COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
Child Support Services Department

Philip L. Browning
Director

September 7, 2005

To: Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: PHILIP L. BROWNING
Director

Subject: **THE FACE OF CHILD SUPPORT IN CALIFORNIA**

I am pleased to provide you with a copy of ***The Face of Child Support in California***, a recent publication of the California Child Support Directors Association. I currently serve as president of the Association and am particularly proud of this report. I believe it does an excellent job of providing a behind-the-scenes glimpse of the day-to-day successes and frustrations of the child support program in our state.

As you know in Los Angeles County we have made significant improvement in the child support program by increasing our collections to over $500 million last year. We also meet all the five federal performance measures and have passed the rigorous data reliability audit, which allows California to compete for over $450 million in incentives. We have unique challenges in Los Angeles County since we have a high poverty rate and the out of wedlock rate of the county exceeds 38%, which is highlighted in this publication.

As this document outlines, child support works with separated families and deals with their money – not always an easy combination. Daily, the 8000 child support professionals in California see thousands of deeply personal and moving human interactions involving children, their parents and their families. Over 1600 Los Angeles County Child Support Services Department staff work tirelessly to help our local families and children who we serve.

The Face of Child Support in California is a snapshot of just one day in the life of California's child support program and is intended to demonstrate how critical our work is toward enhancing the economic independence of our customers. It was, though, just another day.

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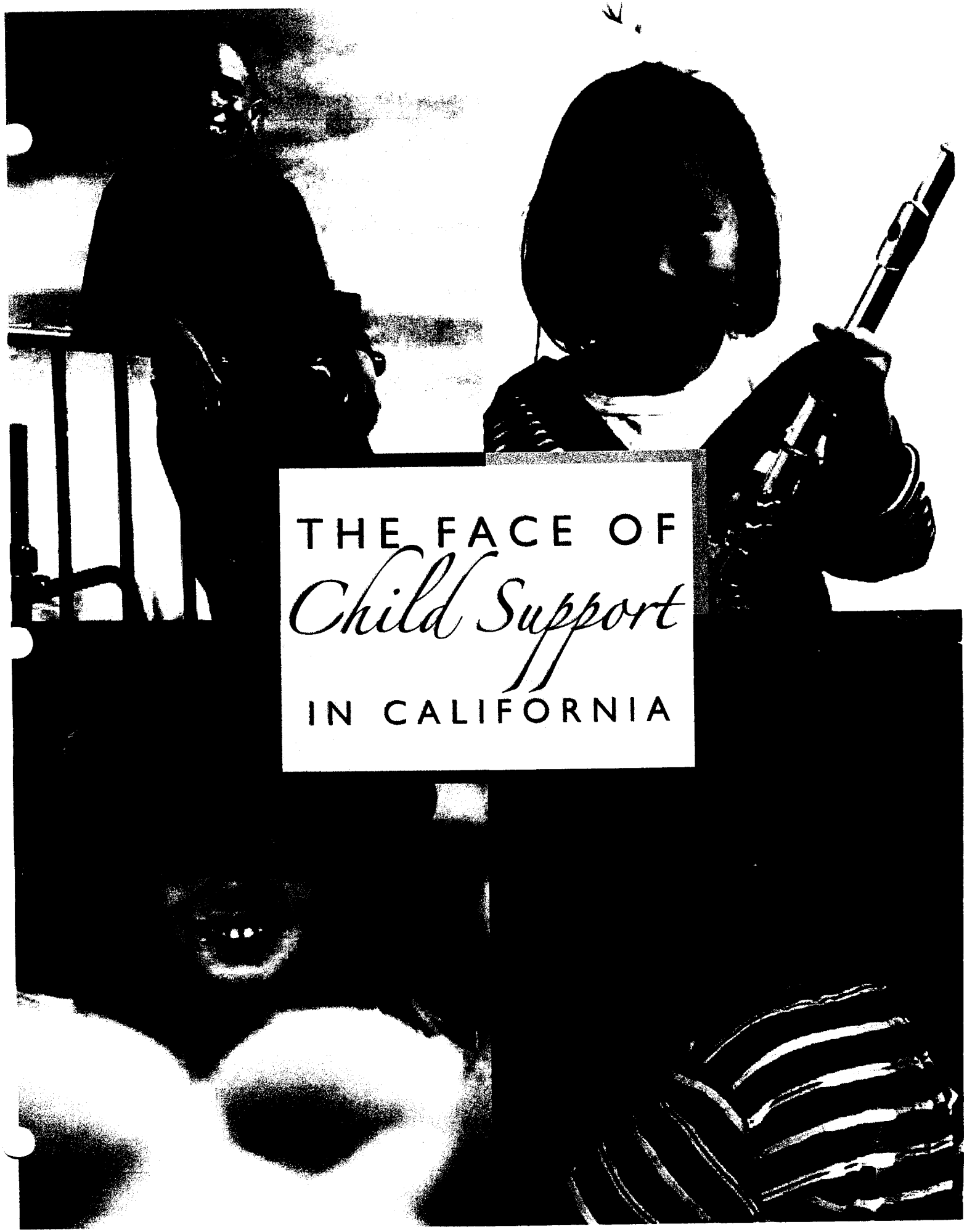
"To Enrich Lives Through Effective And Caring Service"

