

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR RELEASE 11:00 A.M.**January 4, 2002**Contact: Mike Botula, Public Information Officer
(916) 464-5188 (916) 464-5315**California's Child Support Reform Results in Greater Benefits for Families***Child Support Collections Up, Customer Service Enhanced*

SACRAMENTO—Child support Collections in California, for the first time, have exceeded the \$2 billion mark, paternity establishments and support orders are up and customer service for custodial and non-custodial parents has improved, according to a report outlining the successes of the California Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) released at a Capitol news conference today.

Governor Gray Davis signed Child Support Reform legislation in September 1999 creating the Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) in January 2000 to provide leadership, ensure uniformity of services for families throughout the State and to oversee the development of a statewide automation system.

"This Administration has a new vision for the future of California's Child Support Program of building stronger communities through strengthening families," said state Health and Human Services Agency Secretary Grantland Johnson. "Connecting children with their parents for financial, medical and emotional support is the foundation of that vision," the Secretary said.

The reform legislation mandated that county-level child support programs, previously administered by district attorneys, be operated by local child support agencies (LCSAs). A major task for DCSS in its first two years has been the transition of the local programs out of the district attorneys offices into the new local agencies under the one state administered umbrella of the DCSS.

"The transition process is ahead of schedule and is saving the state \$4 million a year," said DCSS Director Curtis L. Child. Child said all 58 counties would complete the transition to local child support agencies by July 1, 2002.

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Citing the need for a new approach for the delivery of services and collection of child support, the Director said the Child Support Services Program is one of the largest human service programs in the State and serves families longer than most other social services programs. "Two thirds of the families we currently serve are not on public assistance, meaning that most of the child support funds that are collected by the state go directly to families and children," Child said.

DCSS has also begun several major customer service initiatives including the Ombudsperson Program and Complaint Resolution and State Administrative Hearings. A statewide customer satisfaction survey is also being conducted to determine how and in what ways that customer service can be improved in the future.

EDITORS: More information on Child Support Reform may be obtained from the DCSS Internet site: <http://www.childsup.ca.gov>