

# *Strategic Plan*

*2010–2014*



# *Improving Child Support Program Performance*

The California Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) gratefully acknowledges the cooperation of everyone who contributed to the Strategic Plan. Those deserving special recognition for their efforts to coordinate the writing and editing of the report include:

Jan Sturla	Director, California Department of Child Support Services
June Lee	Chief Deputy Director, California Department of Child Support Services
Mary Ann Miller	Assistant Director, California Department of Child Support Services
Bill Otterbeck	Deputy Director, California Department of Child Support Services
Mark Beckley	Deputy Director, California Department of Child Support Services
Kathy Hrepich	Chief Counsel, California Department of Child Support Services
Robert Jones	Deputy Director, California Department of Child Support Services
Connie Brunn	Director, San Bernardino County Department of Child Support Services
Steve Eldred	Director, Orange County Department of Child Support Services
Debbie Frahm	Assistant Director, Ventura County Department of Child Support Services
Steven Golightly	Director, Los Angeles County Child Support Services Department
Adele Hendrickson	Director, Tuolumne County Department of Child Support Services
Iliana Rodriguez	Director, San Mateo County Department of Child Support Services
David Ingersoll	Director, Stanislaus County Department of Child Support Services
Terri Love	Director, Shasta County Department of Child Support Services
Phil Lowe	Director, San Luis Obispo County Department of Child Support Services
Ralph Miller	Director, Santa Clara County Department of Child Support Services
Kathy Sokolik	Director, Santa Cruz/San Benito County Department of Child Support Services
Sharon Stone	Director, Butte County Department of Child Support Services
Tamara Thomas	Assistant Director, Stanislaus County Department of Child Support Services
David Kilgore	Deputy Director, Los Angeles County Child Support Services Department
Elise Wing	Program Specialist, Region IX, Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement
Michael Wright	Program Manager, Administrative Office of the Courts
David Oppenheim	Director, Child Support Directors Association
Natalie Dillon	Deputy Director, Child Support Directors Association
Vickie Contreras	Regional Administrator, California Department of Child Support Services
Lupe Gonzales	Regional Administrator, California Department of Child Support Services
Mary Lawrence	Regional Administrator, California Department of Child Support Services
Cheryl Stewart	Regional Administrator, California Department of Child Support Services







## *Director's Message*

Through our work to establish, collect and distribute child support, California's child support program provides an essential bridge to self-sufficiency and security for nearly 1.8 million children and families. We take that responsibility very seriously.

Since the Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) began operations a decade ago, it has presided over the evolution of California's child support program. Beginning from a decentralized system administered by local district attorneys, it is now a single, unified statewide child support program with standardized program policies, procedures and customer service standards.

This plan is the product of the collaboration of state and local child support professionals, and stakeholders to achieve a common vision — that children can rely on their parents for the financial and medical support they need to be healthy and successful.

As California's child support program looks toward the next decade, improving program performance and increasing efficiency are mission-critical for DCSS. This performance focus is expressed in the goals that the Department has adopted as its priorities for the next five years.

Jan C. Sturla

Director, California Department of Child Support Services

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## Mission

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*Enhance the well-being of children and the self-sufficiency of families by providing professional services to locate parents, establish paternity and establish and enforce orders for financial and medical support.*

## Vision

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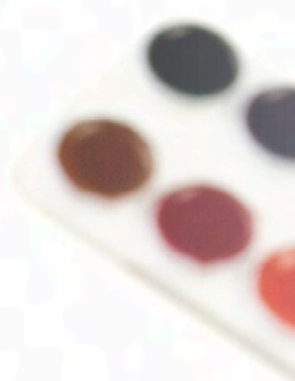
*Children can rely on their parents for the financial and medical support they need to be healthy and successful.*





*We Value . . .*

*family*







***Commitment to  
Children & Families***

*We believe in a shared commitment to children by families, parents and child support communities.*

***Fairness & Respect***

*We embrace the diversity of people, consider their needs and treat each individual with fairness, equity and respect.*

***Quality  
Customer Service***

*We are committed to excellence in customer service.*

***Cooperative  
Partnerships***

*We promote sharing, communication, and cooperation with families, communities, and agencies.*

***Integrity &  
Ethical Conduct***

*We uphold the highest ethical standards of personal and professional conduct. We will ensure the privacy and security of all personal information.*

***Operational  
Excellence***

*We proactively seek to achieve operational excellence in order to meet the needs of children and families through highly professional staff.*

# *Introduction*



Established by state legislation in 1999, the California Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) is designated as the single state entity responsible for ensuring that all functions necessary to establish, collect and distribute child support are effectively and efficiently implemented.