If you or your staff have questions please call me at (323) 889-3340.

PLB:lm

Enclosure

c: Chief Administrative Office
Department of Public Social Service
Department of Children and Family Services



THE FACE OF *Child Support* IN CALIFORNIA

Children are the most important part of our world. We, the employees at child support offices throughout California, strive every day to ensure that our children are taken care of financially. This is our job. This is our life. This publication is dedicated to the children served by the California child support program.

Just Another Day

The child support program works with separated families and deals with their money – not always an easy combination. Daily, the 8,000 child support professionals in California see thousands of deeply personal and moving human interactions involving children, their parents and their families.

Child support programs are measured and evaluated on the basis of five federally established performance standards: paternity establishment, support orders established, current support collected, cases with arrears collected and cost effectiveness. The child support program is one of the few Federal programs that provides incentive funds based on actual programmatic outcomes.

There are countless stories in the Golden State about child support. This report will chronicle and document just one day in the life of the child support program in California – Wednesday, April 20, 2005. This "snapshot" is intended to highlight the complexities, the heartaches, the pressures and the successes seen by California's child support professionals. Every day across California, children and families are connected through the child support process. Often, the result is a positive one and families are reunited in the support of their children. Other times, as the following story about Jason and Jennifer relates, the results are not as gratifying.

However, keep in mind – April 20, 2005 was just another day in our life's work.

Jason and Jennifer

(Los Angeles County) Jason, eight years old and his sister Jennifer, seven, had never met their father before. On the morning of April 20, 2005 all that was about to change. They were going to court with their mother that day for a child support hearing. The local child support office had been working for the past several months with Mom to identify and locate the father. He had been ordered to appear in court to have a child support order established for financial and medical support for his children.

Jason and Jennifer were very excited about finally meeting their father. Would he like them? Would he start taking them out on weekends? Would they find out whether or not they had other brothers and sisters? Would they look like him? All these questions were racing through their minds, as they got ready to go to court.

The hearing was scheduled that morning at the courthouse in **Los Angeles**. Jason and Jennifer could only think about finally meeting this man who was their father.

Shortly before 11:00 am, Dad came into the courtroom. He was with a woman who held tightly onto his arm as they sat in the last row. As Mom, Dad and the child support attorney approached the podium, Jason and Jennifer realized who their father was. Their hearts were beating quickly as Mom told them to remain in their seats.

After a brief dialogue, the presiding Commissioner determined that Dad should begin paying $650 per month for child support for Jason and Jennifer and also ordered that he provide medical insurance for the children.

A very unhappy Dad, with his girlfriend by his side, stormed out of the courtroom and headed toward the elevator, without acknowledging Jason and Jennifer. The children ran after their father. As Dad entered the elevator, he yelled "Go back to your mother, I don't want anything to do with you!"

