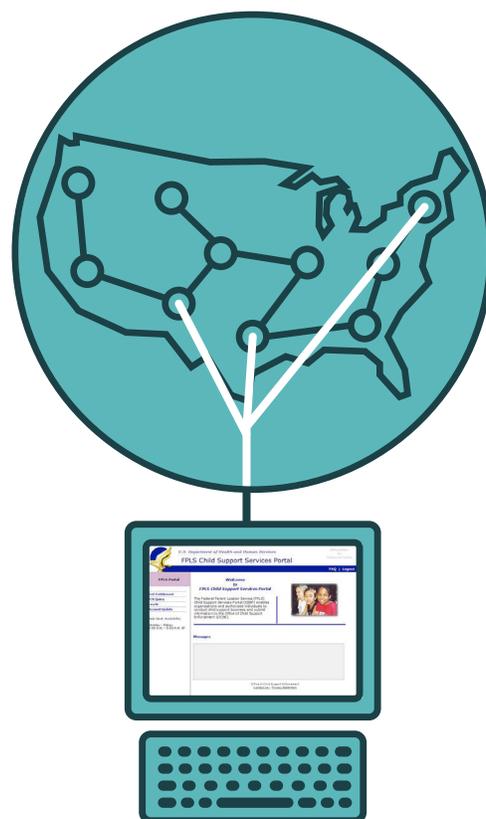
First, we had to take a number of steps to ensure child welfare staff across the state had access to the FPLS: we signed up with OCSE, established a statewide process for granting access, and trained staff. Iowa's child abuse assessors, ongoing social work case managers, social work supervisors, and certain central office staff may request access to the FPLS, but there are conditions. They must complete a confidentiality and non-disclosure agreement, as well as annual security and confidentiality training classes. Once our central office staff verifies that a staff member completed the requirements, our information technology department may grant FPLS access to that individual. Supervisors and designated central office staff monitor usage. Currently, 13 staff members have access.

Our central office staff also uses the FPLS to locate youth so we can administer National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) surveys. The NYTD survey collects information on youth in foster care, including sex, race, ethnicity, date of birth, and foster care status, as well as information about the outcomes of youth who left foster care when they became adults. Before using the FPLS, our NYTD survey completion rates fell short of federal requirements. Now, we meet the requirements. In practical terms, this improvement helped Iowa avoid a low survey response penalty of nearly \$40,000.

Although our overall experience with the FPLS has been positive, some child welfare staff still face barriers. For example, we do not receive information when an individual's data has a family violence indicator flag. We know this is a federal requirement, but since child welfare workers often encounter families who have experienced domestic violence, we believe staff could provide better service to the families if we had wider access to this information. Ultimately, this expansion needs to be resolved at the federal level.

Working together, both child welfare and child support staffs can make a difference in the lives of children and families we serve. We hope other states will consider utilizing the FPLS in their child welfare systems as well.

For information on Iowa's system, contact Kara Lynn Regula at kregula@dhs.state.ia.us.



Father's Day recognition events

Fort Belknap Indian Community

The Fort Belknap Child Support Program hosted a Fishing Derby for Dads and Kids at Snake Butte Reservoir, June 17. Over 160 people attended making it the largest fishing derby ever held on the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation.

The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks provided fishing poles to lend to children who did not have their own equipment. Local convenience stores supplied bait and tackle. The Fort Belknap Fish and Wildlife Department waived the fishing license fees and provided a scale to weigh the fish.

Participants fished anywhere they wanted on the reservoir, and then brought in their fish to be weighed. Two child support staff and game wardens also spent the afternoon going around the reservoir weighing fish.

Child support staff began serving a sack lunch at noon, provided in part by the Fort Belknap Public Health Nursing Program, and drew tickets for door prizes. Collaborative partners provided such great support that each registered child was able to receive a door prize!

These children were the winners in their age division (clockwise from top left), Landon T., Landon J., Xavier H., and Larissa H.



Ohio

Montgomery County held its fifth annual Celebrate Fatherhood event in Dayton on June 17 and 18. The Friday evening kick-off event featured local politicians, judges, and community activists who spoke about the importance of fatherhood. Local students submitted art projects about their fathers and father figures. Day two at a local park featured live music and free food. Over 20 service providers addressed the needs of the community. The two-day event attracted approximately 1,000 attendees.

