

**Colorado
Early Intervention
and
Simplified Modification
Project**

Final Report

CPR

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RESEARCH

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Executive Summary

Conducted in Denver and Pueblo, two large urban counties, Colorado's Section 1115 demonstration grant aimed to improve child support payments and reduce arrears by utilizing early intervention strategies and simplified modification procedures. Unlike several previous experiments dealing with early intervention, the Colorado project tested the feasibility of having general child support workers incorporate early intervention into the normal range of activities they are expected to perform with their regular caseload rather than using specialized personnel. Colorado also tested the efficacy of using early intervention techniques on older delinquency cases, as well as those more typically targeted for early intervention, namely cases with newly established orders.

With respect to the early intervention treatment, workers were asked to:

- Contact noncustodial parents in a wide range of case types, establish positive relationships, explain orders, provide appropriate referrals, address barriers to payment, and monitor payment;
- Contact custodial parents and employers to locate obligors and establish wage withholding orders; and
- Record the outreach actions they attempted and accomplished with noncustodial parents in a wide range of cases.

With respect to simplified modification, CSE developed a streamlined review and adjustment procedure that involved:

- A simplified form to request an order modification;
- Financial affidavits that did not require notarization; and
- Routine use of in-person negotiation conferences soon after the request was filed to facilitate agreement-making.

From July 2006 through January 2008, four child support workers who handle enforcement cases in Denver and three in Pueblo attempted to apply proactive, early intervention contact techniques to 1,250 cases (817 in Denver and 433 in Pueblo). From March 2007 through June 2008, workers in the two counties processed 1,367 requests for review and adjustment (1,145 in Denver and 222 in Pueblo) using simplified procedures developed for this project.

The project evaluation involved:

- Analysis of records maintained by workers on proactive actions and simplified modification procedures they attempted and those that they achieved with cases in the treatment group;

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- Telephone interviews in 2008 by professional interviewers with 182 noncustodial parents who were targeted for early intervention and 180 whose review and adjustment cases were processed using simplified modification procedures to gauge their reactions;
- Focus groups with child support staff in Denver and Pueblo counties;
- Generation in June 2009 of an automated extract by programmers with the Colorado Automated Child Support Enforcement System (ACSES) consisting of groups of cases that were processed using conventional outreach techniques and the standard review and adjustment process; and
- Generation and analysis of an ACSES automated extract showing payment activity and various case processing time frames for cases exposed to early intervention and simplified modification treatments, as well as patterns for groups of cases processed using conventional approaches to determine differences that might be attributed to early intervention and simplified modification.

Although ACSES programmers made every attempt to match the sample of cases in the treatment and comparison groups, the cases they identified that were processed using conventional techniques had lower arrears balances and more favorable payment patterns that limit the reliability of the comparison with cases exposed to early intervention techniques. While the treatment and comparison groups for the analysis of simplified modification procedures were more equivalent, the increase in the minimum wage that became effective in Colorado on January 1, 2007, is a potential source of bias. The comparison group was comprised of cases with requests filed in 2006, a time period that preceded the rise in minimum wage, while the treatment group was generated from 2007 to 2008, a time period that followed wage change.

Findings

Early Intervention Strategies

- It was extremely challenging for child support workers with a regular complement of enforcement cases to select cases from their very large caseloads that were suitable for early intervention outreach activities. Over the 19-month enrollment period, project workers selected for early intervention treatment an average of 9.4 cases per month. Workers attributed the low case volume to the competing demands of handling regular responsibilities for 350 to 600 enforcement cases and the manual process they used to identify suitable older cases.
- Without developing a specialized caseload, most cases that regular enforcement workers selected for early intervention treatment were older delinquency cases. Indeed, only 13 percent of project cases flagged by workers were new orders that were fresh to the child support system and 68 percent were older cases with payment delinquencies.

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- Although it was a project goal to conduct a relationship-building call with noncustodial parents in every project case, workers reported attempting to do this in 66 percent of targeted cases and reached noncustodial parents by telephone in 52 percent of cases. The biggest barrier to contact was outdated telephone numbers.
- Although workers agreed that telephone calls with noncustodial parents were valuable, they tended to rely on more conventional outreach techniques, such as mailing materials to targeted noncustodial parents, which they reported doing in 72 percent of targeted cases, rather than conducting telephone calls and in-person meetings, which they reported doing in 52 and 6 percent of cases, respectively. Interviewed obligors were less likely to recall receiving a telephone call (32%), while nearly everyone recalled receiving a mailed letter.
- Although one goal of early intervention is to identify and address barriers to payment, workers reported making referrals for assistance with employment and visitation in only 3 percent of the cases. This might reflect the failure to report activity rather than the true level of activity.
- Workers reported rarely sending thank-you letters for payment, initiating contempt procedures for nonpayment, and recommending applications for review and adjustment. Again, this might reflect the failure to report rather than the lack of activity.
- Interviewed noncustodial parents rated most early intervention actions as at least somewhat helpful, especially in-person meetings and telephone calls. The actions that received the highest helpfulness ratings were those that were least likely to be done: referrals for help with visitation (66%), and employment (58%), and a letter of thanks for making payments (43%).
- Although some respondents volunteered that their interactions with workers had improved over time, interviewed obligors rated workers more highly in their enforcement duties than in building relationships. Many interviewed obligors reported that it was difficult to reach their worker at child support by telephone. And there was little evidence that early intervention improved the image of the child support agency, with half of interviewed obligors rating the worker, the agency, and the court as “very” or “somewhat” unfair.
- The interviews suggest that early intervention may do little to promote voluntary payment of child support since the chief reasons for nonpayment cited by interviewed project participants were not having the money to pay (87%), having a salary that did not cover their needs (63%), and having another family to support (53%).
- A comparison of payment patterns for cases in both the treatment and comparison groups showed significant increases for both groups in the 18 months following project participation, as compared with the 18 months prior to project participation, although payment performance fell far below being perfect. The percentage of owed child support that was paid rose from 36.6 percent to 42.1 percent in the treatment group and 38.7 to 48.1 percent in the comparison group. Delinquent cases in the treatment group did not improve at all over time,

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with obligors paying 37.1 percent of the support they owed prior to and following their enrollment in the project.

- Payment improvements tended to occur during the first three to four months following project enrolment — a time period that coincided with the duration of the early intervention treatment that lasted an average of 3.8 months and a median of 3.4. Payment ratios peaked at different levels for different cases types. In new order cases, payment performance peaked in month three, when obligors paid 51 percent of what they owed. For newly modified cases, payment performance peaked in month six, when they paid 67 percent of what they owed. And for delinquent cases, payment peaked in month three, when they paid 39 percent. Overall, obligors in the treatment group achieved a peak payment rate of 45 percent, three months after project enrollment.
- Rates of payment improved the most among treatment cases exposed to direct worker contact. In the 18 months prior to and following project enrollment, payment performance increased from 40.3 to 50 percent for cases with worker contact, while performance was only 34.7 and 37.0 percent in the pre- and post- enrollment months for cases with no worker contact.

Simplified Modification Procedures

- Early intervention procedures can generate referrals for review and adjustment, particularly from paying obligors with low arrears balances. Half of requests for simplified modification came from obligors who were told by early intervention workers to attempt to modify their orders.
- Simplified modification procedures can attract more noncustodial parents to apply. Sixty percent of requests were filed by noncustodial parents, the chief reasons being job loss, a pay cut, or an injury or disability. Under traditional modification procedures, 50 percent of requests were filed by noncustodial parents and 46 by custodial parents.
- Under both simplified and conventional modification procedures, workers denied requests because it had been less than 36 months since the previous modification and terminated many requests for failure to supply financial information. In Denver, nearly half (46%) of all requests using the simplified process were denied or terminated, as compared with 24 percent in Pueblo, where workers were reportedly willing to help parents complete the financial forms at the settlement conference. Overall, the rate of denied and terminated requests was higher among cases processed using simplified (42%) versus conventional (34%) procedures, suggesting that the simplified approach many have invited a greater number of requests that were viewed as inappropriate. Rates of denial and termination were lower among cases referred by early intervention workers, suggesting that these workers did some pre-screening.

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- In both counties, most review conferences that were scheduled were held (74% in Denver and 80% in Pueblo). The major reason they were not held was the failure of the requesting party to appear. Most conferences were held with both parties in attendance in the same room (49%), some cases involved “shuttle” techniques (11%), and sometime a party participated by telephone (13%). Nearly all conferences were brief lasting less than 60 minutes and were held an average of 33 and 45.8 days after the request was filed in Denver and Pueblo, respectively.
- Across the two counties, conference outcomes were equally divided among the parties reaching an agreement (36%), failing to reach an agreement (32%), and having the review terminated (33%). The agreement rate was 29 percent in Denver and 47 percent in Pueblo. Denver attributed its lower rate of agreement to the contentious nature of its population; Pueblo workers received training on mediation techniques.
- Ultimately, rates of stipulation did not differ for cases in the treatment and comparison group, with 76 and 80 percent of modification requests being established by stipulation under simplified and conventional approaches, respectively. An identical 8 percent of simplified and conventional orders were ultimately established by default, and 16 and 13 percent were established by the court.
- Across the two counties, conference settlements were equally divided among parties agreeing to an increase in support (30%), a decrease (39%), and no change (31%), but there were differences by county. In Denver, half (53%) of conference settlements resulted in orders that were unchanged, while 20 percent increased and 27 percent decreased. In Pueblo, only 5 percent of conference settlements led to orders that were unchanged, while 41 percent increased and 53 percent decreased.
- Simplified modification procedures did not lead to higher rates of downward modification. Overall, 42 percent of cases processed using the simplified approach was modified downward, as compared with 50 percent in the comparison group. The lower rate of downward orders may be due to an increase in the minimum wage, which went into effect in Colorado on January 1, 2007. Treatment cases were generated after the wage change, while comparison group cases consisted of requests filed before wage change.
- Overall, the simplified approach did not shorten the amount of time from application to result, which averaged 61.2 days for cases in the treatment group, as compared with 64.1 days for cases processed using conventional methods. Denver cases processed using the simplified approach took significantly more time than those processed using conventional procedures (64.2 versus 53.9 days), while Pueblo had the opposite pattern (48.4 versus 85.7 days). Denver developed a specialized group of workers to handle modifications for this project, so it is possible that the longer case processing time was due to the new staffing arrangement.

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- Obligor in Denver who filed modification requests using the simplified approach paid 56.1 percent of their monthly obligation in the 18 months following their request, while those in the comparison group paid 57.8 percent. Comparing payments in the 18 months prior to and following the modification request filing finds that both Denver groups improved by an identical 7 percentage points, while both Pueblo groups improved by 8.8 percentage points.
- Telephone interviews conducted with 180 noncustodial parents revealed that many still found the forms difficult to complete. Half of the interviewed noncustodial parents who recalled attending a modification settlement conference rated it as helpful, although the most helpful feature was getting help with filling out financial forms, which was rarely done. The chief reasons they gave for failing to attend the conference was not receiving a mailed notice and/or having trouble filling out financial forms. Interviewed noncustodial parents were equally apt to say their orders had gone up, down, or stayed the same, and half remained very displeased with the outcome. They felt that the modification process was lengthy and biased in favor of custodial parents. Although they knew how to reach their child support worker, most complained that it was difficult to get through and have a conversation.
- Interviewed noncustodial parents who said they paid less than the full amount due in child support said they did not have the money (85%), had lost their job or had lower earnings (80%), felt that the order was too high (76%), and/or had another family to support (60%).

Conclusions

The Colorado project shows that over time payments improved for cases processed using early intervention and conventional techniques, although payment performance remained low among obligors in both groups. While early intervention was not associated with any particular increases in child support payment patterns, payment improvements tended to occur during the first three to four months following project enrollment—a time period that coincided with the duration of the early intervention treatment. Interviews with noncustodial parents indicate that most non-payment problems were due to basic financial limitations including job loss, low income, and other families to support.

The best payment improvements occurred in new order cases that were fresh to the child support system where workers actually achieved contact with noncustodial parents and conducted relationship-building calls. Few benefits were discerned for older delinquent cases and/or cases with mailed contact or voice mail messages. These findings are consistent with those observed in previous studies of early intervention and argue for focusing early intervention efforts on new order cases.

Colorado's decision to assign regular enforcement workers to do early intervention along with their other case responsibilities did not work. It led to low case volume and relatively low levels of contact with noncustodial parents. It also had questionable customer service benefits. Telephone

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interviews with 182 obligors indicated that regular workers were hard to reach by telephone and were often unresponsive and unsympathetic. A better strategy might be to assign early intervention duties to a specialized unit with a customer-service orientation and the capacity to make multiple telephone attempts to reach obligors.

Despite efforts to simplify the modification process, it continued to be perceived as complicated by many interviewed obligors and did not consistently shorten the time from filing to outcome, with reductions achieved in Pueblo but not in Denver. Nor did the simplified process address the fact that a large proportion of requests (especially in Denver) continued to be eliminated for failure to provide required financial information. The higher rate of agreement-making in Pueblo conferences suggests that the approach has the potential to improve rates of stipulation, but, like Pueblo workers, workers need to be trained in facilitation. Obligor cases were processed using simplified and conventional approaches did a better job of paying over time, but no increases in payment could be tied to the use of the simplified approach and payments still fell far short of being complete. Interviewed obligors attributed their lack of payment to financial factors including job loss, wage cuts, other families to support, disability, and illness.

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Appendix A: Materials for Early Intervention

Appendix B: Materials for Simplified Modification Process

Appendix C: Data Forms for Early Intervention

Appendix D: Data Forms for Simplified Modification Process

Chapter 1: Introduction

In September 2005, the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement awarded the Colorado Division of Child Support Enforcement (CSE) a Section 1115 demonstration grant aimed at improving the voluntary payment of support, reducing arrears, and increasing the reliability of child support collections. Conducted in Denver and Pueblo counties, the demonstration sought to improve payments and reduce arrears by utilizing a variety of strategies that are believed to increase the generation of appropriate child support orders, promote payment, and reduce the need to undertake punitive enforcement actions. The project involved the use of a variety of strategies and proactive techniques, referred to as “early intervention.” They included the following:

- **Early Intervention Techniques:** Workers were asked to contact noncustodial parents in a wide range of case types, including newly established and newly modified orders. They were to use these contacts to attempt to establish positive relationships, explain orders, provide appropriate referrals, address barriers to payment, and monitor payment. The contacts with custodial parents and employers were also intended to improve their ability to locate obligors and establish effective wage withholding orders.
- **Early Delinquency Intervention:** Workers were asked to flag cases with new delinquencies and intervene with actions likely to restart payment activity. These actions could include contacting noncustodial parents and employers, modifying orders, seizing assets, and initiating appropriate enforcement actions in a timely manner.
- **Correcting Orders that Are Too High:** Workers were asked to identify older cases with delinquencies. They were instructed to refer or initiate modification procedures for cases where the noncustodial parent was incarcerated, disabled, unemployed, or otherwise lacked the ability to pay, and the order level exceeded the minimum established through the new low-income adjustment.
- **Simplifying the Modification Process:** CSE developed a streamlined and simplified review and adjustment procedure that workers in Pueblo and Denver could use to modify orders. It involved simplified materials and request forms about order modification, financial affidavits that did not require notarization, reduced time frames for notification and response, and in-person negotiation conferences to facilitate agreement-making between the parties.

CSE contracted with the Center for Policy Research (CPR) to evaluate the demonstration. CPR’s evaluation relied on several research techniques including:

- The generation of groups of cases that were processed using conventional techniques and those that were subjected to proactive outreach efforts;

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- Analysis of records maintained by workers on proactive actions they attempted and those that they achieved with cases in the experimental group;
- Telephone interviews with noncustodial parents who were targeted for early intervention and simplified modification procedures to determine their reactions and their perceived impact on payment behaviors and their perceptions of the child support agency;
- Qualitative data collected through focus groups with staff; and
- The examination of rates of child support collection and enforcement activity for cases in the experimental and comparison groups.

In preliminary project reports,¹ CPR summarized the process of implementing the project interventions, described preliminary experiences in using a variety of early intervention techniques, presented initial information on cases with requests for modification made under the simplified procedures, and documented staff reactions to the simplified modification procedures and the use of various proactive outreach efforts.

This final report considers both the early intervention and simplified modification components of this project. It reviews implementation patterns associated with both sets of procedures and describes the actions actually taken by workers with various types of cases. The final report also presents the recollections and reactions of noncustodial parents to the outreach efforts extended by child support workers and the simplified review and adjustment procedures available as part of the demonstration project. Finally, the report considers a variety of quantitative outcomes associated with the use of early intervention and simplified modification procedures, including payment patterns, arrears balances, and enforcement actions. It compares cases subjected to the project treatments with patterns observed for comparable cases processed using normal agency treatments.

¹ “Findings from Project Implementation,” November 2007, focused on the use of a variety of early intervention techniques in 704 cases that had been enrolled into the project as of June 30, 2007. The December 2007 report entitled “Preliminary Findings from the Modification Demonstration” presented information on 437 cases with requests for modification made under the simplified procedures during the first months of project operation: March 1, 2007, to October 31, 2007. A March 2008 report entitled “Site Visit Report” presented the results of focus groups conducted with early intervention and modification workers in Denver and Pueblo counties in February 2008.

Chapter 2: Background on Early Intervention

Early intervention approaches encourage workers to focus on child support cases at initial stages of case processing and to engage in proactive contact with noncustodial and custodial parents for the purpose of establishing a positive working relationship. Caseworkers typically have no routine contact with the noncustodial parent after the order is entered. When they do have contact, normally months into the child support process, the noncustodial parent often owes back-due support and faces bank attachments, license revocations, liens, and other enforcement actions.

Early intervention strategies may be used at a variety of points in case processing. Prior to order establishment, early intervention involves contacting the obligor to identify income and address barriers to payment through appropriate service referrals. Following the establishment of an order, early intervention involves contacting the obligor to explain the terms of the order and the payment procedures prior to the initiation of automatic wage withholding. Following the first episode of delinquency, early intervention involves contacting the noncustodial parent to determine reasons for non-payment, and taking appropriate steps to collect support.

Early intervention may also involve contact with custodial parents and employers to locate noncustodial parents, ensure that wage withholding orders have been sent to the right payroll office, and identify barriers to payment. The most important aspects of early intervention include setting reasonable, enforceable orders from the outset; promoting voluntary compliance with child support obligations; monitoring cases; and enforcing them swiftly (Legler, 2003).

Interest in early intervention is fueled by data showing that the longer a debt remains unpaid, the less likely it is ever to be paid. According to a survey of members of the Commercial Collection Agency Association, collection probability drops to 73 percent after three months and 57 percent after six months. After one year of non-payment, there is only a 29 percent probability of obtaining a payment (Commercial Collection Agency Association, 2006). The recession has worsened the prospects of collecting past due support. Credit card companies are required to reduce the value of delinquent debts to zero after six months, and experts say that 5 cents on the dollar is now the most a credit card company can hope to get for its past-due accounts (Streitfeld, 2009).