On April 20, 2005, **San Bernardino County** child support staff hand-carried an agreement to be filed with the Superior Court which represented a settlement between the parties for a lump sum payment that would satisfy the past due child support owed in the case. Because of an intermittent employment history in the case, the non-custodial father had accrued a past due balance of over $58,000. His sporadic payments had failed to reduce the monthly interest accruing on his account, and a work-related injury prevented him from being able to pay all of the arrears owed. Local child support staff negotiated an agreement in Dad's Workers' Compensation case that netted $37,000, of which $13,000 was payable to the County and $24,000 was payable to the custodial parent. The child, who had turned 18 in 2002, had previously anticipated the need to secure employment to pay his way through co[illegible] his [illegible]ment between the child's parents and the child support agency changed the student's life a[illegible] vide[illegible] [illegible]ial assistance necessary to cover his college expenses.

What is Child Support?

Child support is based on the concept that parents are obligated to pay for the support of their children, even when the children are not living with both biological parents. It is the ongoing obligation for a periodic payment made by a non-custodial parent to a custodial parent, caregiver or guardian, for the care and support of children of a relationship, encounter or marriage which is no longer intact.

The timely receipt of child support is critical for millions of families and children. California's Child Support Enforcement Program is a federal/state/local partnership designed to help families by promoting family self-sufficiency and child well being. Local child support agencies in California, operated by county governments, locate non-custodial parents, establish paternity when necessary, establish and modify orders for support and collect child support payments for families.

In the same way that police officers and courts exist to enforce laws that regulate relationships, the child support enforcement program exists to ensure payment of child support so that the moral and legal responsibility of parents are met.

What Does Child Support Mean to You?

To the average person on the street, child support is often confused with childcare, or with child welfare sevices, the program that provides protection for abused and neglected children.

To the news media, over the course of the last decade the term "child support" has been used interchangeably with "deadbeat dads"—leading many individuals to assume that anyone with a child support order or wage assignment is a bad person.

To many of those using the child support system – custodial and non-custodial parents – child support has been perceived as either being a help or a hindrance, depending upon who was receiving and who was paying.

To the child support professionals working in the program every day, "child support" means working with families to put children first – "everything we do is for the children!"

There are many definitions and just as many perceptions and misperceptions of this 30-year-old federal program. This report was conceived and developed as a way to put a face on the child support program in California – to tell the personal stories behind the impersonal numbers and statistics typically associated with this program, and in so doing, to encourage families to work with the child support program to ensure the well-being of the children of California.

Helping Families "Find" Each Other

Many parents and children who have been separated find the need to locate each other at some point in their lives. In some cases, these parents have never met their children, or have not seen their children for many years. Child support can bring parents and children together in a very productive and positive way, both financially and emotionally.

On April 20, staff at the **San Joaquin County** child support office received a telephone call from a father who wanted to say "thank you." He had contacted the office a few months before to request that his telephone number be given to his son's mother. The father, who had been paying child support for almost five years, had never met his son, 9 year old Oscar. After receiving the father's telephone number, Oscar's mother decided that father and son needed to meet. Father and son have since developed a new relationship and a regular visitation schedule has been established.

In **Kern County**, the father of 10 year old Sam decided he wanted to be a part of his son's life. He had a spotty track record as far as paying child support over the years. Sam's mother was frustrated with the lack of consistent payments, given her recent discovery that Dad was a rather successful independent building contractor. At first, Mom thought that her local child support office would not be able to help her since she was not receiving public financial assistance. However, on April 20, the **Kern County** Child Support Office opened a child support case after Mom requested assistance with her situation. Dad is now regularly paying child support for Sam and has become actively involved in his life.

On April 20, a mother of an 8-month old baby boy came into the **Plumas County** child support office to see if the results of her paternity test had been received. The staff person spoke with the anxious mother and told her that the results had arrived earlier that day. The results were positive. The mother was very happy and excited that her child would now know who his father was, and that perhaps a relationship with his father and the extended family could be established.