California's child support program is the largest in the nation – representing 1.6 million cases, or more than 10 percent of the federal child support case load of 15 million. Services are delivered through a network of 52 county and regional child support agencies that serve nearly 1.8 million children and families annually.

Since Federal Fiscal Year 2000, states have been evaluated for federal incentive funds based on five performance measures. These five measures are related to the process of establishing and enforcing a child support case and are an important part of determining program effectiveness. As such, the federal performance measures outlined below, are incorporated into the goals of California's Strategic Plan:



***Paternity Establishment*** - Statewide paternity establishment measures the total number of children born out-of-wedlock for whom paternity was acknowledged or established in the fiscal year, compared to the total number of children in the state born out-of-wedlock during the preceding fiscal year, expressed as a percentage.

***Percent of Cases with a Child Support Order*** - This measures cases with support orders as compared to the total caseload. Support orders are broadly defined as all legally enforceable orders, including orders for financial and medical support, and zero support orders.

***Current Collections*** - This performance standard measures the amount of monthly support collected, compared to the total amount of monthly support owed.

***Arrearage Collections*** - This performance standard measures the number of cases with child support arrearage collections compared with the number of cases owing arrearages during the federal fiscal year.

***Cost Effectiveness*** - This measure compares the total amount of distributed collections to the total amount of expenditures for the fiscal year, expressed as distributed collections per dollar of expenditure.

Today, California's child support program is using new technology to expand the ability of child support staff to assist customers. Working collaboratively with local child support agencies, the courts, county health and human services entities, employers and various state and federal agencies, this new technology is making it easier and faster to locate individuals and collect child support payments for families.

California's Department of Child Support Services is committed to "Supporting California's Children — one child, one family at a time."





# Goal 1

*All children have parentage established*



## Objective

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*1. Ensure statewide paternity establishment percentage is at least 100 percent*

### *Strategies*

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- Educate the public on the importance of establishing paternity
- Educate hospitals and other partners on the Paternity Opportunity Program and encourage their participation





# Goal 2

*All children in the California child support program have support orders*



## Objective

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*Increase the percentage of cases with a support order from 80.2 percent to 84 percent*

### *Strategies*

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- Emphasize early intervention to encourage the involvement of parents in the establishment process
- Provide proactive case management
- Emphasize timely, accurate and appropriate data exchanges
- Customize services appropriate to diverse customer needs
- Establish timely and appropriate orders
- Develop and augment more effective locate, service of process and establishment tools
- Increase the number of families receiving child support services
- Expand the use of administrative processes





# Goal 3

*All children in the California child support program have medical coverage*



## Objective

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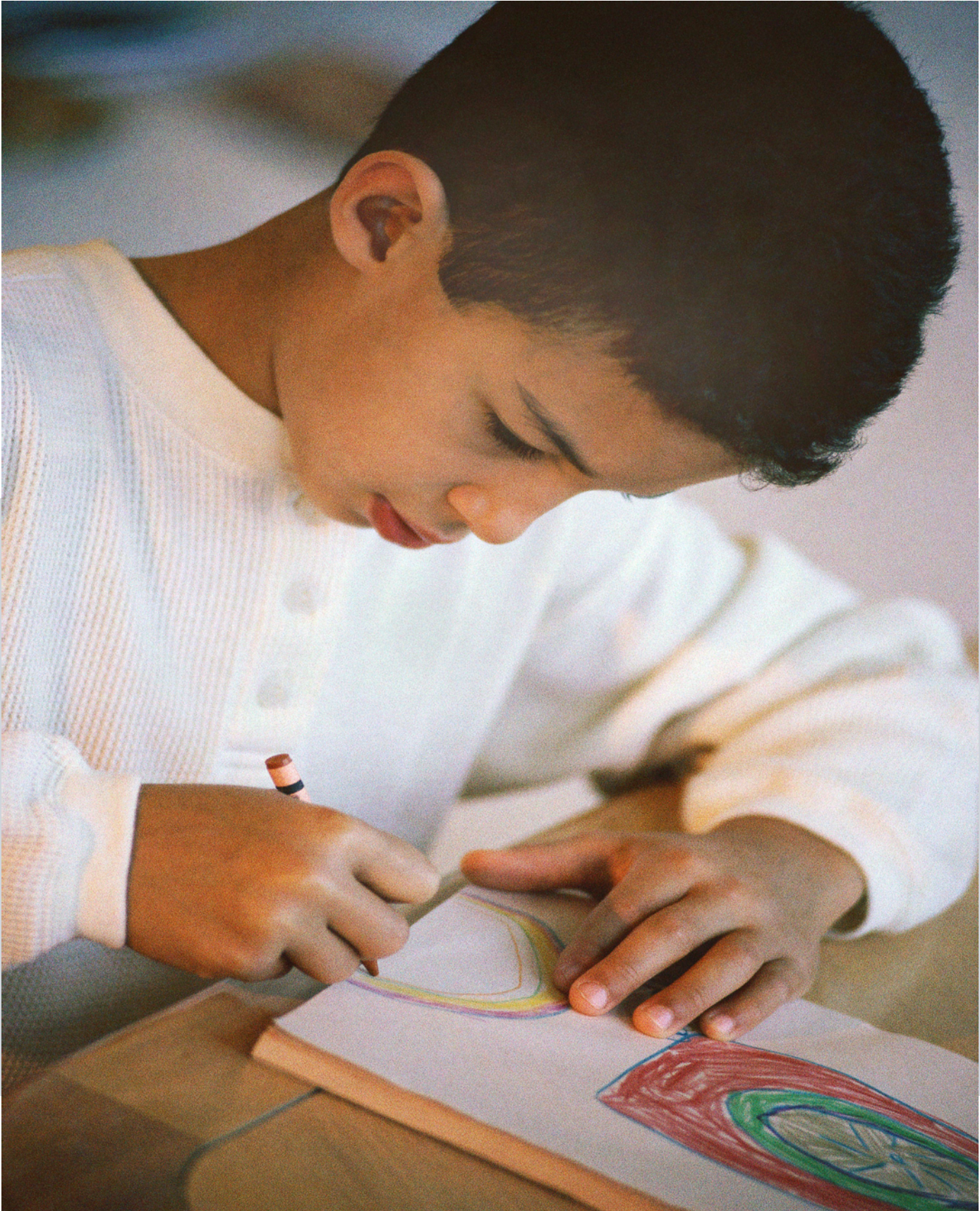
*The percentage of cases in the California child support program with support orders in which medical support is ordered and provided will increase from 49 percent to 60 percent*