At all stages of case processing, the goal of early intervention is for the child support agency to approach noncustodial parents in a non-threatening manner before any legal action is started. Ideally, the worker verbally explains in an understandable manner the need for child support and the child support process. Next, the worker determines whether unemployment or underemployment are barriers to payment and offers employment and training services so that the noncustodial parent can work and better support himself. The worker might also determine whether parent-child contact is established and make appropriate referrals to community-based agencies and court programs

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offering mediation, and other services to promote access and visitation. If the noncustodial parent's circumstances have changed since the promulgation of the order, the worker would determine whether a review and adjustment is warranted. During the ensuing few months, the worker would monitor payment behavior and assist a parent in meeting his or her obligations. Child support might also contact employers to make sure that they have received legal papers instructing them to garnish wages for child support purposes.

Early intervention is used extensively in Australia and New Zealand. In New Zealand, special teams of workers handle cases during the first 90 days after the order is entered. In Australia, early intervention continues for the first nine months. According to an account of child support practices in Australia and New Zealand (Legler, 2000), the focus in both locations is on achieving an early pattern of compliance. Australian caseworkers are instructed to telephone clients within 10 days after a payment is missed and approach them "sensitively" in order to establish the reason for non-payment. The strategy stems from the belief that the most important payments are the very first ones paid after an order is entered and that the likelihood of regular payment increases with proactive outreach. According to Legler (2000), the child support agency in New Zealand has found that 85 percent of noncustodial parents made the first payment on time if early educational contacts were conducted by the agency. If no contacts were made, the percent making timely payments dropped to 63 percent.

In recent years, there has been increased interest in and use of early intervention techniques in child support agencies in the United States, too. Reflecting an emphasis on prompt, proactive steps to generate timely and consistent payments in the National CSE Strategic Plan for 2005-2009, the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement funded several projects to promote and evaluate the use of early intervention techniques in child support cases. In 2007, OCSE underscored its commitment to early intervention by including the use of these techniques as a key feature of its Project to Avoid Increasing Delinquencies (PAID), a multi-year initiative designed to increase collection of current support and prevent and reduce arrears (DCL-06-06' DCL-07-17). Through a series of updates, guides, and affinity calls, OCSE has focused on disseminating information on recommended activities including the use of user-friendly legal documents and materials that are accessible to low-literacy level and non-English speaking parents; automatic reminders to parents regarding appointments, hearings and responsibilities; and proactive coordination with employment services providers to help unemployed or underemployed noncustodial parents (OCSE, 2003).

Some of the major evaluations of early intervention projects conducted to date are Making Connections, Improving Collections (MCIC) in Iowa (Iowa Bureau of Collections, 2006); Knox County Case Stratification and Early Intervention Project in Tennessee (Policy Studies Inc. 2006); Child Support Outreach Project in Nebraska (Social Sciences Research Center, 2006); and Early

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Intervention in Child Support Cases in Five Jurisdictions (Center for Policy Research, 2007), which included sites in Colorado, Massachusetts, Oregon, Texas, and Wisconsin. All these projects utilized front-end contacts with noncustodial parents, compared cases exposed to early intervention strategies with a comparison group of similar cases that were treated in a traditional manner, and compared the treatment and comparison groups for differences in a variety of outcomes including payments, arrears balances, and enforcement actions.

Although proponents of early intervention have posited many benefits, the findings reached in the CPR project conducted in five jurisdictions, along with the OCSE-funded studies conducted in Tennessee, Iowa, and Nebraska, noted above, suggest that early intervention achieves some, but not all, the goals hoped for by project architects. Key findings from the evaluations of early intervention projects conducted to date are as follows:

- Early intervention was used for different purposes at different sites. While some sites aimed to build a relationship with noncustodial parents and identify and address barriers to payment, others used early intervention techniques to more closely monitor payments following the promulgation of orders, address problems with income assignments, and initiate enforcement actions more quickly than had been done in the past.
- Early intervention involved the use of different techniques in different settings. The rate of success reported by workers for reaching noncustodial parents by telephone ranged from 3 percent in Wisconsin to 68 percent in Nebraska among those with new orders, with specialized call workers in Nebraska reporting that they made an average of 6.44 calls to reach each parent.
- Early intervention workers rarely made referrals to remedial services to address problems with employment and/or parent-child contact. The highest rates of referral occurred in Tennessee, which referred 20 percent of noncustodial parents in early intervention cases to employment services and/or mediation for visitation issues.
- Early intervention workers attempted and achieved telephone contact with custodial parents and employers more frequently than with noncustodial parents. For example, Tennessee workers reached 77 percent of targeted custodial parents, as compared with 46 percent of noncustodial parents.
- Early intervention techniques used prior to the establishment of orders were associated with faster rates of order establishment. Iowa reported that the average number of days from service to order establishment was reduced by over two weeks for establishment cases exposed to early intervention and that these cases had significantly lower rates of default.

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- Early intervention techniques used following order establishment were often associated with the more rapid initiation of enforcement actions. For example, in Wisconsin and Massachusetts, credit bureau reporting was more likely to occur within the first 12 months following order establishment among early intervention cases and Wisconsin cases were more likely to have a contempt action initiated.
- Early intervention techniques were sometimes associated with improvements in child support payments, but the pattern was inconsistent and restricted to certain case types. Only one site in CPR's five-site study (Colorado) showed improvements. Nebraska and Tennessee showed statistically significant improvements in payment following early intervention treatments; however, they tended to be modest and to occur for only some sub-groups. The Nebraska cases that had improved payment patterns consisted of new orders that received both proactive mailings and telephone calls. Tennessee's early intervention cases that were significantly more likely to make any payments consisted of those involving the current receipt of public assistance. At other sites and for other sub-groups there were no statistically significant differences in payment for treatment and comparison cases except in Texas, where payment patterns consistently favored the comparison group.
- Early intervention techniques were rarely associated with improved payments, and lower arrears balances in older cases with delinquencies and benefits appeared to disappear after 12 months. For example, while cases with new orders that were exposed to early intervention in Nebraska had significantly better payment patterns, cases contacted after they became delinquent showed no such benefits. And all payment improvements favoring the treatment group for cases in the CPR evaluation disappeared over time. Indeed, by 24 months following order promulgation, the groups were statistically equivalent at all sites.
- Early intervention techniques were sometimes associated with lower arrears balances, but this tended to occur only during the first year following order establishment and in cases with new orders. For example, in Colorado, average arrears in new cases were \$2,688 in the early intervention group versus \$5,984 in the comparison group.
- Early intervention techniques increased client understanding of child support, the obligation, and enforcement remedies and inspired user satisfaction. Pre-s and post-knowledge surveys in Nebraska with approximately 100 noncustodial parents revealed significant increases in knowledge following the proactive call by workers. Focus groups with 19 noncustodial parents revealed frustration with the bureaucratic and legal nature of child support but appreciation of the personal contact.

Soon after the grant was awarded, Colorado formed an Advisory Committee comprised of child support administrators and staff members at the federal, state, and county levels, along with members of the evaluation team. In initial meetings, the Committee refined the project approach

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and clarified the targeted population. They decided to expand upon other jurisdictions' experiences with early intervention in two ways.

- **Staffing Arrangement:** Rather than rely on specialized staff as was the case in Nebraska (which, like Australia and New Zealand, uses specialized customer service personnel to make outreach calls to new, noncustodial parents within 90 days of the judgment date), Colorado would test whether early intervention strategies could be incorporated into the normal range of activities that typical child support workers are expected to perform and applied within a segment of their regular enforcement caseload. Specifically, general child support workers who handle cases after orders had been established would make front-end contact with noncustodial parents in a non-threatening manner and attempt to improve compliance by communicating with them and being more responsive to their issues and concerns. This was similar to the approach Tennessee and Iowa adopted in their projects when they assigned early intervention and case assessment duties to a wider pool of caseworkers.
- **Case Types:** The Colorado demonstration also tested the efficacy of using early intervention techniques on delinquent cases, as well as on new cases. Most child support agencies like Nebraska, Tennessee, Australia, and New Zealand only use early intervention techniques with new cases. Since child support payments are typically lower among existing cases than new ones, Colorado decided to extend early intervention techniques to newly delinquent cases and older delinquent cases where the noncustodial parent's contact information was available. Nebraska had experimented with using early intervention with older, non-paying cases, as had Iowa, which used proactive outreach with both newly established court orders and older, previously compliant cases that began to miss payments. Evaluations of those two projects found no improvement in payments for older cases exposed to early intervention techniques.

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Chapter 3: Background on Simplified Modification

Order review and modification is another critical component of OCSE's PAID initiative and a key feature of the Colorado demonstration project. Traditional modification processes can be cumbersome and impede the process of correcting orders that do not reflect the current circumstances of the parties. Parents frequently fail to understand when and under what circumstances their order may be reviewed for a possible modification, the written information and forms they need to submit to initiate a review, and how to complete the forms. In the absence of direct communication between the parties, the timeline for review becomes protracted. The problem is compounded by lengthy waiting periods for parties to respond to each notice before the next step can be taken. Finally, the process results in staff inefficiencies when the requesting party withdraws or fails to supply required documentation.

Other states and child support offices share many of Colorado's concerns about the modification process and have attempted to address some of these issues. The consensus appears to be that providing simple and concise information about review and adjustment and simplified forms improves the process. For example, Iowa received about 1,000 more requests in one year when they mailed a pre-stamped postcard that could be returned to initiate a review. In a similar vein, a Colorado demonstration project conducted with incarcerated obligors found that over half of those who were mailed a simple notice explaining that they had the option to modify returned the paperwork needed to initiate a review.

One modification process that was of particular interest for the simplified approach to be used in this project was a procedure developed in Arapahoe County, Colorado. It condenses to 45 days the time from the receipt of the request for review to the date of the ruling or hearing on the motion to modify. Federal regulations provide for a 180-day time frame, and most Colorado counties take up to 120 days to do a modification.

The major difference between Arapahoe County and other Colorado counties is the use of "review conferences," which are scheduled, agency-based meetings with both parents and a child support worker that are similar to settlement conferences used throughout Colorado to establish support orders. Like settlement conferences, the parties are encouraged to reach an agreement in an informal setting. By scheduling and conducting review conferences, Arapahoe County avoids the lengthy process of mailing notices and requests for income information and waiting an additional 30 days for the parties to challenge the results of the review. The Arapahoe process also eliminates court hearings that result from one parent disputing the other parent's information about income, child care costs, the child's health insurance, the amount of physical custody, or another factors considered in the Colorado child support guidelines calculation. The conference allows parents to

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bring income statements and discuss other guideline factors (*e.g.*, the costs of the child's health insurance coverage). The premise is that parents can arrive at a stipulation if they communicate.

Based on the literature dealing with review and adjustment and the Arapahoe County experience, project architects developed a revised modification procedure aimed at increasing request activity and completed modifications among eligible parties, shortening time frames for the review process, and reducing challenges and increasing rates of interparty stipulation between parents. It involved a simpler request form including postcards and Internet forms that could be submitted by email, proactive notification of potentially eligible parties by early intervention workers reviewing cases with delinquencies, a financial affidavit that did not require notarization, and scheduling and conducting an in-person settlement/negotiation conference within 15 to 25 days after a request was received with the goal of facilitating a stipulation between the parties. Both pilot counties also created or used specialized workers to conduct modifications. Prior to the conduct of the project, Denver had distributed review and adjustment duties to all its enforcement workers.

Soon after the project began, the modification landscape in Colorado began to change. CSE authorized the submission of requests for review via the Internet throughout the state, and House Bill 2007-1349 was enacted, which specified that effective calendar year 2008, periodic reviews of orders in public assistance cases would be reinstated and that a party requesting a review must simultaneously supply verification of his or her income and other supporting documentation. The new legislation also shortened the timelines for conducting the review and for challenging the results.

These provisions promised to have a mixed impact. While reinstatement of periodic reviews of orders in public assistance cases might increase review activity, requiring supporting documentation to be supplied along with the request should have the opposite effect but lead to higher completion rates. It is relevant that when South Dakota adopted a similar documentation requirement, the rate of filed requests that resulted in a modification was 80 percent. The comparable percentage in Colorado stands at 50 percent.

Chapter 4: Overview of Project Design

Demonstration Sites

The project was conducted in Denver and Pueblo counties. As Table 1 shows, they differ substantially in size, with Denver's population being four times that of Pueblo's. Although the median family income for Denver female-headed households was nearly twice as high as Pueblo's (\$19,499 versus \$11,990), a higher percentage of families with children under 18 lived below the poverty level in Denver (23.0% versus 21.8%). Nonetheless, relative to the national statistics, both Denver and Pueblo are economically disadvantaged. (The comparative national statistics are median income of \$23,008 among female-headed families and a 7.1 percent poverty rate among all families, *i.e.*, one- and two-parent families.) Another relevant measure is the percentage of households that lack enough money to cover basic living expenses, known as the Self-Sufficiency Standard (Pearce and Brooks, 2004). The percentage of Denver and Pueblo households with incomes that were above poverty but below the self-sufficiency standard in 2004 was 15.2 and 17.3 percent, respectively.

Table 1 also compares child support statistics in Denver and Pueblo counties. With a caseload of about 24,468 and 7,325, respectively, Denver and Pueblo counties rank first and sixth in state caseload size. The combined caseload of Denver and Pueblo constitutes over one-fifth of the entire state's 142,500 cases.

Table 1. Selected Demographics and Annual Child Support Characteristics of Counties Participating in the Colorado Early Intervention Project

	Denver County	Pueblo County
Demographics (2006 data)		
Total population	566,974	152,912
Percentage of families with children under 18 at or below poverty level	23.0%	21.8%
Median family income of single-parent, female householder	\$19,499	\$11,990
Child Support Characteristics (2006 data)		
Open cases	24,468	7,325
Orders established	1,380	606
Orders modified	1,030	421
Paternity establishment percentage	91.9%	95.8%
Caseload with orders	89.6%	83.0%
Percentage of MSO collected	53.7%	58.5%
Percent of arrears cases with payment toward arrears	65.1%	70.6%
Average number of modifications per month	85	35
Actual number of modifications in 2007	1,191	473
Modifications per ordered case per year	5.4%	7.7%

The federal child support performance measures that are most relevant to early intervention and simplified modifications are the percentage of the caseload with orders and the percentage of current monthly support that is paid. Cases with orders are the only ones eligible to be modified.

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Theoretically, support is more likely to be paid when the obligor understands his child support obligations and feels consulted in the process and the order reflects the actual circumstances of the case, including the noncustodial parent's current income. The modification ratio indicates how frequently orders are modified to keep up with changes in parental income and other changes in circumstances. If there are frequent changes in income or other circumstances, the modification ratio should be higher.

With the exception of order establishment activity, Pueblo scored higher than Denver on all key measures of agency performance. Its paternity establishment percentage was 95.8 percent, and it collected 58.5 percent of child support that was due and obtained an arrears payment in 70.6 percent of its cases with arrears. While the number of modifications it completed in 2007 was below the number completed in Denver (472 versus 1,191), its rate of modification was higher and stood at 7.7 percent of its caseload with orders. Denver's rate of modification relative to cases under order was 5.4 percent. Administrators and line staff in Pueblo attribute the large number of modification requests to Pueblo's labor market, where there are frequent layoffs and changes in employment. They also attribute it to widespread knowledge in the community about the modification process.

Project Design

As noted above, the project had two major components: early intervention and simplified modification. Phased in at different points in time, they targeted different types of cases, involved different types of interventions, and utilized different staffing arrangements.

Early Intervention: The early intervention component began in July 2006 and concluded in January 2008. During this time, four enforcement workers in Denver and three in Pueblo agreed to use proactive techniques with the cases in their caseload that met the criteria for inclusion in the project. The only cases that were excluded for possible proactive treatments were initiating interstate cases, foster care cases, cases that lacked a monthly order and only involved the collection of child support arrears, and cases that involved an incarcerated noncustodial parent. Simultaneously, workers handled the non-qualifying cases in their caseload in the conventional manner. Neither agency changed the way cases were allocated to project workers to ensure that they received a larger proportion of cases with new orders, which have been shown in other studies to be most responsive to early intervention treatments. Nor did either agency reduce the overall number of cases that project workers handled to allow them more time for early intervention activities. The goal was to see whether workers who handle a general child support caseload could incorporate proactive outreach efforts in their regular range of activities given their current workload levels and their normal distribution of case types.

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It was up to project workers to identify the cases that qualified for project inclusion, apply the appropriate treatment designed to strengthen relationships with the noncustodial parent and encourage voluntary payment of child support, and keep track of the actions they took and the reactions they generated on standard data collection forms prepared for evaluation purposes. Since each enforcement technician only received one to four new cases per month, it was decided to focus on a broad range of cases handled by these workers. They included cases with new child support orders, cases with existing orders that were new to the child support agency, cases with newly modified orders, previously paying cases that had delinquencies of 45 to 89 days, and older delinquency cases where payments had not been received for at least 90 days and contact information for the noncustodial parent was available.

Enforcement workers were instructed identify new and older delinquency cases by consulting a monthly “Super Report” that lists a worker’s cases and shows pertinent information about each case. By manually scanning the listing, it was possible to identify cases with relevant changes of status. To identify newly delinquent cases, workers were to look for category 1 cases (Colorado’s classification for paying cases) in which there was partial payment and category 2 cases (Colorado’s classification for cases that previously classified category 1 but no payment was received in the last closed accounting period). To identify older delinquency cases, workers were instructed to look for category 3 cases, which means non-paying cases that lack a verified employer but for which there is a home address for the noncustodial parent.

The proactive treatments that workers were told to apply to qualifying cases were designed to promote payments by strengthening relationships, addressing barriers to payment, and enhancing understanding of the child support system and individual responsibilities. A cornerstone of the intervention was a relationship-building telephone call with noncustodial parents to explain the child support order and the child support process, and identify and address barriers to payment through referrals to community services and the possible pursuit of review and adjustment procedures to modify orders. In cases with new delinquencies, the purpose of the telephone call was to alert the parent to the facts that payment had not been received, enforcement actions would start, and barriers to payment might be addressed through referrals and order modifications. Other proscribed interventions included contacts with employers to make sure they had received legal papers instructing them to garnish wages for child support purposes, and contact with custodial parents to inform the parent of the child support process and establish an open line of communication. When phone contact could not be achieved, workers were instructed to mail an introductory letter with relevant brochures.

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A set of standard call scripts, letters, and other mailed materials for targeted groups was developed and distributed to the enforcement workers who were applying early intervention techniques in their caseload. They are attached as Appendix A to this report.

Simplified Modification: The simplified modification process was developed by late 2006 and adopted for use in Denver and Pueblo counties by March 2007. Both counties assigned the modification function to a specialized set of workers and after March 2007, both counties used the simplified approach with all modification cases with the exception of interstate and foster care matters. The process was developed by the CSE policy specialists in consultation with Denver and Pueblo county CSE administrators, child support attorneys, judges, mediators and others. In January and February 2007, CSE policy specialists trained the specialized modification teams in Denver and Pueblo counties on the simplified approach. The evaluator developed data collection forms to track modifications undertaken using the simplified approach and trained staff in Denver and Pueblo counties on their use.