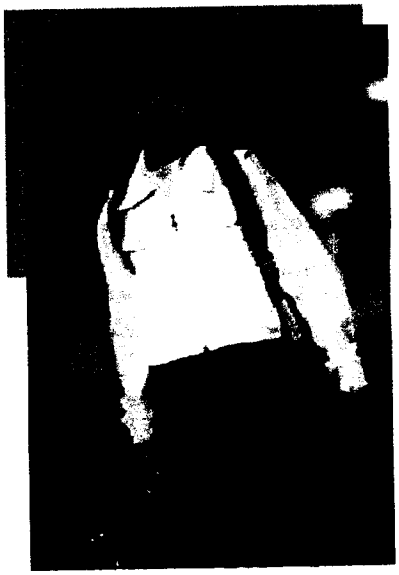
In **San Francisco County**, a non-custodial father was arrested on suspicion of narcotics possession. Police found $8,311 in cash in his pocket. When the arresting officer asked why he carried so much cash, the father explained that he had a child support case, and that he could not keep a bank account without the child support office taking the funds. Upon learning this, the San Francisco County Child Support office served a levy on the police department for the funds. The money was subsequently applied to his child support case and a check was issued to Mom.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20 IN CALIFORNIA

5,141 customers walked into local child support offices for help

On April 20, the **San Mateo County** child support office made a referral to the Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center in a case where the non-custodial parent wanted to re-establish his relationship with his adolescent daughter, Sandra, after many years of absence. Although Sandra was initially reluctant, Mom offered to mediate. As a result, the non-custodial parent and the custodial parent have agreed to go to church with their daughter every Sunday and to work on spending time together as a family.

In **San Benito County**, a non-custodial father had requested that the court order the mother to reveal his child's home address. Father and child, 8 year-old John, had never met. Through the child support agency, the mother provided the father with John's e-mail address and phone number. The father told the child support staff that he had been interested in computers since he was 9 years old. He took the e-mail address provided by the mother, looked at it and said: "He likes computers, just like me!" Then, he started grinning from ear to ear.



A very distraught father went to the **San Benito County** child support office with his 4-month old, Joachim. The father explained that he had exercised his visitation with the baby over the weekend. As he attempted to return Joachim to the mother, she told him she didn't want the child anymore and that he could keep him. He didn't know what to do. Child support staff contacted the county's department of children and family services and asked their assistance. The child support office served as the venue for a meeting between the Dad and representatives from the child welfare office concerning the child.

While preparing for a settlement conference related to contempt charges against a father who hadn't paid child support for years to two different custodial mothers, the **Santa Cruz County** child support attorney received a request from one of the mothers asking that the children from the two families meet with each other. The attorney facilitated a meeting with the respective mothers. The mothers agreed to let their children get to know each other.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12 IN CALIFORNIA

Our staff answered 34,832 telephone calls

Establishing Paternity

Paternity means fatherhood. The child's paternity must be established prior to a court granting a child support order. Genetic testing is generally accepted as proof of fatherhood, and is available through local child support offices in California, at no cost.

Unmarried parents can also establish paternity by signing a voluntary Declaration of Paternity. This can be done in the hospital after the child is born or by the parents after they leave the hospital.

The benefits of establishing paternity extend far beyond financial support. Proof of paternity is generally required for a person to be eligible for Social Security and Veteran's benefits from a parent. Paternity establishment also grants children the right to medical and life insurance coverage from their parents, to inheritance rights, and to access medical record histories about their parents.

Placer County Child Support Services had an open case for 11-year old Dylan. The paternal grandparents were the custodial parties. One of the non-custodial parents (Mom) was receiving Supplemental Security Income and the other one (Dad) recently died. Dylan's grandparents contacted the Social Security Administration but were unable to receive death benefits for the child, as paternity had never been legally established. At the request of the grandparents, **Placer County** child support subsequently arranged for genetic testing with the paternal grandparents, a paternal uncle and Dylan. Paternity was ultimately established by the Social Security Administration and Dylan was determined to be eligible for his father's death benefits.

An alleged father had previously visited the **Santa Cruz County** child support office to complain that he was not the person named in a child support lawsuit. The man stated that he did not know the woman named in the action. On April 20, one day after he was served with the legal paperwork, the alleged father came in to discuss the case. By chance, as he waited in the lobby, the mother walked into the office. As staff were about to introduce the two, the father acknowledged knowing the mother. He decided not to dispute paternity and voluntarily signed a child support agreement.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20 IN CALIFORNIA

We collected $8,898,039.01 for children and families

Establishing A Child Support Order

Trying to provide for basic necessities, such as food and clothing, is a financial challenge for many families. Child support helps by ensuring that both parents share the financial responsibility for their children.