## Strategies

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- Ensure that DCSS, the California Department of Health Care Services and families have accurate information about health care coverage available to individuals receiving child support services
- Increase the percentage of orders that include medical support
- Ensure that health care coverage is provided as ordered







# Goal 4

*All children in the California child support program receive financial support from parents as ordered*



## Objectives

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- 1. Increase the percentage of current support collected from 52.8 percent to 62.8 percent*
  - 2. Increase the total dollar amount collected and distributed by 20 percent*
  - 3. Increase the percentage of cases with arrears collections from 59 percent to 69 percent*
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## Strategies

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- Emphasize early intervention to prevent payment delinquency
- Ensure accurate and appropriate orders
- Increase the number of obligors paying by income withholding
- Increase child support services to families
- Partner with community and government resources to promote employment opportunities for obligors
- Expand and enhance location and enforcement tools

# Goal 5

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# *The California child support program will operate efficiently and effectively*

## **Objectives**

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- 1. Total dollars collected per dollar of expenditures will increase from \$1.96 to \$3.17*
  - 2. Increase statewide uniformity of California's child support program's operations*
  - 3. Expand alternative approaches to providing California child support program services*
  - 4. Obtain best value goods and services*
- 

### *Strategies*

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- Increase electronic communication with customers
- Expand use of administrative processes
- Increase the usability of Child Support Enforcement System to improve productivity
- Develop and implement statewide procedures and standards
- Develop and implement a statewide training approach
- Explore alternative organizational approaches to performing child support functions
- Proactively manage and maintain eligible cases within the California child support caseload
- Increase the availability and use of electronic processes
- Develop management reports and tools to assist in monitoring and analyzing performance





# Goal 6

*The child support services program will provide excellent customer service*



## Objectives

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- 1. Maximize customer access to program information and services*
- 2. Ensure timely and responsive services to internal and external customers*
- 3. Establish and implement uniform standards of excellence*
- 4. Attract, develop and retain the highest quality child support professionals*

## Strategies

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- Collect and use data to manage and provide excellent customer service
- Expand approaches to outreach and education
- Increase customer and partner access to electronic information and services
- Improve hiring and retention processes
- Promote worksite wellness
- Promote employee development and training
- Develop and implement succession plans
- Enhance security measures to attain the highest levels of confidentiality





**Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor  
State of California**

**Kimberly Belshé, Secretary  
California Health and Human Services Agency**

**Jan C. Sturla, Director  
California Department of Child Support Services**

**California Department of  
Child Support Services  
P.O. Box 419064  
Rancho Cordova, CA  
95741-9064**

**Toll-free (866) 901-3212  
TTY Toll-free (866) 223-9529  
[www.childsup.ca.gov](http://www.childsup.ca.gov)**

*Ava DeLara  
Publication Design  
Office of Public Affairs*