The key elements of the process developed for the project involved the use of simplified materials about review and adjustment, a simplified request form including an easy-to-return postcard, a simplified financial affidavit that did not require notarization, and reviewing requests and scheduling and conducting an in-person settlement conference within 15 to 25 days following the receipt of a request. The review terminated if the requesting party did not appear for the settlement conference and the criterion for order modification remained a change of at least 10 percent between the new and current order. Although parents retained the right to challenge one another regarding mathematical or factual errors in the calculation of the new child support guideline and to resolve their disagreements in court using the regular modification process, a key purpose of the in-person settlement conference was to enable parents to communicate with one another and reach an agreement concerning the modification.

The brochure explaining modification lists a variety of changes that might warrant an order modification including an increase or decrease in either parent's income, a change in health insurance coverage for a child, an increase or decrease in child care or uninsured medical expenses, a court-ordered or court-approved change in the number of overnights either parent has with the children, and/or legal emancipation of the child. The postcard with a request for review presents a variety of reasons to seek an order change that the applicant simply checks. These materials, along with a letter explaining the settlement conference and the simplified financial statement, appear as Appendix B to this report.

Table 2. Summary of Staffing Arrangements, Case Types, and Interventions for the Early Intervention and Simplified Modification Components of the Colorado Project

Project Component and (Dates of Operation)	Early Intervention (July 2006 to January 2008)
Staffing Arrangement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regular enforcement workers (4 in Denver, 3 in Pueblo) with a full caseload of 350-600 ▪ Instructed to identify appropriate cases and apply designated treatments
Case Types Targeted/Excluded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cases with new child support orders sent to enforcement by the establishment or intake unit ▪ Cases with existing child support orders that were new to the child support agency referred to enforcement by the establishment or intake unit ▪ Cases with newly modified orders sent to establishment by the specialized modification unit ▪ Newly delinquent cases where payment was 45 to 89 days past due identified on monthly "Super Reports" ▪ Older delinquency cases with payments past due for at least 90 days with noncustodial parent (NCP) contact information ▪ Excluded initiating interstate, foster care and arrears-only cases as well as those that involved an incarcerated NCP
Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attempt to make conduct a relationship-building call with NCPs to explain orders and/or notify of non-payment, explore reasons, and explain enforcement remedies or modification option ▪ Attempt to make personal contact with custodial parent (CP) using telephone calls and/or in person meetings to obtain NCP contact information ▪ Telephone contact with employers to review wage withholding ▪ Referring NCPs with identified barriers to payment to community services ▪ Thank-you letters and cards mailed to paying NCPs ▪ Payment monitoring and rapid initiation of enforcement actions ▪ Mailed letters to NCPs who could not be reached by telephone
Simplified Modification (March 2007 to June 2008)	
Staffing Arrangement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Specialized team of enforcement workers who handle review and adjustment cases for the whole agency
Case Types Targeted/Excluded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All modification cases in Denver and Pueblo Counties processed after March 2007 ▪ Excluded interstate and foster care cases ▪ Special interest in receiving cases from early intervention workers in Denver and Pueblo counties, especially recent non-payment cases and older cases new to IV-D where NCPs indicate a change of circumstances that might warrant a review and adjustment
Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mail parents a postcard that can be returned to initiate a request for review and adjustment ▪ Mail parents a simplified brochure that outlines the changes that might give rise to the need for a review and adjustment and the process of making application ▪ Send both parents a notice of a settlement conference within 15 to 30 days of a request ▪ Send both parents a simplified financial statement that eliminates the need for notarization ▪ Conduct settlement conference with both parents lasting an estimated 45 to 60 minutes ▪ Conduct guidelines calculation to determine if 10% threshold for change has been reached ▪ Review guidelines calculation with parties and seek a stipulation ▪ Terminate review if requesting party does not show ▪ Initiate a motion to modify and notice non-requesting party of right to object if non-requesting party fails to show ▪ Revert to a regular modification if parties unable to reach agreement ▪ Mailed letters to NCPs who could not be reached by telephone.

Chapter 5: Project Evaluation

The objective of the evaluation of the Colorado demonstration project was to answer a variety of questions, including the following:

- Which early intervention strategies do child support workers attempt to use with noncustodial parents and how effective are they in making contact?
- Which proactive outreach strategies do they attempt to use with custodial parents and employers in various types of child support cases and how effective are they in making contact?
- What types of information do workers learn and what actions do they take as a result of proactive outreach with noncustodial and custodial parents and employers?
- How effective is the simplified modification approach in stimulating requests for review and adjustment, reducing time frames associated with the review process, increasing the rate of completed application requests, and generating agreements between the parties?
- Is the simplified modification approach more apt to result in orders that are lower or higher than original orders?
- What challenges and benefits are associated with the introduction and use of simplified modification procedures?
- How effective are early intervention strategies and simplified modification procedures in promoting regular payment of child support?
- Are payment outcomes better in certain types of cases or at certain stages of case processing?
- Do noncustodial parents who are exposed to enhanced outreach strategies and simplified procedures appreciate these efforts and do they translate into improved understanding of the child support system and personal obligations?
- Do enhanced outreach strategies and simplified modification procedures improve the image of the child support agency among noncustodial parents?
- What challenges and benefits do workers perceive to the use of early intervention in their caseload?

To answer these questions, CPR conducted an evaluation that had both quantitative and qualitative components that included the following:

- Identification of cases in both counties that were exposed to project and normal treatments.

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- Generation of information on the actions taken by child support workers in project cases targeted for proactive and simplified modification procedures and immediate outcomes associated with these actions.
- Assessment of project cases and comparable cases exposed to normal treatments on a variety of longer-term outcomes including child support payments, arrears balances, and enforcement actions.
- Telephone interviews with a group of noncustodial parents who were targeted for early intervention and simplified modification procedures to determine whether they recalled these interventions, their reactions to them, their perceived impact on payment behaviors, and their perceptions of the child support agency.
- Focus groups with workers who participated in the project to determine the perceived benefits and limitations to the use of early intervention and simplified modification procedures in their caseload.

These components are discussed in greater detail below.

Generating Groups of Treatment and Non-Treatment Cases

Early Intervention: Cases targeted for early intervention treatment were drawn from the regular caseload maintained by four enforcement workers in Denver County and three enforcement workers in Pueblo County during July 2006 through January 31, 2008. Workers who were assigned to the project agreed to identify cases in their regular caseload that met the criteria for inclusion in the project and to attempt to apply relevant proactive techniques. Once they flagged these cases, they kept track of them on manual data collection forms designed by CPR. Project workers were instructed to select for early intervention treatment at least 25 cases per month from their regular caseload. The cases were drawn from the following categories: new child support orders, existing child support orders that were new to the child support agency, newly modified orders, newly delinquent cases, and older delinquent cases.

Because the seven project workers used all the new and newly modified orders in their caseload for early intervention treatments, it was impossible to use a true experimental design and randomly assign cases for early intervention and conventional treatments. Instead, CPR pursued a quasi-experimental design that compares matched comparison groups. While widely used in program evaluation research, quasi-experimental designs suffer threats to internal validity, the chief one being the lack of equivalence of the groups being compared. Indeed, it is only valid to conclude that any observed differences in outcome can be attributed to the treatment if the groups are truly comparable in observable ways.

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The group of non-treatment cases was generated in an automated fashion by computer programmers with the Colorado's Automated Child Support Enforcement System (ACSES). To create the comparison group, they identified cases processed by non-project workers in Denver and Pueblo counties during calendar year 2007. Since cases in both counties are assigned to workers based on randomly-assigned household numbers, there was no obvious bias in the types of cases handled by workers in the treatment and comparison groups.

To better match the cases in the treatment and comparison groups, ACSES programmers eliminated from the pool of potential comparison group cases all the case types that project workers eliminated for early intervention treatment. Thus, both groups were stripped of interstate cases, cases involving incarcerated obligors, foster care cases, and cases that lacked a current support obligation and only involved the collection of child support arrears. They attempted to construct a comparison group comprised of the major types of cases targeted by early intervention workers: newly established child support orders, cases with existing orders that were new to the child support agency, cases with newly modified orders, and cases with delinquencies of newer and older vintage.

Ultimately, ACSES programmers identified 5,825 cases processed in 2007 by regular enforcement workers in Denver and Pueblo counties who were not asked to use proactive outreach efforts. When all cases with \$0 orders were eliminated, the number of cases available for selection into the comparison group dropped to 2,949. The number of project cases using early intervention techniques that was subject to analysis totaled 1,251.

Simplified Modification: The group of cases handled using simplified modification procedures consisted of *all* cases in which a request to review had been received from March 2007 through June 2008. The only modification cases in Denver and Pueblo counties that were not processed using simplified approaches were foster care and interstate matters. The treatment group subject to analysis consisted of child support cases for 1,015 noncustodial parents involved with modification requests processed using a simplified approach.

As with the early intervention assessment, the comparison group was generated in an automated fashion by computer programmers with Colorado's ACSES. Since all modifications after March 2007 in both counties were processed using simplified techniques, the sample of cases processed using older, conventional modification approaches was drawn from modification requests filed in Denver and Pueblo counties in 2006. To match the treatment group, programmers eliminated foster care and interstate matters. They utilized the number of resulting modification requests filed in 2006 to generate a comparison group consisting of child support cases for 1,216 noncustodial parents who pursued modifications using conventional procedures.

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Information on Actions and Immediate Outcomes in Treatment Cases

Early Intervention: Workers assigned to the early intervention project kept track of the cases they enrolled in the project and the actions they took in their attempt to make contact with noncustodial parents, custodial parents, and employers. Since these activities are not explicit fields on the automated child support system and might not be recorded at all or only in a narrative fashion, workers were required to complete a manual data collection form for each case in the project. On each form, they recorded some information about the case and when it was enrolled in the project. They also were asked to keep track of all contact activities with parties in the case, including mailings, attempts to telephone, actual telephone calls, and in-person meetings. To assess immediate outcomes of these contact efforts, workers were asked to note whether their interactions had led to referrals for various types of services, the initiation of enforcement actions, review and adjustment activities, and/or the acquisition of useful information on employment and earnings. Finally, workers were asked to give assessments of a more subjective and qualitative nature including negative interactions and/or evidence of resistance to the child support system.

One threat to the validity of the study was the lack of cross-worker standardization. Although project workers were instructed on how to select cases for project treatments and given standard scripts and materials to use when making various types of proactive outreach efforts, they may well have used different criteria for case selection, especially when it came to choosing newer and older delinquency cases that merited early intervention treatments. They also exercised discretion in the number and types of outreach efforts they made. Finally, despite the development of a uniform data collection form, the development and maintenance of a centralized system for inputting and monitoring data collection, and the use of various quality comparison procedures, there were demonstrable differences in the quality of data collection and documentation performed by the various workers.

A copy of the data collection form that workers maintained on cases selected for early intervention treatment appears in Appendix C.

Simplified Modification: Workers who handled modification actions in Denver and Pueblo counties kept track of all the cases they processed in 2007 and 2008 using simplified procedures. They provided information on requests for modification, including the requesting party, the date the request was received, and the reason for the request. They noted the amount of the original order and whether a settlement conference was scheduled. If a settlement conference was held, they recorded a variety of information about it, including the parties who attended; topics that were discussed, including issues pertaining to income, health insurance, and visitation; and the outcome of the settlement conference, including agreed new orders, terminations, referrals to mediation, and/or motions filed with the court. A copy of the data collection form that workers maintained on cases processed using simplified modification procedures appears in Appendix D.

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Longer-Term Outcomes on Payments, Arrears, and Enforcement Actions

Early Intervention: In addition to identifying a sample of cases handled using conventional approaches, computer programmers at the Colorado ACSES generated an automated extract consisting of information on cases targeted for early intervention treatment as well as cases flagged for the comparison group. For both groups of cases, they provided case-specific information on the percentage of monthly support paid in the 18 months prior to and following selection into the treatment or comparison group. Similar pre- and post-selection information was generated on arrears balances and evidence of enforcement actions, including driver's license suspensions or contempt actions. In addition to this outcome information, programmers extracted selected information on the characteristics of cases in the comparison group. The extract included information on case type and stage of case processing. Programmers noted whether the order was established by stipulation, default, or through a contested action in the court; the public assistance status of the children in the case; and the monthly support order and arrears balance in 2007, a time period that preceded selection of the case into the comparison group for the project.

Simplified Modification: Computer programmers at the Colorado ACSES also generated an automated extract on cases processed in 2007 and 2008 using simplified procedures and a comparable sample of modification cases processed in 2006 using conventional modification procedures. For both groups of cases, they provided information on the public assistance status of the children, the method by which original orders were established, the date of the original order and its level, the party requesting a modification, the date that the modification request was filed, the completion status of the modification request and whether it was terminated, the percent of requests that resulted in a stipulation and those that were referred to the court because the parties failed to stipulate, the modified order level, the days that elapsed between filing a request and court approval of the modification, and the percentage of current monthly support paid in the 18 months prior to and following the filing of the request to modify.

User Reactions to Early Intervention and Simplified Modification

Early Intervention: To gauge user reactions to early intervention techniques, a follow-up telephone survey was conducted with 182 noncustodial parents in the treatment group. The evaluation contractor developed a close-ended, fixed-choice questionnaire for this purpose, a copy of which appears in Appendix C. Respondents were asked whether they recalled receiving telephone calls from child support workers and their utility. Respondents were also asked to assess changes in their child support payment behavior and the factors that might explain non-payment, such as unemployment, disability, or new financial obligations. Finally, respondents were asked a few demographic questions and items on the perceived fairness of the child support worker and the impartiality of the agency.

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The interviews were conducted by professional telephone interviewers at the Public Option Laboratory (POL) of Northern Illinois University, using its computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system. POL has conducted many prior telephone surveys with child support populations and is familiar with child support terminology and challenges associated with trying to reach custodial and noncustodial parents in the child support system. All respondents received a \$20 gift certificate from a popular grocery chain. Those who could not be reached by telephone were sent a postcard reminding them about the \$20 incentive and inviting them to phone POL using its toll-free number.

Simplified Modification: A similar set of interviews was conducted with 180 noncustodial parents whose modification cases were processed using simplified techniques. The questionnaire instrument designed by CPR appears in Appendix D. It was close-ended and fixed-choice, and the interviews were conducted by professional telephone interviews at the Public Option Laboratory (POL) of Northern Illinois University. Respondents were asked whether they recalled filing a request to change their child support order, reactions to the application process and the financial documentation requirements, experiences with the negotiation conference, reasons why a respondent might have missed the negotiation conference, and changes in the order (if any) as a result of the modification request. Respondents were asked to estimate the percentage of child support that they currently pay and the reasons why they might not make full and timely payments. The interview concluded with a few demographic questions and items dealing with the perceived fairness of the child support worker and the agency.

Focus Groups with Workers

A final component of the evaluation was compiling information on worker reactions to early intervention and simplified modification procedures. This information was obtained through focus groups conducted with line staff and workers at each site.

Early Intervention: Early intervention workers, their supervisors, and the agency administrator in Denver and Pueblo counties were asked to assess the types of cases that were most responsive to proactive outreach efforts. Another topic of conversation dealt with the pros and cons of various staffing strategies, including the advisability of using specialized versus general staff to make outreach calls. A third topic of conversation dealt with the effectiveness of various outreach approaches such as introductory letters, telephone calls, and referrals for services. Finally, workers were asked to discuss the utility of early intervention in child support cases and its impact on noncustodial parents and future payment behaviors. They also suggested ways to make early outreach more effective and improve payment outcomes.

Simplified Modification: Modification workers, their supervisors, and the agency administrator in Denver and Pueblo counties were asked to discuss the effectiveness of simplified modification procedures. They were questioned specifically about the utility of the face-to-face negotiation

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conference introduced as part of the simplified procedure. Another topic of discussion was the modification request form and the new financial statements. Workers were asked to discuss outcomes of conferences and modifications and the factors associated with positive versus negative outcomes. They assessed the types of populations that apply for modification and the differences across the counties. Finally, they reviewed measures that might be taken to improve the effectiveness of simplified modification procedures and methods of promoting agreement-making behaviors and subsequent positive payment behaviors.

Chapter 6: Project Implementation

Field operations for the component of the project dealing with early intervention began in mid-July 2006. Workers in Denver and Pueblo counties began using simplified modification procedures on a routine basis by March 2007. New, early intervention cases were accepted through January 31, 2008, and were followed through June 2008. New cases using simplified modification procedures were accepted until June 30, 2008, and were followed through September 30, 2008.

Low case volume was identified as an issue within a few short months after the project became operational. The following discusses implementation of both project components and the measures taken to increase case volume.

Early Intervention: One of the key challenges to project implementation was generating an adequate number of cases for treatment using early intervention techniques. At the beginning of the project, workers enrolled an average of only five cases per month. An investigation by CPR of the barriers to case enrollment indicated that workers were having trouble identifying cases in their large caseloads that were suitable for early intervention treatment. While it was relatively easy for them to flag new orders and new cases, it was more difficult to identify delinquency cases of both new and older duration. To remedy the problem, CSE personnel conducted additional training with line workers. They were encouraged to use a new tool, the Super Report, to identify cases with delinquencies of various lengths. The report is a complete listing of cases in a worker's caseload that shows payment performance. Although it contains all the information needed to flag recent and older delinquency cases, it must be reviewed manually.

Another perceived barrier to identifying cases suitable for early intervention treatments was the simultaneous duties associated with carrying a regular enforcement caseload of 350 to 650 cases. Workers viewed early intervention as an additional task to perform on top of the everyday activities of managing their existing caseload. It took extra time to identify early intervention cases, conduct early intervention practices, and record information. Workers reported that relationship-building telephone calls were time consuming, typically taking 20 minutes. They viewed the data collection form required for the evaluation as onerous. They felt that other caseload demands (*e.g.*, calendar reviews, new information provided by new hire reporting or custodial parents) absorbed the bulk of their time.

Once again, project architects and CPR staff met with administrators and workers in Denver and Pueblo to reiterate the fundamental purpose of early intervention and motivate staff to use these strategies. CPR also met with workers individually to review how data collection forms could be completed more expeditiously. While support for the early intervention techniques grew as workers saw their personal performance statistics improve, the initial hesitancy among some workers to

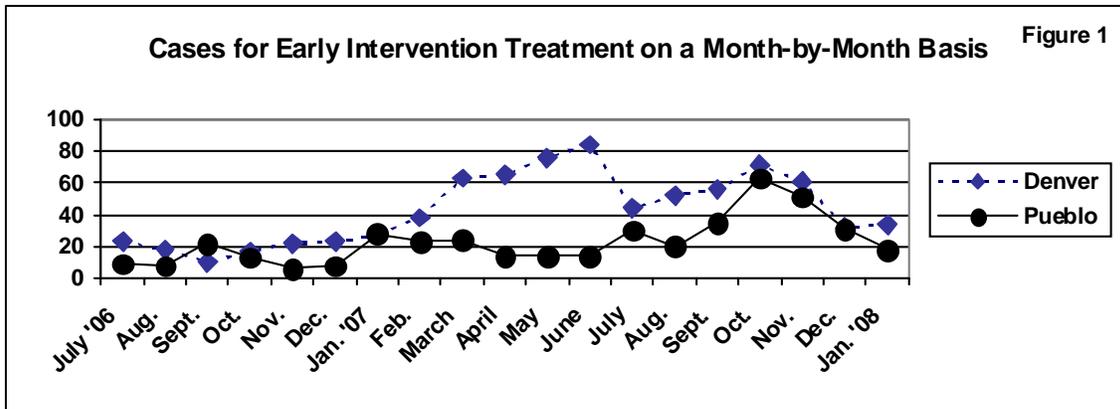
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transition from the use of primarily punitive enforcement techniques to the proactive, customer-service oriented techniques of early intervention was not entirely overcome.