The actual amount of child support results from a mathematical calculation specified in statute that takes into consideration several factors, including the parents' incomes, childcare and visitation. The financial factors of both parents are considered in this calculation. Child support is a legal financial obligation that is recognized by the courts, and is enforceable through local child support offices in California.

A custodial parent was disputing allegations by the **Butte County** child support department that she received cash welfare assistance from the county. Several court hearings had been scheduled to resolve the dispute. In a face-to-face interview several months earlier, child support staff had discovered that the custodial parent did not understand that the cash assistance she received through the CalWorks program was the reason for the confusion. Child support staff helped this Mom understand and acknowledge that the calculations of her income were correct. She withdrew her objections, and the court subsequently issued a ruling for past due support, on April 20.

A court hearing was held in **Marin County** on April 20 in a case involving $160,000 in past due child support. The parents, each represented by private attorneys, attempted to reach a compromise agreement. The terms of the agreement became unattractive to the parties, as the complexity of reporting, accounting and enforcement issues came to light. The **Marin County** child support attorney present in court that day intervened and an agreement reached by the end of the day provided for an initial payment of $30,000, and continuing monthly $1,000 payments through the **Marin County** child support office, until the total of $160,000 in past due child support was paid.

Yuba County Child Support Services secured a $1,500 monthly child support obligation on behalf of the custodial parent. She received a copy of the court order on April 20. Learning that she might finally be able to discontinue public assistance, the custodial parent became very emotional: she had been on public assistance with her six children for the last 10 years, and this was now her way out – and off - welfare.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20 IN CALIFORNIA

2,343 cases were heard in court

Enforcing Child Support Orders

The California child support program has an array of tools and services designed to make the collection of child support efficient and effective. These tools and services include:

Wage Withholding – Over 50 percent of all child support nationally is collected through wage assignments. Employers are required, through court orders, to withhold child support from a non-custodial parent's wages. Local child support offices issue thousands of wage assignments every month to employers in California, other states and other countries. **Los Angeles County** alone generates close to 19,000 wage assignments monthly.

A custodial parent contacted the **Sacramento County** Child Support office advising that the non-custodial parent had changed jobs and moved to Thailand. Since there is no international child support enforcement agreement with Thailand, the **Sacramento County** child support office ran a computer locate query for the non-custodial parent's employer service agent. A "hit" came back for a location in San Jose. On April 20, the **Sacramento** Child Support Services sent a withholding notice for past due child support to the employer's agent requesting compliance with the order for support. Even though Dad was physically working in Thailand, a wage assignment was sent to the employer's agent, who complied and the children continued to receive their support.

Credit Reporting – Failure to pay child support can negatively affect a parent's credit rating.

Passport Denial – The renewal or issuance of a passport is subject to denial when a parent owes past due child support.

A non-custodial father of two children in **Orange County** is an international business traveler. On April 20, this individual was not able to travel abroad due to a revocation of his passport. **Orange County** Child Support Services attorneys were able to negotiate an agreement that required the non-custodial parent to pay his past due child support balance in full. As a result of this work, a check in the amount of $45,090.00 was forwarded to the custodial parent.

Real Estate Property Liens – Proceeds from the sale of property are collected through liens filed against parents who owe child support.

On April 20, **Plumas County** Child Support Services received information that a $17,000 check was being processed by an escrow company as a result of a child support lien filed by that office. The payment was forwarded to the custodial parent for past due child support owed her.

In **Santa Barbara County**, a non-custodial parent working as a drywall installer was not paying support. Wage assignments had rarely been effective, as he was constantly changing employers. This dad wanted to refinance his home but was concerned about his balance of $53,807.24 in past due child support. On April 20, the escrow transaction closed and the **Santa Barbara** office received a check for $53,807, which went immediately to the custodial parent.

License Suspension – Issuance and renewal of professional or driver licenses may be denied for parents whose child support accounts are delinquent. Professional licenses include medical, realtor, sporting and attorney licenses, among others.