Job and Family Services Fatherhood Coordinator Michael Newsom chaired the event committee.



Missouri

Jeanne Sparks and David Hartsfield, with the Missouri Family Support Division, provided child support information at the 'Celebrating Men and Fathers: A Family Affair' Neighborhood Community Project, June 17 in Kansas City. The event offered hot meals, kid activities, health services, haircuts, community services, family resources, veteran services, gaming and robotics, and job resources. The organizers are already planning to have an event next year!



District of Columbia

The Office of Attorney General, Child Support Services Division celebrated fathers the entire month of June. The office distributed Father's Day cards during mobile outreach events and mailed them to some of their program participants. The cards said, "A father holds his child's hand for a short while but holds their heart forever. Thank you for being a great dad." Reginald Grant and his son received one of the cards at an outreach event. He said he was extremely pleased to know that child support values fathers and was thankful to receive one of the Father's Day cards. Child Support Services also offered free genetic testing at their June mobile events to presumptive fathers who have been named in a TANF child support case.



Georgia

Home Depot and other employers participated in a mini-job fair at Fatherhood: A Celebration, June 18 at the Adamsville Recreation Center in Atlanta. More than 20 vendors and exhibitors attended the event, which featured giveaways, a charging station, and a raffle.

Children had the opportunity to participate in a craft workshop with their fathers, choosing from a variety of projects, such as making a toolbox.

C.J. Stewart, former Cubs outfielder and cofounder and CEO of L.E.A.D., spoke to attendees about the importance of fathers' roles in their children's lives. L.E.A.D. is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to empower an at-risk generation to lead and transform their communities.



Cherokee Nation Building Blocks

Miranda Bush, Tribal
Innovation Grant Coordinator,
and Kara Whitworth, Director,
Child Support Services



Since 2007, the Cherokee Nation Office of Child Support Services in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, has provided child support services to our tribal community. Our office handles approximately 1,800 active cases using a holistic approach to case management delivery.

In October 2014, the Cherokee Nation received one of the five federal OCSE Tribal Innovation Grants. We used the funding to develop and implement a parenting curriculum titled, “Cherokee Nation Building Blocks.” The parenting curriculum provides culturally appropriate information on child support and helps parents build meaningful relationships with their children. We designed the curriculum to teach moms and dads that child support is more than a monthly payment; positive co-parenting is also important.

The program has seven different segments:

- Child support: defines the term and sets expectations.
- Legal responsibility: provides knowledge on paternity establishment, as well as statutes on responsibility of parenting.
- Moral responsibility: outlines the parents’ responsibilities to protect and teach children values.
- Parent/child interaction: teaches parents effective communication techniques they can use with the child.
- Father and mother roles: describes the importance of a mother and father in the child’s life.
- Communication: explains co-parenting and outlines common barriers.
- Personal growth: clarifies different parental personality types, personal time, and goal setting.

We offer the one-time parenting class to parents while they are filling out their intake application. If they decide against taking the class, the Cherokee Nation District Court System can require attendance when the parents are in the establishment process. The program also gives class participants a resource guide listing Cherokee Nation family services and a storybook written in English and Cherokee that parents can share with their children.

The Office of Cherokee Nation Child Support Services will offer this parenting class to all newly established tribal court-ordered cases on a monthly basis. Our hope is to assist parents in understanding the importance of child support and the link it offers toward effective co-parenting relationships.

For additional information, contact Miranda Bush, at 918-453-5444 or Miranda-Bush@cherokee.org.

Congratulations, you made it to the end!

So, what do you think? We want to hear from you. We’re thinking of ways to improve the *Child Support Report* newsletter, but first we need your input.

[Email the editor](#) to share your thoughts!

How much of this newsletter do you read?

1-3 articles, 4-6 articles, more than 7?

Do you like short articles?

Do you prefer articles that have more research and do a deep dive into the topic? Or do you think a mix of articles is the best way to go?

What types of stories intrigue you?

Best practices that feature grants or state innovations, feel good stories that highlight successes in the program, or stories about leadership — such as our monthly column by Commissioner Turetsky or a story from a child support director?

How would you like to read our newsletter?

As a PDF or on a web page?

Finally, do you print the newsletter?

Yes, no, sometimes?

Child Support Report

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