A third barrier to selection of cases for early intervention was worker turnover at both sites. For example, one of the four Denver technicians assigned to the project in July 2006 left in March 2007. One of Pueblo’s three project technicians left in February 2007 and was not replaced and trained until late May 2007. The counts were also depressed by the learning curve new workers faced as they become familiar with the project, case selection criteria, and the interventions.

To contend with all of the above-noted problems, the Advisory Committee established an expectation that each project worker would generate a minimum of 25 cases per month. The numerical quota was formally adopted in March 2007, and evaluators began to regularly monitor the performance of each worker.

Figure 1 shows the number of cases early intervention workers identified and opened each month from the inception of case enrollment in July 2006 to its conclusion on January 31, 2008. Ultimately, 1,250 cases were handled by project workers using early intervention techniques. This was an average of 65.8 cases per month over the 19-month project, or 9.4 cases per month for each of the seven project workers.

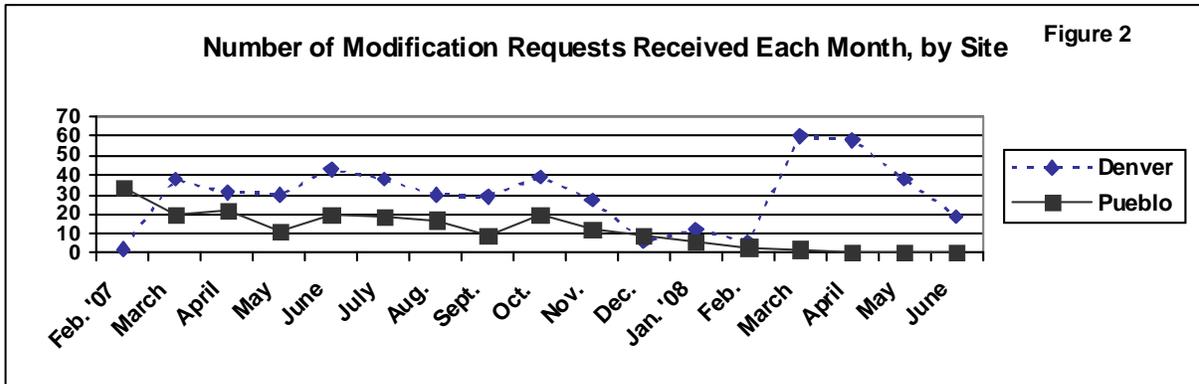


Simplified Modification: Approximately 75 modification requests were processed each month using simplified techniques across the two counties, for a total of 1,367 cases (1,145 in Denver and 222 in Pueblo) during the 16 month enrollment period. The biggest implementation challenge encountered in the project was collecting accurate data on the disposition of cases with modification requests. Workers often neglected to record on paper forms the date that the request for modification was made. Other items that were frequently missing was the public assistance status of the children, the employment status of the requesting party, and whether the child support worker

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helped the parties to complete required financial statements at the review conference. As with staffing for the early intervention component, there was a fairly high rate of turnover among workers assigned to the project.

Figure 2 shows the number of cases each county processed using simplified modification procedures from the inception of case enrollment in March 2007 to its conclusion on June 30, 2008.



Chapter 7: Using Early Intervention Strategies

The goal of early intervention in the Colorado project was to establish positive payment behaviors in new child support cases and/or take immediate steps to restart payments if they were missed. To accomplish this, workers were instructed to make proactive telephone calls to noncustodial parents in a wide range of child support cases. In brand-new cases, the purpose of the call was to establish a relationship with the noncustodial parent. In cases with a missed payment, the purpose of the call was to establish the reason for non-payment and attempt to resolve the problem. In cases with persistent non-payment, the purpose of the call was to explore whether a modification was needed and/or to initiate enforcement actions. Project architects felt that voluntary payment activity would be best promoted by treating noncustodial parents in a customer-friendly manner and informing them about their responsibilities and the consequences of non-payment in an understandable manner.

This chapter examines the actions that workers actually attempted and accomplished in cases targeted for early intervention and the immediate responses and types of information they yielded. First, we consider characteristics of cases selected for intervention and worker action patterns for Denver and Pueblo counties separately. Finally, we examine action and immediate outcome patterns for various types of child support cases.

Characteristics of Cases Targeted for Early Intervention

Table 3 shows that most cases (68%) entered the Colorado project as either a new or an older delinquent case. This comes close to approximating the average percentage of non-paying cases in any given worker's caseload. Only 13 percent of the cases in the project (15% in Denver and 10% in Pueblo) involved new orders and were "fresh" to the child support system. Small and similar percentages of project cases had existing orders but were new to the child support system (11%) or had newly modified orders (11%).

Denver orders were significantly more likely to be established using judicial procedures, whereas Pueblo orders were more likely to be established through an administrative process. Similarly, orders were typically entered through stipulation in Pueblo, while Denver reported a large number of orders (29%) entered by "Other" methods. According to workers, "Other" typically means that an order had been entered following a trial, which is consistent with a case entering the child support enforcement system after the order was established privately. Across the two project sites, 17 percent of orders were established without the participation of the noncustodial parent in any administrative or judicial setting. The incidence of default orders was significantly higher in Denver County as compared with Pueblo (22% versus 9%).

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As intended, most project cases were intrastate matters where both parents lived within Colorado. A small percentage (4%) involved responding, interstate cases. Nearly half of project cases in Denver (49%) had formerly involved the receipt of public assistance, and an additional 13 percent were current recipients. In Pueblo, the largest share of cases (49%) had never received public assistance and an additional 14 percent were Medicaid-only cases.

Overall, Denver cases appeared to involve more disadvantaged families when they entered the project, as evidenced by the higher rates of current and past receipt of public assistance. In addition, noncustodial parents in the Denver cases appeared to be less involved in the child support agency's actions, as evidenced by their higher use of court and default procedures to establish orders (51% versus 12%).

Table 3. Case Characteristics²			
	Denver (n=817)	Pueblo (n=433)	Total (n=1,250)
★Case type at project entry			
Case with new order	15%	10%	13%
New case with existing order	11%	11%	11%
Newly modified order	8%	8%	8%
Newly delinquent order	27%	20%	25%
Older delinquent order	39%	50%	43%
Interstate status			
Intrastate	94%	95%	95%
Interstate, responding	5%	4%	4%
Direct/interstate wage assign	1%	1%	1%
Marital status			
Never married	74%	72%	73%
Married	4%	5%	4%
Divorced	22%	22%	22%
★Public assistance status			
Current TANF	13%	8%	11%
Former TANF	49%	29%	42%
Never TANF	34%	49%	39%
Medicaid only	5%	14%	8%
★Order establishment process			
Administrative	52%	79%	61%
Judicial	49%	21%	39%
★Order entry method			
Stipulation	49%	86%	62%
Default	22%	9%	17%
Contested	1%	2%	1%
Other	28%	3%	20%
★Differences between counties are significant at .05 or less.			

² Sample size is based on the number of unique NCPs. In instances where an NCP had multiple cases or his case cycled through the program a second time, only the first case is used in the analysis. This is true of all subsequent tables unless otherwise stated.

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Table 4 shows that monthly support orders ranged from \$5 to \$1,397 per month, with the average order for project cases being just under \$300 a month. Despite this wide range, half of project cases at both sites had monthly support orders that fell below \$250. The percentage of project cases with minimum orders of \$50 or less was 6 and 7 percent in Denver and Pueblo, respectively. Only 9 percent of noncustodial parents entered the project with no arrears balance. For those who did have arrears balances, the mean was nearly \$10,000 (\$9,974) and the median was approximately nearly \$5,000 (\$4,877). Average arrears balances were significantly higher among noncustodial parents in Denver County and were \$11,094, as compared with \$7,917 in Pueblo.

The true level of indebtedness that many noncustodial parents faced only became apparent when all their child support cases were considered. On average, each noncustodial parent in the project had 1.3 child support cases and owed a total of nearly \$15,000 in past-due child support (\$17,212 in Denver and \$10,291 in Pueblo). On average, noncustodial parents had not made a child support payment in nearly 10 months (9.5) when they were enrolled in the project and exposed to proactive outreach efforts. The amount of time elapsing since their last payment, however, was very broad and ranged from one to 174 months (14.5 years). On the other hand, the median number of months since the last child support payment was only three, indicating that half of all cases targeted for early intervention had fairly up-to-date payment records and were only delinquent by three months.

Early intervention is usually viewed as a preventive intervention aimed at establishing a positive payment pattern where none has developed. While the overwhelming majority (91%) of noncustodial parents in project cases had established payment patterns and substantial arrearages, approximately half had made a payment within two months prior to their identification for the early intervention project and their exposure to proactive outreach techniques.

Table 4. Current Support Order Characteristics

	Denver	Pueblo	Total
Current monthly support amount (MSO)			
Mean	\$300	\$269	\$289
Median	\$264	\$216	\$246
Range	\$5-\$1,338	\$25-\$1,397	\$5-\$1,397
Number	(812)	(433)	(1,245)
Percentage of cases with minimum order of \$50 or less	6%	7%	6%
Monthly arrears payment (MAD)			
Mean	\$49	\$30	\$42
Median	\$40	\$20	\$33
Range	\$1-\$457	\$1-\$176	\$1-\$457
Number	(724)	(401)	(1,125)
Arrears			
Percentage of cases with \$0 arrears balance	10%	8%	9%
Of those with arrears greater than \$0			
Mean	\$11,094	\$7,917	\$9,974
Median	\$5,699	\$3,604	\$4,877
Range	\$3-\$193,535	\$9-\$86,485	\$3-\$193,535
Number	(734)	(400)	(1,134)
Average number of cases NCP has on ACSES			
Number	1.35 (808)	1.31 (432)	1.34 (1,240)
Average arrears balance owed on all cases			
Number	\$17,212 (739)	\$10,291 (402)	\$14,774 (1,141)
Number of months since last payment made on case			
Mean	9.1	10.1	9.5
Median	3.0	3.0	3.0
Range	1-79	1-174	1-174
Number	(451)	(246)	(697)
Average amount of last payment made on the case			
Number	\$416 (635)	\$155 (373)	\$320 (1,008)

Actions Taken by Workers with Noncustodial Parents

Telephone Calls: Early intervention workers were instructed to conduct telephone calls with targeted noncustodial parents. The goal of the call was to attempt to build a relationship, explain the child support obligation that the parents faced, explore barriers to nonpayment, provide appropriate referrals, answer questions, and describe the range of enforcement actions the agency would take if payments were not forthcoming.

Table 5 examines whether workers were able to conduct up-front telephone calls with noncustodial parents in targeted cases. It shows that across the two sites, workers attempted to contact noncustodial parents in 66 percent of the cases targeted for proactive outreach, and were successful in reaching about half (52% of all cases). There were some significant differences in outreach efforts by county, with Denver workers reporting a significantly higher proportion of telephone attempts than Pueblo workers (68% versus 63%). On the other hand, Pueblo workers reported somewhat more success than Denver workers did in actually reaching noncustodial parents and speaking with them by telephone (56% versus 50%).

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Workers in both counties routinely mailed materials to targeted noncustodial parents, with this occurring in nearly three-quarters (72%) of cases targeted for early intervention. While mailed materials were viewed as helpful follow-ups to in-person and/or telephone contacts, they were not considered by workers or project architects to be effective substitutes. On the other hand, telephone disconnections and/or answer machines frequently made it impossible for workers to achieve telephone contact. In both counties, in-person meetings with noncustodial parents were rare and occurred in only 6 percent of cases.

The rates of attempted and successful contact with noncustodial parents for Denver and Pueblo counties are higher than those reported in some other early intervention projects, but not as high as others. For example, workers in early intervention projects in Texas, Tennessee, and Nebraska reported reaching noncustodial parents in 14, 46, and 68 percent of targeted cases, respectively (Center for Policy Research, 2007).

According to automated call records maintained in Nebraska, the site with the highest rate of telephone contact, achieving telephone contact with noncustodial parents requires a very substantial effort. Specialized call center workers in Nebraska made 6.44 calls to reach each parent in the full sample of cases targeted for early intervention and 8.5 attempts to reach delinquent obligors. In addition to phoning during regular business hours, they made telephone calls during evening and weekend hours (Social Sciences Research Center, 2006). Although early intervention workers in Denver and Pueblo did not keep detailed records of the number of telephone calls they placed with each targeted noncustodial parent, they indicated the incidence of multiple telephone attempts. An analysis of these records revealed that workers made multiple attempts to reach noncustodial parents in 24 percent of cases, with an average of 1.5 phone attempts per case.

Table 5. Actions Taken/Attempted with NCPs Targeted for Early Intervention, by County

During the time the case was open at early intervention, worker reports	Denver (n=799)	Pueblo (n=396)	Total (n=1,195)
Sent a letter, brochure, or postcard to NCP	73%	68%	72%
★ Attempted to contact NCP by phone	68%	63%	66%
Spoke with NCP by phone	50%	56%	52%
Met with NCP in person	6%	5%	6%

★ Chi square is significant between sites at .09 or less.

Identifying Problems and Making Referrals: One believed benefit of making direct contact with noncustodial parents is the ability to identify problems with employment and parenting time and to make appropriate referrals for services in the community. Table 6 suggests that while 60 percent of the noncustodial parents in cases targeted for early intervention entered the project without a verified employer (suggesting a lack of stable employment) and 28 percent were classified as unemployed at program enrollment, workers rarely referred them for job services. Across the two

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counties, workers reported making referrals for community-based services dealing with employment and visitation in only 3 percent of the cases.

It is difficult to determine whether workers failed to make referrals or simply neglected to note these activities on their data collection forms. For example, one Denver worker reported that many of the noncustodial parents she contacted were between jobs or self-employed (*e.g.*, lawn care services), and would not necessarily benefit from typical job services. A Pueblo worker also reported that she usually referred the noncustodial parent to employers in the community known to be hiring (*e.g.*, local restaurants) rather than to a job services program and would not record this activity on the data collection form. On the other hand, workers in both agencies reported being frustrated with the limited number of job options available for many noncustodial parents. Although the workforce program was perceived to “help,” most workers felt that “there are simply no jobs” or that noncustodial parents lacked the training to do the jobs that were available. They recommended that job training opportunities be expanded and that surplus TANF funds be used for this purpose. In April 2009, the Colorado legislature passed Senate Bill 09-100, which allows counties to use TANF funds to support job counseling and training services for noncustodial parents regardless of whether his or her child is receiving public assistance under the Colorado Works program.

Workers were also ambivalent about probing for visitation problems and making referrals. For example, one worker explained that she does not press parents about visitation because if she did, “they would all say they have access issues.” Instead, her approach is to let the parent volunteer the information. Other workers said that they were uncomfortable discussing visitation because they lacked the authority to get involved with these issues and neither county had adequate mediation resources. Still others were frustrated by their lack of training on access and visitation. As one worker put it, “We need knowledge on those issues. I don’t like to talk about it because I don’t know what to say.”

This pattern is consistent with those observed in other early intervention projects. Despite the fact that Tennessee attempted to promote referral activity in its early intervention project by developing a directory of services dealing with employment and access and visitation, and placing it on a shared drive for all caseworkers to utilize, only 44 referrals were made in the 175 cases targeted for early intervention (36 noncustodial parents and eight custodial parents). This represents 20 percent of noncustodial parents in the project. All were for employment services and/or mediation for visitation services.

Table 6. Employment and Location Issues Identified by Workers in Cases Targeted for Early Intervention, by County

During the time the case was open for early intervention, worker reports	Denver (n=818)	Pueblo (n=433)	Total (n=1,251)
★ There was a verified employer	36%	43%	39%
There was a verified address	81%	77%	80%
★ NCP was unemployed	22%	38%	28%
★ NCP could not be located	7%	13%	9%

★ Chi square is significant between sites at .09 or less

Other Actions: Table 7 shows that workers reported initiating an enforcement action, typically an expedited contempt procedure or driver’s license suspension, in 9 percent of the cases. In approximately 5 percent of project cases, they discussed the possibility of modifying a child support order and/or referred the noncustodial parent to a worker to begin the review and adjustment process. In 13 percent of cases in Denver and 9 percent of cases in Pueblo, workers sent noncustodial parents who made complete child support payments for three months a postcard expressing thanks. In 16 percent of cases, workers reported using a paid website, ACCURINT, to obtain new contact information for noncustodial parents.

It is not clear why so few cases were deemed by workers to be suitable for a review and adjustment and/or an immediate enforcement action. As with other actions, it is unclear whether these figures represented the true level of need identified by workers or reporting failures on data collection forms. As for thank-you letters to paying parents, workers felt that parents appreciated these gestures, but that they lacked the time to write and address them personally because they were typically “too busy putting out fires” and dealing with non-payers. Although locating noncustodial parents was a problem, especially in older cases that had accumulated delinquencies, ACCURINT proved not to be a good resource and most workers concluded that “it wasn’t a useful tool.” While ACCURINT does have cell phone listings, agencies are charged for each contact number. Several workers reported that it would help if they had free access to cell phone listings. As has always been the case, workers found custodial parents to be the best source of contact information for noncustodial parents. In addition to obtaining contact information, Pueblo workers find that establishing a relationship with the custodial parent pays off because once contacted, she tends to “call all the time.”

Table 7. Child Support Actions Workers Reported Taking in Cases Targeted for Early Intervention, by County

During the time the case was open for early intervention, worker reports	Denver (n=817)	Pueblo (n=433)	Total (n=1,250)
Used ACCURINT to try to find new locate information	17% (141)	15% (63)	16% (204)
Filed a contempt action	9% (71)	8% (36)	9% (107)
Mailed a notice of opportunity to modify	5% (37)	6% (28)	5% (65)
Sent thank-you card for 3 months of payments	13% (108)	9% (37)	12% (145)

★ Chi square is significant between sites at .05 or less.

Actions Taken with Custodial Parents and Employers

Although the primary goal of the project was to have workers establish contact with noncustodial parents and build positive relationships with them, workers were also instructed to attempt to communicate with custodial parents and employers. The purpose of the telephone call with custodial parents was to initiate an open channel of communication, obtain location assistance, and/or glean information about his or her employment status.