Franchise Tax Board (FTB) – When a parent's child support account reflects an arrears of $100 or more, and is more than 60 days past due, the local child support office must alert the FTB of the delinquency. The FTB can take funds from bank accounts, tax returns, royalties, commissions, rental income or dividends from the non-custodial parent to satisfy a child support obligation.

The Franchise Tax Board placed a levy on a non-custodial father's stock account on behalf of the **Santa Cruz County** Child Support office. On April 20, the child support office received a check in the amount of $154,563 to pay past due child support owed to the custodial mother.

On April 20, a custodial parent came into the **Sierra Nevada Regional** child support office to pick up a $23,857 check for past due child support. The collection represented the culmination of intense cooperation involving **Sierra Nevada Regional** Child Support Services and the Franchise Tax Board. The two agencies had been working together to seize a monetary award that the non-custodial parent was receiving from a professional association. In addition to collecting $23,857 in past due child support, the court ordered the non-custodial parent to set up a trust account to secure future child support payments.

Income Tax Intercepts – A non-custodial parent's federal and state tax refunds are subject to intercept when a child support account is delinquent.

A non-custodial parent was referred to the **San Diego County** Child Support Ombudsman Team by the local office of the Mexican Consulate. The parent was very upset and distraught, as he had two active child support cases for the same children - one in Mexico and the other in the United States. The California Franchise Tax Board, at the request of **San Diego County** Child Support, had recently intercepted his tax refund, due to delinquency. The non-custodial parent did not know where to turn for help. Child Support staff assisted him by initiating contact with Mexican authorities and with the custodial parent. Staff also helped clear the past due balance. This paved the way for him to receive his income tax refund. In addition, child support staff helped him and the custodial parent to close their case in Mexico.

At the **Ventura County** child support office, a custodial parent provided information that indicated the non-custodial parent was about to inherit money and property in Massachusetts. **Ventura County** staff filed a federal lien in Massachusetts that resulted in collecting the entire past due child support balance. On April 20, the **Ventura County** Child Support office forwarded $39,910 to a very happy custodial parent.

Benefits Intercepts – Workers' Compensation, disability and unemployment benefits are subject to intercept when a parent's child support account is past due.

A custodial parent called the **Lassen County** child support office because she had not received her child support payment in April. When contacted, the non-custodial parent's employer verified that the individual was not working due to an on the job injury. Child Support staff obtained the workers' compensation insurer information from the employer, and served a wage withholding order on the insurance carrier. On April 20, child support staff successfully filed a workers' compensation lien with the Workers' Compensation Appeals Board, which resulted in a payment for the custodial parent.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20 IN CALIFORNIA

Our partners, the Family Court Facilitators, interviewed 1,304 individuals about child support matters

When Circumstances Change

The California child support program is concerned about the needs of both parents – custodial and non-custodial, as well as securing financial needs of the children. At certain points in their lives, parents face financial challenges that may require a reduction or an increase in the monthly child support obligation.

A custodial parent in **Del Norte County** requested a modification of a child support order after her child developed a serious medical condition. The condition, which placed a huge financial hardship on the family, started to take its toll emotionally on every family member. **Del Norte County** child support staff initiated a modification of the child support order, maintained regular phone contact with the parties and assisted the parties to reach an agreement. Both parents indicated that they were very pleased with the results.

In **El Dorado County**, a non-custodial father was seeking a child support order against the child's mother. The mother's child support declaration filed with the court reflected no income, due to an alleged physical disability. The father produced copies of flyers posted around town that advertised a business that mom owned. That information prompted the court to schedule a new hearing. The mother was ordered to file a new child support income declaration to reflect current earnings from her business. As a result, an appropriate order was granted.

Los Angeles County child support staff received a telephone call from a Spanish-speaking non-custodial parent. Staff explained to the parent that his prior request to compromise a past-due child support balance had been approved. Once the non-custodial parent paid $8,532.00, Child Support Services could compromise $1,671.00 from his total past due obligation and then close his case. On April 20, the non-custodial parent came into the child support office with a check and brought his account to zero.

A non-custodial father appeared in **Orange County** court on his motion to terminate a wage assignment. Although the father was current on his child support obligation, and had paid per the court order each and every month, **Orange County** Child Support Services initially opposed the non-custodial parent's request to stop the wage

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20 IN CALIFORNIA

1,464 new child support orders were generated

assignment. Prior to the hearing, the Child Support Services attorney spoke with the father and learned that, due to a life threatening disease, stopping the wage assignment might be appropriate. The court agreed, and ordered an immediate stop.

Sacramento County Child Support Services contacted a father who owed $37,106 in past due child support to advise him that his application for a compromise agreement had been approved. The father agreed to pay a lump sum of $6,406, as a compromise of the entire past due child support debt owed to the county. The father also agreed to pay the past due support owed to mother in the amount of $3,594. On April 20, the father came into the office and paid the full $10,000.

Santa Clara child support agreed to terminate a health insurance assignment order after a non-custodial parent provided proof of private health insurance coverage he purchased for the children outside of his employer's health plan. The non-custodial parent's employer was notified accordingly.

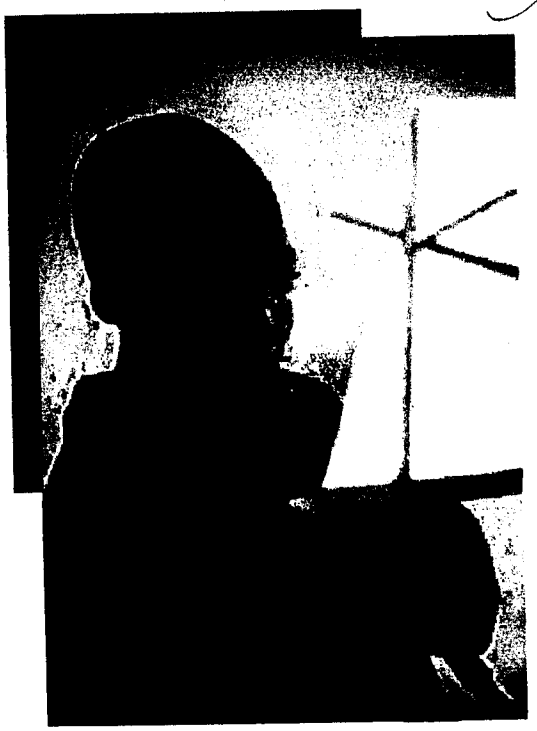
A non-custodial mother of three children came into the **Tulare County** child support office to discuss a compromise agreement for past due child support. She owed a substantial amount of past due child support for the time that she did not have custody of her children. The mother's life had been unstable, and she was unemployed for some time. However, on April 20 she started a new part-time job. The father does not live in the home, but does pay child support. **Tulare County** Child Support Services accepted the mother's application for a compromise agreement.

In **Contra Costa County**, a custodial parent passed away in early April. Her present husband, the stepfather of the minor child, came into the **Contra Costa County** Child Support office to provide a copy of his wife's death certificate. He requested that the office make him the custodial parent on the case, and asked that future child support payments be made payable to him. Child support staff directed him to the Family Law Facilitator to file a motion. Subsequent court action named the stepfather as custodial parent.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20 IN CALIFORNIA

697 modifications to existing support orders were granted

Thankful Families



In today's world, providing for a child goes beyond making monthly child support payments. Financial child support enables families the ability to provide for essential needs, such as food and shelter, but it can also contribute to other meaningful life goals, such as the financing of a college degree. The emotional and psychological benefits of providing financial support are also significant. By providing financial support, custodial and non-custodial parents show they care about their children, a factor that can significantly contribute to a child's successful growth and development.

The mother of two young girls attended a court hearing in **Los Angeles**. The girls came to court with Mom due to a lack of available childcare services. The girls were nervous and anxious. Rather than interviewing Mom in the girls' presence, child support services staff took the children into a different area where pens, paper and highlighters provided them with distraction and inspiration. The girls drew a beautiful picture of a party, complete with balloons and streamers. They had fun and laughed at each other's drawings. It made the experience less stressful for them. The girls signed the drawings, and gave them to the child support staff member, who put the pictures up in her cubicle to remind her of how important the agency's work is to the families being served.