Table 8 shows that there were definite differences by county in the incidence of contact attempts with custodial parents. Pueblo workers reported attempting to initiate such calls in 80 percent of the cases, as compared with 54 percent in Denver County. Success rates were also higher in Pueblo versus Denver (47% versus 34%). Denver County workers were somewhat more apt to try to contact custodial parents by telephone when they were having trouble locating a noncustodial parent and reported placing telephone calls in 60 percent of such cases, although this was still significantly below the level of attempted contact reported by Pueblo workers (77%). Rates of actual contact with custodial parents in cases with location problems remained at approximately 50 percent (49%) in Pueblo and 38 percent in Denver.

Nearly one-fifth of Denver workers (19%) and 10 percent of Pueblo workers said that their contact with custodial parents had been productive and led to new information on location, employment, or the reasons for non-payment of child support. When the analysis was restricted to cases that lacked good location information for noncustodial parents, the calls were even more productive. In Denver County, a quarter (25%) of such calls led to new information, as did 32 percent in Pueblo County.

Table 8. Actions Taken or Attempted with CPs in Cases Targeted for Early Intervention, by County

During the time the case was open at early intervention, worker reports	Denver	Pueblo	Total
All Cases			
★ Attempted to contact CP by phone	54%	80%	63%
★ Spoke with CP by phone or in person	34%	47%	39%
Number	(818)	(433)	(1251)
★ For those cases where caseworker spoke with CP, obtained new locate info or reason for non-payment	19%	10%	15%
Number	(281)	(202)	(483)
Cases with locate problems only			
★ Attempted to contact CP by phone	60%	77%	65%
Spoke with CP by phone or in person	38%	49%	41%
Number	(140)	(57)	(197)
For those cases where caseworker spoke with CP, obtained new locate info or reason for non-payment	25%	32%	27%
Number	(53)	(28)	(81)

★ Chi square is significant between sites at .09 or less.

The purpose of contacting employers was to confirm a wage assignment and/or answer questions associated with the wage assignment process. Another reason for contacting employers in cases involving non-payment was to verify employment or determine new employment arrangements. Table 9 shows that workers attempted to contact employers somewhat less often than they did with noncustodial and custodial parents but their attempts were far more effective. Thus, while workers reported attempting to telephone employers in 39 percent of project cases (36% in Denver and 46% in Pueblo), they were nearly always able to reach them, with contact achieved 95 percent of the time. The patterns were even more pronounced when CPR restricted the analysis to cases with a verified employer. Denver workers attempted to contact employers in more than half of these cases (54%) and were successful 93 percent of the time, while Pueblo workers attempted contact in 60 percent of the cases and were successful in 96 percent.

Table 9. Actions Taken or Attempted with Employers in Cases Targeted for Early Intervention, by County

During the time the case was open at early intervention, worker reports	Denver	Pueblo	Total
All Cases			
★ Attempted to contact employer by phone	36%	46%	39%
Number	(818)	(433)	(1,251)
For those attempted, percentage contacted employer	95%	96%	95%
Number	(291)	(198)	(489)
Cases with verified employer only			
Attempted to contact employer by phone	54%	60%	56%
Number	(282)	(185)	(467)
For those attempted, percentage contacted employer	93%	96%	94%
Number	(152)	(110)	(262)

★ Chi square is significant between sites at .09 or less.

Immediate Outcomes of Early Intervention Actions

While the ultimate goal of early intervention is to establish a regular habit of child support payment, the more immediate objectives are to establish contact with parties in child support cases and obtain actionable information. Table 10 shows that these immediate objectives were frequently realized.

Ultimately, workers reported that they had direct telephone contact with half (52%) of noncustodial parents, 41 percent of custodial parents, and 36 percent of employers. Based on these contacts, they learned about new employment in about a third of the cases (32% in Denver and 40% in Pueblo), learned about under-the-table employment in 8 percent of the cases (10% in Denver and 4% in Pueblo), and learned about disability issues in 5 percent of the cases (7% in Denver and 2% in Pueblo). Finally, workers reported that they were able to confirm that the noncustodial parent had a known employer and implement a wage withholding order in about half the cases they processed (44% in Denver and 56% in Pueblo).

Table 10. Immediate Outcomes in Cases Targeted for Early Intervention Action, by County

Percentage of CSE workers reporting the following happened	Denver	Pueblo	Total
Child support worker spoke with NCP by telephone	52%	52%	52%
★Child support worker spoke with CP by telephone	38%	46%	41%
Child support worker talked with NCP in person	12%	11%	12%
Child support worker talked with CP in person	4%	7%	5%
★Child support worker talked with NCPs employer	32%	44%	36%
★Learned NCP is working for cash "under the table"	10%	4%	8%
★Learned NCP found a job/began working	32%	40%	35%
★Confirmed that NCP is disabled or unable to work	7%	2%	5%
★Confirmed that the NCP had a known employer	39%	50%	43%
★Put a wage withholding order in place	44%	56%	48%
NCP told child support worker he or she does not plan to pay child support	2%	1%	1%

★ Chi square is significant between sites at .09 or less.

Early intervention activities also allowed workers to gauge the cooperation level of parents and to assess the ability of the noncustodial parent to pay child support. Based on these subjective determinations, it appeared that 40 percent of noncustodial parents targeted for early intervention lacked the ability to pay his or her child support order (41% in Denver and 38% in Pueblo) and 47 percent were viewed as unwilling to cooperate and work with the child support agency (46% in Denver and 48% in Pueblo). The percentage of noncustodial parents viewed by workers as being highly cooperative and able to pay support was only 11 and 10 percent, respectively, with another fifth (17% and 20%) rated as generally cooperative and able to pay. Custodial parents were viewed by workers as being more cooperative, but a third (23% in Denver and 42% in Pueblo) were viewed as being extremely difficult and unsupportive.

Table 11. Worker Perception of Parent Cooperation and Ability to Pay in Cases Targeted for Early Intervention, by County

Percentage of CSE workers subjectively rating parents as uncooperative and unable to pay	Denver	Pueblo	Total
NCP very unwilling to cooperate and work with CSE	46%	48%	47%
★NCP very unable to pay his or her child support order	41%	38%	40%
★CP very unwilling to cooperate and work with CSE	23%	42%	31%

★ Chi square is significant between sites at .06 or less.

Early Intervention in Various Types of Cases: Previous studies have found that early intervention is better suited for certain case types. For example, while customer service workers in Nebraska were able to contact 68 percent of targeted noncustodial parents in cases with new orders, they were only able to reach 45 percent of targeted noncustodial parents who were behind in their payments 90 days following the promulgation of their orders. And while workers needed to place an average of 6.44 calls to reach each parent in the full sample, it took 8.5 attempts to reach delinquent obligors (Social Sciences Research Center, 2006)

Colorado tested the efficacy of using early intervention in a wide range of case types, only a fraction of which consisted of brand-new child support orders. Other case varieties included existing orders that were newly opened with the child support agency, newly modified orders, newly delinquent cases, and older cases with delinquencies of longer durations. Across Denver and Pueblo counties, early intervention was implemented with 168 cases with brand-new orders, 138 cases that were newly opened at the IV-D agency, 103 cases with newly modified orders, 308 newly delinquent cases, and 533 cases with older delinquencies.

Table 12 shows the attempts workers made to take various types of proactive actions with targeted noncustodial parents in each of these case types and the immediate responses they yielded. Remarkably, there were no significant differences by case type in the reported proportion of noncustodial parents reached by telephone. Workers reported reaching 55 percent in new cases and 52 percent in older delinquency cases. They reported conducting in-person meetings with an identical 6 percent in both groups.

While contact patterns with noncustodial parents reportedly did not vary by case type, the employment status of the noncustodial parent did. Noncustodial parents in cases with newly modified orders were the most likely to have a verified employer (74%) and the least likely to be unemployed (14%). To contrast, cases with new and older delinquencies had the highest rates of unemployment (33% and 32%, respectively) and the lowest rates of verified employment (32% and 29%, respectively). Cases with new orders and cases with existing orders that were new to the child support agency fell between these extremes, with workers reporting that half of the noncustodial parents in such cases had verified employers and approximately 20 percent were unemployed.

Table 12. Early Intervention Actions Taken or Attempted with NCPs in Targeted Cases, by Case Type

During time the case was open at early intervention, worker reports	Cases with New Order (n=168)	New Case with Existing Order (n=138)	Newly Modified Order (n=103)	Newly Delinquent Case (n=308)	Older Delinquent Case (n=533)
★ Sent a letter, brochure, or postcard to NCP	76%	68%	64%	67%	75%
★ Attempted to contact NCP by phone	65%	70%	75%	67%	57%
Spoke with NCP by phone	55%	50%	56%	51%	52%
Met with NCP in person Number	6% (159)	4% (136)	6% (101)	6% (290)	6% (507)

★ Chi square is significant between sites at .05 or less.

Table 13. Employment and Location Issues Identified by Workers in Cases Targeted for Early Intervention, by Case Type

During the time the case was open at early intervention, worker reports	Cases with New Order (n=168)	New Case with Existing Order (n=138)	Newly Modified Order (n=103)	Newly Delinquent Case (n=308)	Older Delinquent Case (n=533)
★ There was a verified employer	50%	49%	74%	32%	29%
★ There was a verified address	89%	84%	97%	79%	73%
★ NCP was unemployed	22%	17%	14%	33%	32%
★ NCP could not be located	9%	6%	0%	9%	11%

★ Chi square is significant between sites at .05 or less.

Table 14 shows that there was little difference by case type in the use of contempt actions and/or modification actions. One difference was that the paid locate resource, ACCURINT, was used at substantially higher rates in cases with long-standing delinquencies (21%) as compared with other case types. Newly modified orders were least apt to have location problems or require extensive location efforts, a pattern that is not surprising given the fact that a review and adjustment requires the active participation of both parties.

Table 14. Child Support Actions Workers Report Taking in Early Intervention Cases, by Case Type

While case was open at early intervention, worker reports	Cases with New Order (n=168)	New Case with Existing Order (n=138)	Newly Modified Order (n=103)	Newly Delinquent Case (n=308)	Older Delinquent Case (n=533)
★ Used ACCURINT to find new locate information	13%	15%	2%	14%	21%
Filed a contempt action	10%	7%	9%	5%	12%
Mailed a notice of opportunity to modify	4%	7%	4%	6%	5%
Sent thank-you card for 3 months of payments	17%	17%	23%	12%	6%

★ Chi square is significant between sites at .05 or less.

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Cases with delinquencies had significantly lower rates of actual contact with custodial parents and significantly higher rates of attempted contact with employers. There was no evidence of differences by case type in the amount of location information they yielded.

Table 15. Actions Taken or Attempted with CPs and Employers in Early Intervention Cases, by Case Type

During the time the case was open at early intervention, worker reports	Cases with New Order	New Case with Existing Order	Newly Modified Order	Newly Delinquent Case	Older Delinquent Case
All Cases:					
★ Attempted to contact CP by phone	64%	79%	60%	56%	63%
★ Spoke with CP by phone or in person	41%	55%	41%	33%	36%
Number	(168)	(138)	(103)	(308)	(533)
For those cases where caseworker spoke with CP, obtained new locate info or reason for non-payment					
Number	13% (68)	12% (76)	7% (42)	19% (102)	18% (194)
All Cases:					
★ Attempted to contact employer by phone	33%	35%	33%	46%	40%
Number	(168)	(138)	(103)	(308)	(533)
For those attempted, percentage contacted employer					
Number	98% (56)	94% (48)	94% (34)	96% (140)	94% (211)

★ Chi square is significant between sites at .09 or less.

On an immediate basis, the application of early intervention treatments yielded only marginal differences in outcomes. According to workers, delinquency cases resulted in the lowest levels of contact with custodial and noncustodial parents, higher rates of under-the-table employment, lower rates of wage withholding orders, and lower rates of known employment.

Table 16. Summary of Selected Outcomes in Early Intervention Cases

Percentage of CSE workers reporting the following	Cases with New Order	New Case with Existing Order	Newly Modified Order	Newly Delinquent Case	Older Delinquent Case
★ Child support worker spoke with NCP by telephone	53%	61%	66%	58%	44%
★ Child support worker spoke with CP by telephone	46%	60%	43%	38%	36%
Child support worker talked with NCP in person	8%	8%	18%	10%	13%
★ Child support worker talked with CP in person	5%	11%	7%	4%	4%
Child support worker talked with NCPs employer	30%	33%	35%	39%	37%
★ Learned NCP is working for cash "under the table"	11%	3%	2%	8%	10%
★ Learned NCP found a job/began working	34%	35%	24%	42%	33%
Confirmed that NCP is disabled or unable to work	7%	5%	10%	6%	4%
★ Put a wage withholding order in place	53%	55%	61%	45%	44%
★ Confirmed that the NCP had a known employer	43%	61%	61%	48%	32%

★ Chi square is significant between sites at .05 or less.

Subjectively, workers rated a significantly higher proportion of noncustodial parents in cases with older delinquencies as uncooperative (62%) and unable to pay his or her child support obligation

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(56%). They rated noncustodial parents with newly modified orders as most cooperative and best able to pay their child support.

Table 17. Worker Perception of Parent Cooperation and Ability to Pay in Early Intervention Cases, by Case Type

Percentage of CSE workers subjectively rating parents as uncooperative and unable to pay support	Cases with New Order	New Case with Existing Order	Newly Modified Order	Newly Delinquent Case	Older Delinquent Case
★NCP very unwilling to cooperate and work with CSE	41%	30%	24%	38%	62%
★NCP very unable to pay his or her child support order	32%	24%	16%	32%	56%
★CP very unwillingness to cooperate and work with CSE	24%	16%	23%	31%	39%

★ Chi square is significant between sites at .05 or less.

Chapter 8: Reactions to Early Intervention

Proponents of early intervention believe that improved customer service is associated with increased voluntary compliance. By reaching out to noncustodial parents, workers have the opportunity to explain how the child support program works, build trust on an individual level, and improve relationships with the agency. Efforts to reach out to noncustodial parents and educate them about the importance of child support and how their obligations are determined are believed to lead to substantial benefits in customer satisfaction and collections. Giving noncustodial parents advice on what to do if they have problems with payments, including referrals to external service providers, is viewed as critical to sustaining and restoring regular payment behaviors. The effective use of “soft glove” approaches and other efforts to improve relations between child support clients and workers are believed to be fundamental to customer service satisfaction, which, in turn, translates into higher rates of voluntary compliance.

To gauge user reactions to early intervention strategies in the Colorado project, telephone interviews were conducted with noncustodial parents targeted to receive proactive outreach efforts by child support workers. Respondents were asked whether they recalled various types of contact with child support workers and its perceived helpfulness. They were asked to rate the child support worker on various aspects of customer relations, and to rate in a more global fashion their satisfaction with the child support agency and the court. The interviewer tested the respondents’ knowledge of the child support system by asking them about the veracity of key child support facts and fictions. Finally, respondents were asked about their employment status and earnings, their child support payment behaviors, and the barriers to payment they faced.

Interviews were conducted during December 2007 through December 2008 with 184 noncustodial parents who were targeted for early intervention treatments: 110 in Denver and 74 in Pueblo. Approximately 40 percent of the interviews took place about nine months after the parent entered the project and was targeted for early intervention treatment. Most of the remaining interviews (58%) were conducted nearly a year to a year and a half after the project enrollment date. All interviews were conducted in English.

Interviews ranged in length from 17 to 80 minutes and took an average of 29 minutes. Attempts were made to reach 1,163 potential respondents. The 184 completed interviews represented a response rate of 16 percent. The number of calls placed per respondent ranged from 1 to 21, with the average being 4.46. Nearly half (44%) of attempted phone numbers involved non-working or disconnected phones (149) or wrong numbers (305). The remaining 37 percent could not be reached after more than 10 phone attempts (285), or could not be interviewed because the given number was a business and the respondent was unavailable (71). Seventy respondents (6%) refused to be interviewed.

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CPR and the interview firm took many measures to achieve this response rate and attempt to improve it. All potential respondents received pre-notification postcards that were sent to their last known address. Postcards were mailed on a rolling schedule so that as cases were eligible to be called, cards were sent out. The postcards indicated the firm's 800 telephone number. In addition, respondents were offered \$20 gift cards to Wal-Mart or Target for completing the survey. Eighty percent of the interviews were conducted by male interviewers. Male respondents made up 87 percent of the completed interviews; all were noncustodial parents.

Recollections of Actions and Assessments of Helpfulness

Table 18 shows the proportion of noncustodial parents in Denver and Pueblo counties, respectively, who recalled being the target of various types of outreach activities by the child support agency. Clearly, the form of contact that noncustodial parents in both counties recall receiving with the greatest frequency was a letter from the child support agency telling them about their child support obligation. Nearly three-quarters of interviewed noncustodial parents recalled receiving this type of letter, which is standard operating procedure for child support agencies. The next most commonly cited form of communication was a letter notifying the obligor that a payment had been missed. This was recalled by 46 percent of respondents in both Denver and Pueblo counties. Like the letter notifying parents about their orders, this is a typical feature of child support practice. Other actions that workers commonly take in most or all child support cases are mailing brochures about child support and holding in-person meetings with both parents to establish a child support order.

Interviewed noncustodial parents were far less likely to recall being the recipients of actions that may be viewed as less typical and more characteristic of the proactive and customer-service orientated approaches that have come to be termed "early intervention." This includes a "phone call from a worker telling you about the child support owed," which was recalled by nearly a third of Denver respondents (32%) but only 16 percent of Pueblo respondents. Another activity that project workers were encouraged to pursue was placing telephone calls with noncustodial parents who missed payments. The purpose of these calls was to uncover the reason for non-payment and attempt to address it. Nearly one-fifth (19%) of Denver respondents and 12 percent of Pueblo respondents recalled receiving at telephone call about a missed payment.

Other less conventional actions that project workers were encouraged to take to improve customer relations and promote payment were referrals to relevant community agencies. Only a fraction of Denver and Pueblo respondents recalled receiving the name and number of someone to call for help with employment (7% and 5%, respectively). Slightly higher, but still modest, numbers of respondents in each county recalled receiving a referral for help with visitation (Denver 17% and Pueblo 15%).

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To improve the affordability of child support orders, project workers were encouraged to contact potentially eligible noncustodial parents about the possibility of obtaining an order modification. Workers typically wait for parents to initiate a request for review and adjustment. In response to this new policy, a fraction of parents in Denver and Pueblo counties recalled receiving a postcard (10% and 14%, respectively) or a telephone call (4% and 8%, respectively) to see if they wanted to change their child support order.

A final customer service action that was initiated with the Colorado project was a letter of thanks to noncustodial parents who made their child support payments for three successive months in a timely and complete manner. Once again, a fraction of parents in Denver and Pueblo counties recalled receiving a thank-you letter (17% and 15%, respectively).

Table 18. Noncustodial Parents Reported Experiences with the Child Support Agency, by Site

In the past 12 months, did you receive any of the following? If so, how helpful did you find it?	Percentage who did receive the services		If received the services, the percentage who found it very or somewhat helpful	
	Denver (n=110)	Pueblo (n=74)	Denver	Pueblo
A phone call from a worker telling you about the child support owed	★ 32%	16%	71%	75%
Letters from the child support agency telling you about child support owed	71%	73%	60%	65%
A meeting with a worker to tell you about the child support that you owe	★★ 19%	43%	86%	75%
A letter of thanks from child support for making your payments on time	17%	15%	84%	100%
A telephone call to let you know you missed a payment	19%	12%	62%	44%
A letter to let you know you missed a payment	46%	46%	80%	82%
Brochures telling you about child support	26%	18%	76%	85%
A postcard telling you how to see if your child support order can be changed	10%	14%	91%	70%
A telephone call from a worker seeing if you want to change your child support order	4%	8%	50%	83%
The name and number of someone to call for visitation help	17%	15%	78%	91%
The name and number of someone to help with employment	7%	5%	75%	100%
Any other contact from the child support agency	42%	47%	48%	59%

★ Chi square is significant at .05 or less.

★★ Chi square is significant is significant at .01 or less.

To try to gauge respondent exposure to less typical actions that might be construed as an early intervention activity, we calculated the percentage of respondents in each county who recalled receiving a phone call about their order, a missed payment or the opportunity to modify their order, a letter of thanks or a postcard alerting them about the possibility of pursuing an order modification, and/or a referral for help with employment or visitation. The analysis indicated that among Denver and Pueblo respondents, 32 percent said they received outreach telephone calls, 24 percent said they received special mailings, and 19 percent received referrals for community services. This fell below

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levels of telephone activity reported by workers, which was 52 percent across the two counties (50% in Denver and 56% in Pueblo). On the other hand, noncustodial parents reported receiving more special mailings than workers reported sending (5% of workers reported mailing a notice of the opportunity to modify and 12% reported sending a thank-you card for making payments). They also reported receiving more referrals than workers reported making.

Table 19. Reported Experiences of Noncustodial Parents with Proactive Telephone Calls, Mailings, and Referrals, by Site

In the past 12 months, did you receive any of the following?	Percentage who did receive the services		
	Denver (n=110)	Pueblo (n=74)	Total
A telephone call about a child support order, a missed payment, and/or the possibility of requesting an order modification	37%	26%	32%
A letter of thanks regarding child support payment or a postcard about the possibility of an order modification	25%	23%	24%
Referral to help with visitation or employment	29%	16%	19%

Interviewed noncustodial parents volunteered many reasons why they did not talk or meet with their child support worker. Most traced it to bad experiences with the agency in the past, mistrust of the worker, rude behavior, and difficulty reaching the worker. The following comments are typical:

Every time I got the letters it was always at the last minute. I couldn't arrange a babysitter or transportation in time. I didn't understand what it was about.

I would like to meet with my case worker, but they should offer later times to meet with them that would not interfere with our work. This way we can meet with them without being penalized by our employer for having to take off.

They never contacted me. First they start garnishing my paychecks, and then they sent me a letter to tell me why.

In addition to being asked whether they recalled being exposed to various types of actions by child support workers, respondents were asked to rate their usefulness. Their responses suggest that most actions were rated as at least somewhat helpful by at least three-quarters of respondents in one of the two counties. In-person meetings and telephone calls about child support owed were viewed as more helpful than a letter from the child support agency. On the other hand, a letter about a missed payment was viewed as more helpful than a telephone call. Child support brochures, letters of thanks for timely payments, and postcards about the possibility of changing child support orders were all viewed favorably, as were referrals for help with employment and visitation.

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When the analysis of helpfulness was restricted to actions that were considered to be “very” rather than “somewhat” helpful, the picture changed a bit. Several of the actions with the highest ratings were those designed for the early intervention project, including referrals for help with visitation (66%), referrals for help with employment (58%), and a letter of thanks for making regular payments (43%).

Table 20. Noncustodial Parents Who Rate as “Very Helpful” Various Types of Interactions and Services from Child Support Workers

If you interacted with your child support worker in the following ways in the past 12 months, would you characterize it as “very helpful?”	Percentage of recipients of the service who found it “very helpful” (n=184)
A phone call from a worker telling you about the child support owed	28%
Letters from the child support agency telling you about child support owed	26%
A meeting with a worker to tell you about the child support that you owe	49%
A letter of thanks from child support for making your payments on time	63%
A telephone call to let you know you missed a payment	20%
A letter to let you know you missed a payment	36%
Brochures telling you about child support	41%
A postcard telling you how to see if your child support order can be changed	29%
A telephone call from a worker seeing if you want to change your child support order	30%
The name and number of someone to call for visitation help	66%
The name and number of someone to help with employment	58%
Any other contact from the child support agency	29%

Assessments of Workers and Client Understandings of Child Support

It was hoped that worker contact with noncustodial parents would lead to the development of new types of worker-client relationships that involved elements of trust and that these interactions and relationships would improve customer satisfaction. To determine whether this was the case, respondents were asked to rate child support workers on how well they did various things. The items they were asked about included both conventional child support duties and newer roles and responsibilities associated with approaches that stress proactive outreach, responsiveness, and relationship building. An example of the former would be explaining the enforcement remedies child support takes in cases of non-payment. Examples of the latter would include “making you feel like they care about you, telling you how to get help with employment, visitation, or other matters, telling you what to do if you are having trouble paying”, and “making you feel as though you have a say in what happens.”

Table 21 presents the results of worker assessments by noncustodial parents. It shows that even though they were exposed to early intervention actions that were intended to be more sensitive and responsive, parents still viewed workers as strongest in their conventional enforcement role. More than one-third of respondents rated workers as doing a “very good” job of “explaining what will

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happen if you do not pay.” The next most highly rated activity was “explaining what you owe.” In contrast, the roles that workers were viewed as doing “poorly” by more than half of all respondents were making you feel like they care about you (53%), making you feel as though you have a say in what happens (63%), telling you how to get help with employment (73%), telling you where to get visitation help (67%), telling you where to get other types of help (68%), explaining how you can try to change your order (51%), and telling you what to do if you are having trouble paying (54%).

Table 21. Noncustodial Parent Ratings of the Child Support Worker

NCP ratings on how well the child support worker did in the following (n=182)	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Explaining how child support works	21%	18%	26%	36%
Explaining what you owe	26%	23%	26%	25%
Making you feel like they care about you	13%	16%	19%	53%
Making you feel that they are working with you on your case	15%	14%	24%	47%
Making you feel as though you have a say in what happens	10%	13%	14%	63%
Telling you how to get help with employment	4%	13%	10%	73%
Telling you where to get visitation help	7%	14%	12%	67%
Telling you where to get other types of help	6%	12%	13%	68%
Explaining how you can try to change your order	9%	16%	24%	51%
Explaining what will happen if you do not pay	38%	29%	15%	19%
Telling you what to do if you are having trouble paying	10%	18%	17%	54%
Being there to answer questions when you call	14%	17%	26%	43%

The comments voluntarily offered by respondents underscore these statistical patterns:

They made you feel as if you were a convict and you had no rights. It was just ‘I don’t want to hear anything you have to say.’ It was as if they were an attorney acting on behalf of the other side. It made you feel as if you didn’t have a say so.

Some people don’t want to pay, but I work hard and do all I can. Sometimes I just can’t afford it, and they don’t understand it. They need to be more human.

As far as when you don’t have a means of paying, they’re not very helpful. Instead of figuring a way to compensate, they’re more likely to threaten you. But when you’re paying, you don’t hear anything.

Despite the negative ratings that most respondents gave workers with respect to newer roles that emphasize sensitivity and relationships, most respondents in both counties reported that they had spoken with a child support worker by telephone (85%) and knew the number to call at the child support agency if they had questions or a change in their work situation (74%). Respondents were less apt to know the name of their child support worker (64%) or have a direct telephone number for

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this worker (58%). In open-ended comments, several respondents even reported that their interactions with workers had improved over time.

My initial meetings with child support were horrific and one sided. It was clear that the mother had all the rights. Now, 10 years later, my guy worker is very good and even balanced. I was listened to and given a fair chance.

I don't want to say it's good or bad because it was really bad before but it has gotten a lot better.

Haven't had no problem with them. They've done everything I've asked them to do and answered all my questions.

On the other hand, interviewed noncustodial parents were virtually unanimous is rejecting the proposition that it was "easy to reach someone at child support when you want to talk," which was supported by only 33 percent of respondents.

Getting in touch with them is very difficult. There was not even an answering machine when I tried. It just kept ringing and ringing. It takes them 3 to 5 days and longer to get back to you.

I just would like it to be a little easier to get hold of my representative or child support worker. It would be nicer to be able to understand the equations they use to determine the support.

There was a significant difference by county in the incidence of in-person contact with child support workers. This was the case for 68 percent of respondents in Pueblo, but only 47 percent in Denver typically schedules face-to-face meetings with noncustodial parents to discuss enforcement remedies.

Table 22. Noncustodial Parent Reported Knowledge of and Communication with Child Support Workers, by Site

Percentage of NCPs who replied "yes" to the following statements	Denver (n=110)	Pueblo (n=74)	Total (n=184)
Do you know what number to call at the child support agency if you have questions or your work situation changes?	74%	74%	74%
Do you know your child support worker's name?	66%	61%	64%
Do you have a direct number for your child support worker?	56%	61%	58%
★ Have you ever talked with a child support worker in person?	47%	68%	55%
Have you ever talked with a child support worker by telephone?	86%	84%	85%
Is it easy to reach someone at child support when you want to talk?	30%	36%	33%

★ Chi square is significant at .01 or less.

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Although CPR lacked comparative interview data from noncustodial parents who were not targeted for early intervention actions, the ratings given by project participants suggest that exposure to early intervention did little to improve the image of the child support worker or the agency. Asked to assess the fairness of the worker, agency, and the court in setting and enforcing the child support order, respondents gave virtually identical assessments for the worker, the agency, and the court. About half of interviewed noncustodial parents viewed these entities as “somewhat” or “very” fair, and the other half took the opposite view and characterized them as “very” or “somewhat” unfair.

Table 23. Noncustodial Parent Rating of the Fairness of the Agency, Worker, and Court, by Site

In setting and enforcing the child support order, NCP ratings of how fair the child support worker, agency, and court were	Denver (n=109)	Pueblo (n=74)	Total (n=183)
Child Support Worker			
Very fair	15%	22%	18%
Somewhat fair	35%	37%	36%
Somewhat unfair	26%	22%	24%
Very unfair	25%	19%	23%
Child Support Agency			
Very Fair	12%	20%	15%
Somewhat Fair	34%	35%	34%
Somewhat Unfair	28%	26%	27%
Very Unfair	26%	19%	23%
The Court			
Very fair	27%	26%	27%
Somewhat fair	26%	28%	27%
Somewhat unfair	20%	25%	22%
Very unfair	26%	22%	24%

And while the analysis of client understandings of child support is also limited by the lack of comparative data from parents who were not targeted for proactive outreach calls, it appears that respondents were well-informed about many of the rules of child support. Virtually all respondents in both counties correctly identified the major enforcement remedies of wage attachments, tax refund offsets, and driver’s license suspensions. Nearly all (96%) knew that they were required to pay child support even if they did not get to see their children and 92 percent knew that they needed to tell their child support worker about a change in job status. The items that were somewhat less well understood dealt with the cooperation requirement and the relationship between the receipt of welfare benefits and child support.

Table 24. Noncustodial Parent Understanding of How Child Support Works, by Site

Percentage of NCPs who felt the following statements were true	Denver (n=110)	Pueblo (n=74)	Total (n=184)
If your child gets welfare, you will have to pay the money back to the state	82%	75%	79%
It is your job to make sure that child support is being paid	97%	96%	97%
If your child gets welfare, the child support agency will try to collect money from you even if the CP does not request it	83%	83%	83%
To collect child support, the agency can take money out of your paychecks	98%	97%	98%
To collect child support, the agency can take your tax refund	97%	96%	97%
If you do not pay child support, the agency can take away your driver's license	98%	95%	97%
If you lose your job or the amount you earn changes, you need to tell your child support worker right away	92%	91%	92%
You can request that your order be changed if you lose or change your job	82%	87%	84%
You have to pay child support even if you do not get to see your children	98%	92%	96%

Indeed, perhaps part of the reason why noncustodial parents remained so thoroughly disaffected with their child support worker and the agency despite their exposure to newer outreach efforts was because they viewed child support laws as being lopsided and unfair. The following respondent may have articulated the dilemma the best.

The call with my worker was helpful in that they explained the process. It was unhelpful in that the law is completely intolerant of any circumstances outside of the norm. The law is so restrictive; the worker has no discretion and can't go on a case-by-case basis. They don't work with you. They just read the computer screen and follow a flow chart.

Child Support Obligations, Payments, and Barriers to Payment

The ultimate goal of early intervention is to promote voluntary payment of child support. While this issue will be assessed in an objective manner in a later chapter by examining actual payment patterns, arrears balances, and enforcement actions for the samples of cases in the treatment and comparison groups, we also explored some of these issues with interviewed noncustodial parents. Specifically, we asked parents about their employment situations, earnings, and payment behaviors. For those who were paying less than their full support obligation, we explored the reasons for nonpayment.

As Table 25 shows, half of the noncustodial parents interviewed in this project were employed full time, a quarter were unemployed, and the remainder were partially or marginally employed. Half reported annual household earnings that fell below \$20,000, a third reporting household earnings that fell between \$20,000 and \$39,999, and 14 percent reported earnings that exceeded \$40,000. Asked to assess how well their salary covered their needs, two thirds (63%) reported “not very well” or “not at all.”

Table 25. Noncustodial Parent Employment, Benefits, and Wages, by Site, if Employed Regularly

	Denver (n=108)	Pueblo (n=72)	Total (n=180)
NCP reported employment status			
Employed full time	44%	60%	50%
Employed part time	14%	11%	13%
Work occasional or temporary jobs	11%	4%	8%
Self-employed	6%	4%	5%
Not working	26%	22%	24%
How well does the salary cover your needs			
Very well	6%	9%	7%
Somewhat well	28%	33%	30%
Not very well	44%	42%	43%
Not at all	23%	16%	20%
Reported annual household income from all sources			
Less than \$30,000	57%	51%	54%
Between \$30,000 and \$39,999	32%	30%	31%
Between \$40,000 and \$59,999	9%	17%	12%
\$60,000 or more	2%	3%	2%
Number	(108)	(71)	(180)

Accordingly, it is not surprising, that half of all interviewed respondents reported paying less than all of the monthly child support they owed and about the same proportion felt that their monthly support obligations were a “little” or “much” too high. As Table 26 shows, average monthly support orders were \$360 in Denver and \$314 in Pueblo, with the median being \$300 and \$262 in the two counties, respectively. Nearly two-thirds of respondents reported owing back due support with arrears balances that ranged up to \$78,000, but averaged \$11,144 in Denver and \$7,395 in Pueblo.

Table 26. Noncustodial Parent Reported Monthly Child Support Order (MSO), Opinion of the MSO, and Payment of MSO, by Site

	Denver (n=108)	Pueblo (n=73)	Total (n=181)
Monthly child support order			
Mean	\$360	\$314	\$341
Median	\$300	\$264	\$280
Range	\$9-\$1,500	\$20-\$1,300	\$9-\$1,500
Percentage of NCPs who think their MSO amount is			
Too low	3%	1%	2%
About Right	43%	47%	44%
A little too high	27%	26%	27%
Much too high	28%	26%	27%

Table 26. Noncustodial Parent Reported Monthly Child Support Order (MSO), Opinion of the MSO, and Payment of MSO, by Site

	Denver (n=108)	Pueblo (n=73)	Total (n=181)
Percentage of NCPs who said this was how much of the MSO they actually paid			
Everything	51%	61%	55%
More than half	12%	24%	17%
About half	12%	5%	9%
Paid some, but less than half	20%	5%	14%
Paid nothing	5%	4%	4%
Cases with an arrears balance	69%	56%	64%
In the cases with an arrears balance, the estimated arrears balance			
Mean	\$11,144	\$7,395	\$9,701
Median	\$6,000	\$5,000	\$5,750
Range	\$23-\$78,000	\$50-\$60,000	\$23-\$78,000
Number	(75)	(41)	(116)

In addition to paying formal child support, many noncustodial parents interviewed in Denver and Pueblo reported making a variety of direct and informal financial contributions, the most common of which were “spending money on the children when you were with them” (67%), buying “diapers, clothes, furniture, bikes, or other items” (61%), and “giving money” directly to the child or the other parent (55%).

Table 27. Noncustodial Parent Reported Other Types of Support Given to Children, by Site

Percentage of NCPs who gave this type of support to the children covered by the child support order or to the other parent	Denver (n=110)	Pueblo (n=74)	Total (n=184)
Gave money directly to the child or other parent	54%	57%	55%
Made care payments, purchased a car, or lent your car to the child or other parent	14%	15%	14%
Paid medical bills	14%	18%	15%
Made mortgage or rent payments	7%	1%	5%
Bought diapers, clothes, furniture, bikes, or other items	59%	65%	61%
Paid for day care costs or after school activities	20%	23%	21%
Spent money on the children when you were with them	65%	72%	67%
Other types of support or payments	34%	42%	37%

These respondents also reported substantial levels of contact with their children. Although nearly a third in Denver (32%) and a fifth in Pueblo (21%) reported no contact at all, 42 percent reported seeing their children once a week or more often and another 15 percent reported contact on monthly or semi-monthly levels.

Table 28. Noncustodial Parent Report of the Frequency of Visitation with Children, by Site

	Denver (n=108)	Pueblo (n=72)	Total (n=180)
Not at all	32%	21%	28%
Once or twice a year	8%	8%	8%
About every other month	7%	6%	6%
Once or twice a month	13%	18%	15%
About once a week	11%	17%	13%
Several times a week	29%	31%	29%

The chief reason for non-payment given by respondents who paid less than the full amount of support due was not having enough money, which was cited by 87 percent. The second most common reason was having another family to support (53%). Denver respondents were significantly more likely to characterize their order as too high and cite this as a reason for non-payment (56% versus 21%). Other frequently cited reasons for non-payment were mentioned less often by respondents in this project. This included disagreements about visitation (30%), disagreements about how child support is spent (34%), payments going to the welfare department rather than the children (29%), and the other parent having a new partner (16%) or not needing the money (13%). The following comments were voluntarily supplied by interviewed noncustodial parents.

I can say honestly I'm educated and have experience, and have a felony background. Since 9/11 it has been hard to get a good job to support the children. I have to pay support and I have to support the children I live with.

The job I had was part time but worked up to full time but then the economy got bad and then my hours got cut and then I got laid off.

Because of the past arrears due to medical bills. This caused me not to be able to pay support in full.

Being jobless. Also, at one point in time when I didn't know I had a child support order, I was giving my ex cash too.

Table 29. Noncustodial Parent Reported Barriers to Payment of MSO, by Site

Of the NCPs who reported paying less than the full child support amount, the percentage who said the following were reasons they did not pay the full amount	Denver (n=55)	Pueblo (n=29)	Total (n=84)
You do not have the money	89%	83%	87%
★ The child support order is too high	56%	21%	43%
You have another family to support	56%	48%	53%
You have had some disagreements about visitation	36%	17%	30%
You have had some disagreements about how the child support is spent	32%	38%	34%
The child support payment goes directly to the welfare department or state, not to the children	24%	32%	29%
The other parent doesn't need the money	11%	17%	13%
The other parent has a new partner who can help support the children	13%	21%	16%
You do not think the child is yours	0%	3%	1%
You did not want the child	2%	7%	4%
Other reasons	37%	59%	45%

★ Chi square is significant at .01 or less.