A Houston man claimed someone who has a case with **Monterey County** Child Support had stolen his identity. He informed the child support office that he had reported the identity theft to the Houston police. Based on this information, Child Support Services staff was able to verify that the person who had a case in their office had been using the Houston man's identity since 1996. Local child support staff provided proof to the Houston Police in order to strengthen the case against the thief. The identity thief had an extensive criminal background and was wanted on another warrant. On April 20, child support staff corrected the information on their computer system, and requested deletion of all adverse information in credit bureau files.

A non-custodial mother came into the **San Benito County** child support office and made a payment. The remarkable part of this story is that this mother had been trying to obtain employment for several years. She typically would bring in employment search forms indicating no success at finding work. On April 20, she came in to advise that she had secured employment, and to make a child support payment.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20 IN CALIFORNIA

1,062 medical support orders for children were ordered

On April 20, a **Sutter County** child support staff member told her supervisor that a custodial mother had been praising the child support program, saying how great the program was for single parents. The staff member identified herself with the custodial mother, as she was once a single parent. The custodial mother shared that her ex-husband evaded paying child support to their two children for 13 years. After much persistence from **Sutter County** child support, he was located in another state. The custodial mother is now remarried, and very happy that California's child support program helped her resolve many issues.

Every once in a while, custodial and non-custodial parents come to court and work through child support issues smoothly. This was the case in **Riverside County** on April 20. The mother and father appeared at the **Riverside County** court and agreed on visitation, health insurance coverage, and childcare. The father even agreed to pay extra child support. They were so agreeable that child support staff checked the mother's personal identification document to make sure father hadn't brought in someone in place of the custodial parent. For the entire duration of the settlement conference, mother and father chatted, as if they were still happily married.

In **Tuolumne County**, a non-custodial parent called to make a payment. Staff told him that he could do so by phone. He expressed appreciation for being able to make payment by credit card.

Shasta County Child Support Services received the following letter: *"Thank you for all the years of assistance Shasta County Department of Child Support Services has provided me! Without your help and persistence I would never have had a penny of support from my daughters' father. It [the support] helped to provide a life to them that would not have been possible without this help. Your services helped to restore dignity to me by treating me with respect and you handled every situation with a professional air that is not always present in County programs. Shasta County and the State of California should be very proud of this program and the individuals that are in place to make it work! Just know that the work you do changes lives . . ."*

Santa Barbara County Child Support Services received the following 'thank-you' card from a custodial parent: *"I received my first child support check on April 20, 2005 – I can't tell you how much I appreciate your efforts. I get to buy my daughter a prom dress and it makes me happy. Thank you for all your hard work on my case."*

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20 IN CALIFORNIA

Our staff located 2,704 noncustodial parents through the use of automated systems and tools

A new Era in California Child Support

This snapshot of just one day in the life of California's child support program is intended to demonstrate how critical our work is toward enhancing the economic independence of our customers. It was, though, just another day.

Our program in California is still in a state of transition. In 1999, the State Legislature radically restructured the program. The reform legislation moved control from local district attorneys to county child support offices, increased state oversight of child support functions, and called for enhanced accountability and improved outcomes. Overall collections in the state have increased from $1.9 billion in 2000 to over $2.3 billion in State Fiscal Year 2003/04.

We have had successes and failures. However, outcomes are improving, more money is being collected and more children and families are being helped, all through the efforts of the child support professionals who strive each day to fulfill our goal of "Supporting California's Children."

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 28 IN CALIFORNIA

1,207 new support cases were opened

Need to know more?

1. **Consult your local telephone directory or visit the California Department of Child Support Services web site at http://www.childsup.ca.gov/county_locations.asp for the number of your local child support agency.**

2. **Contact CSDA for information about the *Face of Child Support* report. (916)446-6700**

3. **Visit the CDSDA Resource Library at: http://www.csdaca.org/committees/comm_tr_resourcelibrary.asp. You can read or download this brochure.**

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20 IN CALIFORNIA

Paternity establishments were determined for 530 children

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20 IN CALIFORNIA

We were responsible overall for 1,836,618 cases and as such touched the lives of over five million people while doing our work...It was just another day!

CSDA