The use of early intervention techniques in Denver and Pueblo appears to have done little to make noncustodial parents feel more positive about their child support worker, the agency, and its many policies and practices. In their unsolicited comments, noncustodial parents repeatedly complained about high orders during prison sentences, losing a job and being unable to reduce their orders, incurring arrears while not knowing that they had a child, paying support and still losing their driver's licenses, being unable to see their child, and experiencing accounting errors and lengthy modification processes. Although it will take more than a relationship-building phone call to redress the sense of powerlessness that many respondents reported feeling, more responsive customer service approaches would be an important first step.

I am in a very unique position because I work with a city council member who has worked in Denver a long time. He knows people in these agencies. I know the child support agency is understaffed. The call center is terrible. I realize there are deadbeat dads. Don't assume I am one. I have a master's degree. I am active in my child's life. I had problems where I lost my job for a while. I just thought they were trying to get the money. When I called the call center, they wouldn't give out any information. I would have been easier to talk to the president.

I get no help from them at all, I can't get to see my son. They are quick to give her information but they don't give me any information. The only time they get a hold of me is when the checks are running a bit late.

I just think they have to take into consideration that not all cases are the same. I do understand that there are dads that don't care for the kids. I do everything and go beyond for my kids. Just recently, I lost my license and they didn't tell me about it.

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There was no communication from them. They need to improve that. I can never get a hold of them when I call them. The one time I called I got more help from the secretary rather than my worker. I do think they need to be more lenient on the dads that are paying their support. They treat all like deadbeats.

Chapter 9: Outcomes Associated with Early Intervention

To assess the payment benefits associated with early intervention, we compared child support payment patterns in project cases relative to those generated in cases handled using conventional techniques. The information on payment and arrears balances for both groups was drawn from automated records maintained by the child support enforcement agency, which offered the most reliable and valid measures of payment performance by obligors in treatment and comparison groups both before and after the implementation of project treatments.

As explained in Chapter 5, it was impossible to randomly assign child support cases for early intervention and conventional treatments, so CPR used a quasi-experimental design and compared the sample of early intervention cases with a group of cases that were intended to be equivalent on as many characteristics as possible.

Generating a Comparison Group for Early Intervention Procedures

Computer programmers with Colorado's Automated Child Support Enforcement System (ACSES) identified 5,825 cases processed by non-project enforcement workers in Denver and Pueblo counties using conventional child support approaches in 2007. When all cases with \$0 orders were eliminated, the number of cases available for selection into the comparison group dropped to 2,949. To enhance the comparability of the treatment and comparison groups, CPR purposively sampled the pool of cases in the comparison group to match the mix of case types in the treatment group including new, modified, and delinquent varieties. Since it proved difficult to retrospectively identify "newly delinquent" cases in 2007 using automated techniques, newly and older delinquent case categories were assigned to a single, "delinquent" case type category. Within each case type, cases were selected for the comparison group using random techniques.

Table 30 presents the distribution of cases in the treatment group, the distribution of cases in the original comparison group generated by ACSES programmers and the number and type of cases selected by CPR for the comparison group. In an effort to make the treatment and comparison groups equivalent, CPR eliminated from both groups all cases with a monthly support order of \$0, all delinquency cases that paid more than 90 percent at case selection, and all cases that indicated that no child support was owed in the months following case intake and/or selection in 2007 for comparison group purposes. Ultimately, the number of cases available for payment analysis was 1,246 in the treatment group and 1,240 in the comparison group.

Table 30. Composition of Treatment Group, Original Comparison Group, and Matched Comparison Group								
	Treatment Group Created by Project Workers		Original Comparison Group Created by ACSES Programmers		Comparison Group Generated by CPR to Match Treatment Group^a		Cases ultimately selected using random techniques to match treatment group	
Case Types	Cases with MSOs greater than \$0	Percentage of Total	All Cases	Percentage of Total	Cases retained for selection for comparison group			
Newly established orders	169	14%	244	4%	222	8%	170	14%
New IV-D	137	11%	839	14%	130	5%	130	10%
Newly modified orders	102	8%	253	4%	171	6%	100	8%
Newly delinquent cases	308	25%	1,317	23%	2,239 ★★	81% ★★	840 ★★	68% ★★
Older delinquent cases	530	43%	3,172	54%				
Total	1,246	100%	5,825	100%	2,762	100%	1,240	100%

★Eliminates cases due to MSO=\$0, payment rates that exceeded 75% at intake, and other factors.
 ★★Newly and older delinquent cases were combined for the analysis because of limitations encountered when trying to delineate between “newly” and “older” delinquent cases retrospectively.

Comparability of Treatment and Comparison Groups

The extract generated by ACSES programmers on cases in the comparison group was designed to match the information recorded by project workers for cases in the treatment group and included items dealing with the public assistance status of the case, method of order establishment, the number of children on the case, order levels, and arrears balances. They also provided information on payments due and paid in the 18 months prior to and following assignment to the project for cases in the treatment and comparison groups. For cases in the comparison group, a fictional intake date was created that approximated the month during which a case would have been assigned for proactive outreach had it been handled by a project worker. For both treatment and comparison groups, this is referred to as the “intake date.”

Table 31 presents selected information on cases in the treatment and comparison groups. The information for both groups was generated by ACSES programmers in June 2009. It shows that the two groups shared many characteristics, including the following:

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- Parents in both the treatment and comparison groups were equally apt to be never married (76% versus 73%);
- Child support cases in both the treatment and comparison groups involved an average of 1.4 children and a median of 1.0;
- Original child support order levels and current order levels (including modified orders) for cases in both the treatment and comparison groups were statistically equivalent, with current order levels averaging \$279 and \$280 per month; and
- Obligor in the treatment and comparison groups had an average of 2.1 and 2.0 cases in the child support system.

Despite these important similarities and CPRs best efforts to match the treatment and comparison groups, they differed in some fundamental ways. The following is a list of significant differences between the cases in the treatment and comparison groups.

Compared with the treatment group:

- The comparison group was significantly more likely to be comprised of cases that had no prior involvement with public assistance (52% versus 47%).
- The comparison group was significantly more likely to be comprised of orders established by court (29% versus 22%), and less apt to be established by stipulation (55% versus 63%).
- The comparison group was significantly more likely to be comprised of younger cases, with a median age of 3.7 versus 4.3 years from order establishment to extract.
- The comparison group was significantly more likely to be comprised of cases with no arrears balance when the extract was generated in June 2008 (21% versus 13%).
- The comparison group was significantly more likely to be comprised of cases with lower arrears balances when the extract was generated (average levels being \$7,595, compared with \$10,368).
- The comparison group had obligors who had lower arrears balances across *all* their child support cases when the extract was generated (average total arrears being \$12,760, compared with \$15,146).

Table 31. Selected Characteristics of Cases, Obligor, and Order in the Treatment and Comparison Groups for the Early Intervention Component of the Project

		Treatment Group (n=1,244)	Comparison Group (n=1,240)
★ TANF status	Current TANF	20%	16%
	Former TANF	33%	32%
	Never TANF	47%	52%
Parents' marital status	Never married	76%	73%
	Married	9%	11%
	Separated/divorced	15%	17%
★ Method of order establishment	Stipulation	63%	55%
	Default	14%	15%
	Court	22%	29%
★ Age of child support order in years (length of time from order establishment to extract date)	Mean	5.7	5.3
	Median	4.3	3.7
	Range	Less than 1-20	Less than 1-20
Number of children on order	Mean	1.44	1.41
	Median	1.0	1.0
	Range	1-5	1-6
Total number of cases NCP has on automated child support system	Mean	2.1	2.0
	Median	2.0	2.0
	Range	1-10	1-11
Original current support order amount (MSO)	Mean	\$286	\$275
	Median	\$234	\$229
	Range	\$5-\$1,397	\$5-\$2,100
	(number of cases)	(1,225)	(1,227)
Current support order amount (MSO)	Mean	\$279	\$280
	Median	\$245	\$241
	Range	\$10-\$1,398	\$5-\$2,100
	(number of cases)	(1,221)	(1,214)
★ Percentage of cases with no arrears balance		13%	21%
★ Arrears balance as of extract date	Mean	\$10,368	\$7,595
	Median	\$5,088	\$2,782
	Range	\$0-\$193,605	\$0-\$111,692
		(1,221)	(1,201)
★ Total arrears balance on all NCP cases on ACSES	Mean	\$15,146	\$12,760
	Median	\$7,220	\$4,587
	Range	\$0-\$222,067	\$0-\$165,075
★ Statistically significant at .05 significance level.			

Many of the differences observed for the full samples of treatment and comparison group cases persisted when the various types of cases in the two groups were compared. Table 32 presents selected information on various types of cases in the treatment and comparison groups: new orders,

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cases with existing orders that were new to the child support agency, newly modified orders and delinquent cases. It shows:

- While delinquent cases in both the treatment and comparison groups were identical in age, all other case types were significantly newer in the comparison group.
- Average, original monthly levels of child support were significantly higher for delinquent cases in the treatment group versus comparison group (\$259 versus \$239) but were statistically equivalent when the extract was generated (\$256 versus \$245).
- Comparison group cases with new orders and delinquencies were significantly more likely to be free of arrears balances when the extract was generated in June 2009, with 28 and 23 percent of these case types lacking an arrears balance, as compared with 22 and 12 percent of cases in the treatment group.
- Comparison group cases with delinquencies also had lower average arrears balances with respect to the case targeted for action in 2007 (\$9,129 versus \$12,370), as well as across all their child support cases (\$12,395 versus \$17,917).

Table 32. Selected Characteristics of Cases, Obligor, and Orders in Treatment and Comparison Groups for the Early Intervention Component, by Case Type

	New order		New case/existing order		Newly modified		Delinquent	
	Treatment n=167	Comparison n=170	Treatment n=138	Comparison n=130	Treatment n=103	Comparison n=100	Treatment n=829	Comparison n=840
Average age of child support order in years (length of time from order establishment to extract date)	2.1	1.7	4.8	3.0	8.0	6.7	8.1	8.0
Average number of children on order	1.3	1.4	1.6	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.5	1.4
Average amount of original current support order (MSO)	\$315	\$336	\$357	\$324	\$324	\$373	\$259	\$239
Average amount of current support order (MSO)	\$310	\$330	\$319	\$324	\$310	\$362	\$256	\$245
Percentage of cases with no arrears balance on current case	22%	28%	26%	30%	25%	34%	12%	23%

Table 32. Selected Characteristics of Cases, Obligor, and Orders in Treatment and Comparison Groups for the Early Intervention Component, by Case Type

	New Order		New case/ existing order		Newly modified		Delinquent	
	Treatment n=167	Comparison n=170	Treatment n=138	Comparison n=130	Treatment n=103	Comparison n=100	Treatment n=829	Comparison n=840
Average arrears balance as of extract date	\$3,715	\$2,800	\$6,940	\$2,489	\$7,619	\$6,508	\$12,370	\$9,126
				★		★★		★
Average number of cases NCP has on ACSES	1.7	1.6	1.7	1.7	2.2	1.8	2.2	2.2
Average arrears balance on all NCP cases on ACSES	\$7,106	\$5,274	\$8,989	\$7,187	\$10,710	\$8,071	\$17,917	\$12,395
								★

★ Treatment and comparison differences are statistically significant at .05 confidence level.

★★ Treatment and comparison differences are statistically significant at .1 confidence level.

Payment Patterns in Treatment and Comparison Groups

Given the pre-existing differences between cases in the treatment and comparison groups, it seems entirely plausible that obligors in the comparison group might exhibit superior payment behaviors prior to their theoretical assignment to the project in 2007, and that they might retain these payment advantages during the 18 months following their enrollment. For example, the lower arrears level in the comparison group would suggest better payment performance.

In some respects, these better performance patterns among the comparison group did emerge, although not consistently. Table 33 shows:

- On average, obligors in the treatment group paid \$1,399 of the \$3,158 that they owed before being enrolled in the early intervention project, for an average payment rate of 36.6 percent. In contrast, when members of the comparison group were theoretically enrolled in the project in 2007, they exhibited an average, 18-month payment rate of 38.7 percent.
- Obligor in both groups exhibited significant improvements in their payment rates following actual and theoretical project participation. Thus, average payment rates for obligors in the treatment group rose from 36.6 percent to 42.1 percent when the 18 months prior to and following project intake were compared. For members of the comparison group, the comparable rates of payment during both time periods were 38.7 percent and 48.1 percent.
- Over time, the percentages of obligors in both groups who paid 75 percent or more of their monthly obligation increased, and the percentage paying nothing decreased.
- At both pre- and post- program time periods, however, obligors in the comparison group exhibited payment behaviors that were somewhat more robust.

Table 33. Payment Patterns for Cases in the Treatment and Comparison Groups Prior to and Following Actual and Theoretical Enrollment in the Early Intervention Project

	Treatment Group		Comparison Group	
	Pre-	Post-	Pre-	Post-
Average amount of child support due in the 18 months prior to and following intake date	\$3,158	\$4,363	\$3,234	\$4,056
Number	(1,244)	(1,244)	(1,240)	(1,240)
Average amount of child support paid in the 18 months Prior to and following intake date	\$1,399	\$2,083	\$1,452	\$2,219
Number	(1,244)	(1,244)	(1,240)	(1,240)
Percentage of current support paid that was due in the 18 months prior to and following intake date	★		★	
Mean	36.6%	42.1%	38.7%	*48.1%
Number	(1,010)	(1,172)	(1,136)	(1,140)
Range of current percentage of child support paid prior to and following intake date				
Percentage paying "0"	26%	17%	17%	11%
Percentage paying 1-25%	21%	25%	25%	27%
Percentage paying 26-50%	18%	16%	21%	13%
Percentage paying 51-75%	15%	16%	18%	14%
Percentage paying 75% or more	20%	26%	19%	35%
Number	(1,015)	(1,178)	(1,136)	(1,140)

★ Treatment and comparison differences are statistically significant at .05 confidence level.

Given these differences, it is not surprising that obligors in the comparison continued to demonstrate more favorable payment patterns than their counterparts in the treatment group within every relevant case type. Table 34 shows that in the months prior to project enrollment:

- Payment performances for new case, modified orders, and delinquent cases in the treatment group were 21.8 percent, 58.5 percent, and 37.1 percent, respectively. Payment performance for cases in the comparison group in the months prior to project enrollment were 32.1 percent, 56.9 percent, and 38.7 percent, respectively.

In the 18 months following project enrollment:

- Payment performance for new cases with existing orders in both groups was 52.1 and 54.1 percent, respectively.
- For newly modified cases in both groups, performance improved significantly and was 67.6 percent in the treatment group, as compared with 64.9 percent in the comparison group.
- Only delinquent cases in the treatment group exhibited no change in payment performance following project treatment. At both points in time, obligors in the treatment group only paid 37.1 percent of support that was due. Obligor in the comparison group improved their payment behavior and went from paying 38.7 percent in the 18 months prior to enrollment to 44.3 percent in the 18 months following enrollment.

Table 34. Child Support Payment Patterns in Various Types of Treatment and Comparison Group Cases, by Case Type

Treatment Cases						
	New case/existing order (n=138)		Newly modified order (n=103)		All delinquent cases (n=754)	
	Pre-	Post-	Pre-	Post-	Pre-	Post-
Average child support due in the 18 months prior to and following intake date Number	\$845	\$5,046	\$4,235	\$5,907	\$3,961 (829)	\$3,952 (829)
Average child support paid in the 18 months prior to and following intake date Number	\$263	\$2,817	\$2,832	\$4,151	\$1,589 (829)	\$1,587 (829)
Percentage of current support paid that was due in the 18 months prior to and following intake date Mean Number	★ 21.8% (74)	★ 52.1% (74)	★ 58.5% (94)	★ 67.6% (94)	37.1% (754)	37.1% (754)
Comparison Group Cases						
	New case/existing order		Newly modified order		Delinquent order	
	Pre-	Post-	Pre-	Post-	Pre-	Post-
Average child support due in the 18 months prior to and following intake date Number	\$1,384 (130)	\$4,641 (130)	\$5,081 (100)	\$5,695 (100)	\$3,848 (840)	\$3,632 (840)
Average child support paid in the 18 months prior to and following intake date Number	\$501 (130)	\$2,892 (130)	\$3,244 (100)	\$4,143 (100)	\$1,632 (840)	\$1,789 (840)
Percent of current support paid that was due in the 18 months prior to and following intake date Mean Number	★ 32.1% (123)	★ 54.1% (123)	★ 56.9% (93)	★ 64.9% (93)	★ 38.7% (762)	★ 44.3% (762)

★ Pre- and post- amounts are statistically significant at .05 confidence level.

Improvements in Payment for Treatment Group Cases

The underlying differences between cases in the treatment and comparison groups make further comparisons between the two inadvisable. Despite CPR's efforts to generate treatment and comparison groups that were equivalent, obligors in the comparison group were better payers when they entered the project. This was particularly true for delinquent cases, which comprised 68 percent of the cases in both groups.

The remaining analyses of outcomes focus exclusively on the treatment group. CPR attempted to unravel patterns of payment improvement for different types of cases and relationships between improvement and the key project treatment of proactive outreach with obligors.

Table 35 underscores the pattern discussed above: with the exception of delinquent cases, payments improved significantly in every other case type in the 18 months following project enrollment. The average increase in payment performance for existing orders that were new to the child support agency and newly modified orders was 30.3 percent and 9.1 percent, respectively.

Table 35. Child Support Payment Outcomes in Various Types of Treatment Cases Prior to and Following Project Entry

	New case/existing order (n=138)		Newly modified order (n=103)		All delinquent cases (n=754)	
	Pre-	Post-	Pre-	Post-	Pre-	Post-
Average amount of child support due in the 18 months prior to and following intake date	\$845	\$5,046	\$4,235	\$5,907	\$3,961	\$3,952
Average amount of child support paid in the 18 months prior to and following intake date	\$263	\$2,817	\$2,832	\$4,151	\$1,589	\$1,587
Percentage of current support paid that was due in the 18 months prior to and following intake date	★	★	★	★		
Mean Number	21.8% (74)	52.1% (74)	58.5% (94)	67.6% (94)	37.1% (754)	37.1% (754)

★ Pre- and post- amounts are statistically significant at .05 confidence level.

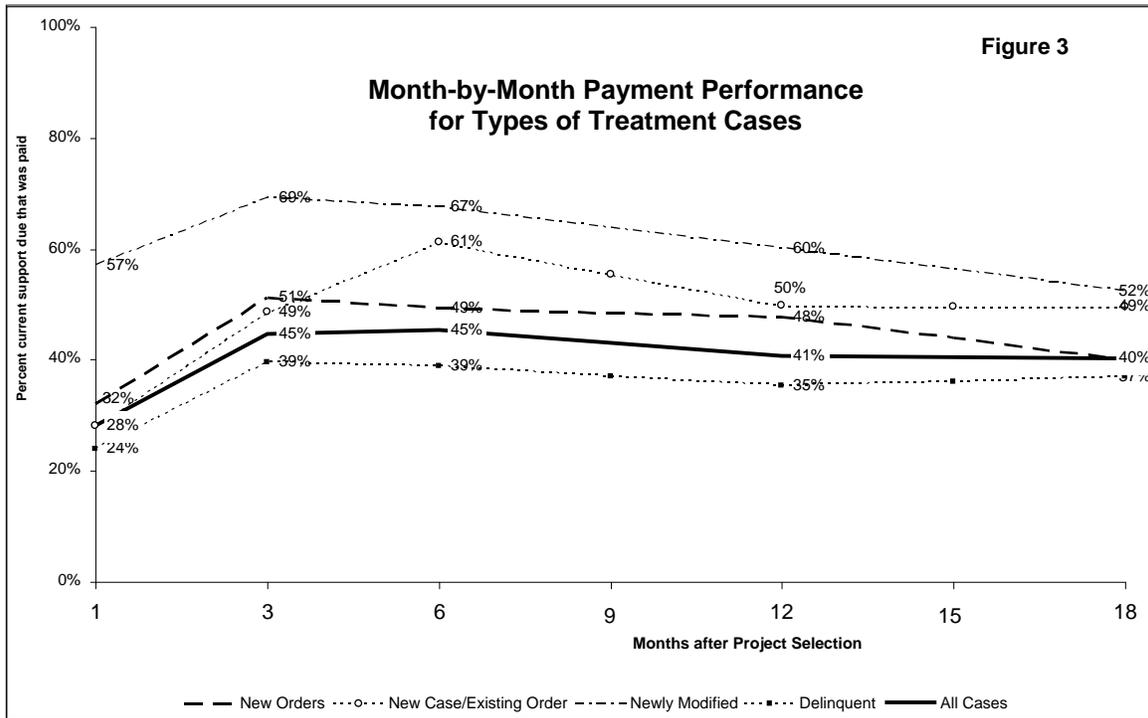
A month-by-month analysis of payment patterns for treatment group cases following enrollment in the early intervention project shows that the most substantial improvements occurred during the first three to four months. After that, payment performance leveled off and began to decline. Thus, for all cases, the percentage of owed support that was paid rose from 28 percent in the first month following project enrollment to 39 percent in the second month to 45 and 46 percent in the third and fourth months, respectively. At that point, payment leveled off and 18 months following project enrollment, obligors in treatment cases paid an average of 40 percent of what they owed.

These patterns were even more pronounced for certain case types. Average rates of payment in cases with new orders rose from 32 percent in month one to 51 percent in month three and began to decline thereafter. By month 18, obligors in cases with new orders paid an average of 40 percent of what they owed. Payment performance in established cases that were new to the child support agency peaked in month six. Peak payment performance for newly modified cases occurred during month three, when the average percentage of owed child support that was paid rose to 69 percent. And among delinquency cases, peak performance occurred in the third month after project enrollment, when average payment rose from 24 percent to 36 percent.

Table 36. Average Percentage of Owed Child Support That Was Paid in Various Types of Treatment Cases Following Project Enrollment

	Month 1	Month 3	Month 6	Month 12	Month 18
New orders	32%	51%	49%	48%	40%
New cases w/ existing orders	28%	49%	61%	50%	49%
Newly modified	57%	69%	67%	60%	52%
Delinquent cases	24%	39%	39%	35%	36%
Total cases	28%	45%	45%	41%	40%

Figure 3 graphs these payment patterns for various types of cases in the treatment group and illustrates that peak payments were generally achieved in the third month and were followed by declines through the 18-month study period.



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These improvement patterns coincided with the duration of the early intervention treatment. Workers reported that they kept project cases in the treatment pool for an average of 3.8 months and a median of 3.4. During this time, they achieved telephone contact with approximately half of the obligors, custodial parents, and employers they attempted to reach.

To further explore the impact of worker contact with obligors and employers, CPR compared average payment rates for cases in the treatment group with and without successful worker contact. The results show:

- Average payment rates for treatment cases rose significantly following project enrollment, when workers were able to reach obligors by telephone and/or conduct an in-person meeting.
- There was also a significant increase in payment following project enrollment in cases where workers were able to reach employers by telephone.
- In contrast, average rates of payment failed to improve among cases in the experimental group that were not exposed to direct worker contact with obligors and/or employers.
- Thus, while successful contact with obligors appeared to pay off and result in payment improvements, other outreach efforts, including mailed letters and attempted telephone calls, had no payment benefits.

Table 37. Child Support Payment Outcomes in Treatment Group Cases with and without Worker Contact with Obligors and/or Employers

	Early Intervention Worker had contact		Early Intervention Worker did not have contact	
	Pre-	Post-	Pre-	Post-
Percentage of current support paid that was due in the 18 months prior to and following intake date-in cases where NCP was contacted by early intervention worker	★			
Mean Number	42.7 (360)	54.3 (360)	33.6 (640)	35.1 (640)
Percentage of current support paid that was due in the 18 months prior to and following intake date-in cases where an employer was contacted by early intervention worker	★			
Mean Number	40.3 (381)	50.0 (381)	34.7 (619)	37.0 (619)

★ Differences pre- and post- are significant at .001 or less.

Chapter 10: Using Simplified Modification Procedures

Developing a simplified and streamlined modification process was an important component of the Colorado project. Review and adjustment procedures are characteristically lengthy and cumbersome. In addition, workers are frequently unwilling to encourage changes that might lead to lower order levels. Since full and consistent payment depends on the generation of order that are appropriate and fair, an important goal of early intervention was to identify child support orders that did not track with earnings, inform noncustodial parents of their ability to request a review and adjustment, and conduct a fair review that could result in both upward and downward adjustments.

During the 16-month project, workers in Denver and Pueblo counties processed 1,306 child support cases for 1,015 noncustodial parents using simplified modification procedures. Most orders came from Denver County (1,145), with only 222 filed in Pueblo. Both counties utilized specialized teams to process modification cases. Specialized workers in Denver handled all applications for review and adjustment filed throughout the agency, with the exception of interstate cases and those that involved foster care matters. The specialized worker in Pueblo only handled cases referred by workers involved with the early intervention project. The barriers they hoped to overcome included a lack of understanding regarding the rules of review and adjustment and the forms that needed to be submitted, complicated applications that frequently went uncompleted, protracted time frames, withdrawals due to the lack of completed materials, and increased court activity due to the inability of parties to reach an agreement.

Selected Characteristics of Simplified Modification Cases

Table 38 compares selected characteristics of cases in Denver and Pueblo with a request for modification using the simplified approach. It shows that a significantly higher proportion of Denver requests involved cases where children were current and former recipients of TANF. Pueblo cases, on the other hand, were overwhelmingly comprised of parties whose children never received public assistance. Another difference between the two counties was the age of the orders for which a modification was requested. While more than a third of the orders in Pueblo County were less than three years old, this was the case for only a quarter of the orders in Denver County. If the order is more than three years old, a review can be requested regardless of whether there is a change in circumstances. If the order is less than three years old, there must be a change in circumstance, such as a change in income or a change in health insurance costs.

As to the process used to establish the original order, both counties had virtually identical proportions of administrative (32%) and judicial (60% to 64%) established orders. Denver County relies heavily on judicial orders because many of its cases involve Spanish-speaking litigants and until recently the only sanctioned translation service was available in a court setting. Pueblo County, on

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the other hand, has a large number of judicial orders because many of its cases involve parties who were previously married and divorced. Divorce proceedings and the child support orders they yield are always handled in a judicial setting.

Neither county generated many modification requests among cases with orders that were established by default without the participation of the noncustodial parent. This was the case for only 8 and 5 percent of orders in Denver and Pueblo counties, respectively. Theoretically, these cases are most likely to be in need of review and adjustment because they were typically established with imputed earnings and without actual information on employment and earnings. The pattern underscores the difficulty of engaging parties who are detached from the child support process even though they might stand to benefit from a review and adjustment process.

Table 38. Selected Characteristics of Cases Requesting Simplified Modification

		Denver County	Pueblo County	Total
★ Public assistance status of children	Current TANF	20%	5%	17%
	Former TANF	40%	27%	38%
	Never TANF	37%	64%	42%
	Medicaid only	3%	4%	3%
	Foster care	1%	1%	1%
	Number	(930)	(215)	(1,145)
Order established by	Administrative process	32%	32%	32%
	Judicial hearing	60%	64%	61%
	Default	8%	5%	7%
	Number	(771)	(215)	(986)
★ Age of the order	Less than 3 years	24%	35%	27%
	3-5 years	32%	27%	30%
	6-10 years	23%	19%	22%
	More than 10 years	21%	19%	21%
	Number	(494)	(206)	(700)

★ Chi square is significant between sites at .00 or less.

Table 39 shows the range, average, and median values of the underlying orders for which a review and adjustment was requested using simplified procedures during the project. They were virtually identical in the two counties, with averages of \$341 and medians of \$300 to \$306. They ranged from \$20 to \$1,600 per month in Denver (and \$1,200 in Pueblo). The arrears balances that noncustodial parents held in cases with modification requests were extremely low, with mean values of only about \$50 and medians of \$36. Clearly, review and adjustment processes are appealing to payers rather than non-payers. Parties who pursued review and adjustment were engaged in the child support system and tended to play by the rules. The process did not engage alienated, uninvolved noncustodial parents who failed to appear at order-making proceedings, neglected to pay their support obligations, and generated large child support arrears balances.

**Table 39. Order Amounts and Arrearages
in Cases Requesting Modification with the Simplified Procedure**

		Denver County	Pueblo County	Total
Monthly support order (at intake)	Mean	\$341	\$341	\$341
	Median	\$300	\$306	\$301
	Range	\$2-\$1,600	\$20-\$1,200	\$2-\$1,600
	Number	(1094)	(212)	(1,306)
Monthly arrears due (at intake)	Mean	\$54	\$39	\$51
	Median	\$40	\$20	\$36
	Range	\$1-\$531	\$1-\$725	\$1-\$725
	Number	(619)	(168)	(787)

Requests for Review and Adjustment

A review of a child support order can only occur if it is requested by a party. In public assistance cases, the party may be the state. In non-public assistance cases, the review must be requested by either the custodial or noncustodial parent. Educating parents about the right to request a review and adjustment and keeping the request process simple can lead to more requests that, in turn, help keep orders updated.

The project afforded workers several opportunities to inform parents about the modification option and to simplify the request process. Project staff assigned to early intervention treatments in the two counties could discuss modification with parents in telephone conversations, particularly if a parent disclosed a recent change in employment or income. They sent parents brochures about modification and a postcard that they could return to initiate a review. A simplified request form was developed to initiate a review. Parents could also request reviews via the Internet.

Table 40 shows that requests for modification in Denver were evenly divided between cases that were referred by project workers who were instructed to utilize early intervention techniques in a wide range of cases, and cases that were referred by other child support workers, the court, or by parties themselves through *pro se* filings. Thus, the early intervention project in Denver had a big impact on requests for review, with project workers frequently suggesting that noncustodial parents pursue a modification request.

As for the method by which parties made their request to modify, Denver workers indicated that only 4 percent were filed using the Internet, as compared with 20 percent in Pueblo. Postcard requests were also sparsely used, with only 1 percent filed in Denver and none filed in Pueblo. One barrier to using the postcard request was the fact that it was too large to fit in the packet of materials that was normally mailed to parents by the child support agency. Most requests were submitted to the agency using the simplified request form (25% in Denver and 65% in Pueblo).

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There were significant differences across the two counties in the party requesting the review and adjustment. While more than half of requests in both counties were filed by noncustodial parents (61% in Denver and 56% in Pueblo), a significantly higher proportion of requests were filed by custodial parents in Pueblo as compared with Denver (42% versus 30%).

The reason why more custodial parents filed requests in Pueblo than in Denver appears in the explanation for the request. While statistically comparable proportions of parents in both counties indicated that they had lost a job or experienced a cut in pay, an injury, or a disability, Pueblo cases were significantly more likely to be filed because of an increase in pay. This was cited as a factor in 5 percent of Denver modification requests but 17 percent of Pueblo requests. According to Pueblo workers, the surge in requests for review and adjustment was partially due to the increase in the minimum wage that became effective in Colorado on January 1, 2007. If an existing order was based on the old minimum wage, custodial parents might have been eligible for an increase based on the change.

Denver requests were significantly more likely to be filed because of incarceration issues or because three or more years had passed since the last review. Requests in both counties were equally apt to involve changes in health insurance coverage (4%) and changes in the number of overnights the children spent with a parent (3% to 5%).

Parents are not required to provide a reason for review to receive consideration, and 5 percent of Denver cases and 10 percent of Pueblo cases neglected to cite a reason. In approximately one-third of the cases in each county, parents selected the “other” reason category to explain their request. A review of written comments provided by workers in such cases revealed that most frequently this was due to the emancipation of a child or a change in custody resulting in a split custody arrangement or the child living with the noncustodial parent. Other reasons for requesting a modification included changes in child care costs, changes in education or other child expenses, medical costs, other child support cases, or dependents that the noncustodial parent had incurred, changes in the cost of living, changes in employment and earnings, and the sheer difficulty the noncustodial parent was experiencing paying the support order.

Table 40. Characteristics of Review Requests

	Denver (n=1,145)	Pueblo (n=222)	Total (n=1,367)
★Modification request received by			
Referral from early intervention staff	50%	30%	47%
Simplified request	29%	85%	38%
Other technicians, court, or <i>pro se</i> filing	47%	14%	42%
Party requesting review			
Noncustodial parent	61%	56%	60%
★Custodial parent	30%	42%	32%
★TANF agency	3%	1%	3%
★Other	4%	1%	4%
Reason for request			
Lost job	9%	9%	9%
Cut in pay	17%	21%	18%
★Increase in pay	5%	17%	7%
Injured or disabled	4%	2%	3%
★Incarcerated	10%	1%	8%
Change in health insurance coverage	4%	4%	4%
Change in overnights	3%	5%	4%
★Three years since order entered or last review	21%	14%	20%
★Other	28%	36%	29%
★Not specified	5%	10%	6%

★ Chi square is significant between sites at .01 or less.

Scheduling and Attending Review Conferences

Perhaps the most novel feature of the simplified modification process was the introduction of an in-person settlement conference to be conducted within 15 to 25 days after a request was received in order to facilitate a stipulation between the parties. Developed in Arapahoe County, Colorado, the purpose of the settlement conference is to eliminate court hearings that result from one parent disputing the other parent's information about income, visitation, and other cost factors. It is based on the notion that review and adjustment can be faster and less contentious if parents communicate about it and reach a stipulation.

Although the settlement conference was meant to make review and adjustment more accessible and successful, modification workers in the Colorado project retained the right to terminate a request for review if the parent did not supply supporting documentation and/or it had been less than three years since the last review or other criteria were not met. Table 41 shows that workers frequently terminated requests for these reasons, especially in Denver County. A comparison of the number of requests that were filed with review conferences that were scheduled reveals that fully 60 percent of all requests in Denver did not go forward to the conference stage. Indeed, conferences were held in only 39 percent of requesting cases. No parallel attrition occurred in Pueblo cases, where 92 percent

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of all requests were scheduled for conference and nearly all scheduled conferences were ultimately held.

Denver workers gave reasons why conferences were not scheduled for 225 cases. The most common reason was the failure of the parents to supply financial information or respond to worker requests for information. Nearly 30 percent of dropped requests were ended for this reason. Another 21 percent were dropped because one or more party lived out of town or out of state. In 17 percent of dropped cases, the conference was not scheduled because the noncustodial parent was incarcerated. Still other requests were terminated (10%) because they failed to meet the requirements to modify, including those dealing with time (*e.g.*, brand-new orders, newly modified orders, or orders that were less than three years old) and change of circumstances (less than 10% change in order amount). Some requests were not scheduled for a conference (10%) because they needed court attention to resolve an underlying custody or parenting time issue, deal with minor-aged or Spanish-speaking parents, or because the parties were represented by attorneys. Finally, some requests (10%) were dropped at the request of the noncustodial parent or because the custodial parent requested case closure, because the child was emancipated or about to emancipate, because the noncustodial parents failed to appear, or because the parties reconciled.

Pueblo workers were reportedly more flexible than Denver workers about when parents could supply the financial information needed to support their requests to modify. They reported that they allowed requesting parties to bring their financial documents to the conference rather than requiring that they submit them prior to scheduling. Accordingly, Pueblo workers scheduled conferences in 93 percent of cases with a modification request.

In both counties, most review conferences that were scheduled were held. In Denver, 74 percent of scheduled conferences were ultimately held, while the proportion in Pueblo County was 80 percent. The major reason why they did not was the failure of the requesting party to appear.

Table 41. Percentage of Cases in Which a Review Conference was Held

	Denver	Pueblo	Total
Requests for modification filed	1,145	222	1,367
Review conferences scheduled	445	207	652
Review conference was held	341	168	509

Custodial parents were significantly more likely to attend review conferences in Pueblo than in Denver, while noncustodial parents were more apt to attend conferences in Denver than in Pueblo. This tracks with patterns in the two counties concerning the party requesting the conference. As previously mentioned, custodial parents were more likely to request the review in Pueblo, while noncustodial parents were more apt to be the requesting party in Denver. A majority of conferences

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in Denver (58%) were held with both parties in the same room, with only 6 percent in separate rooms and 15 percent participating by telephone. Only 30 percent of Pueblo conferences involved both parties participating simultaneously, 20 percent involved parties participating in separate rooms, and 10 percent involved one party participating by telephone. Most conferences in both counties were relatively brief, lasting less than 60 minutes, although 5 percent of Denver conferences lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. Conferences were held an average of 33 days after the request was filed in Denver and 45.8 days in Pueblo. Median lengths of time between requesting a modification and conducting a conference were even shorter: 29 days in Denver and 38 days in Pueblo.

Table 42. Attendance Patterns and Length of Review Conferences

	Denver	Pueblo	Total
Parties who attended conference			
★ Noncustodial parent	82%	74%	79%
★ Custodial parent	75%	91%	80%
Noncustodial parent's attorney	2%	0%	1%
Other	1%	0%	1%
Number	(341)	(168)	(509)
★ Attendance			
One party appeared in person	20%	37%	26%
Both parties in person, same room	58%	33%	49%
Both parties in person, different room or days	6%	20%	11%
One party participated by phone	15%	10%	13%
Neither party appeared in person	1%	1%	1%
Number	(299)	(169)	(468)
Length of conference			
Conference lasted 60 minutes or less	95%	98%	96%
Conference lasted 61-90 minutes ★	5%	2%	4%
Conferences where a continuance was granted	4%	5%	5%
Number	(297)	(164)	(461)
★ Length of time from modification request to conference (in days)			
Mean	33.1	45.8	39.7
Median	29.0	38.0	31.5
Range	7-395	4-297	4-395
Number	(137)	(151)	(288)

★ Chi square is significant between sites at .05 or less.

Although project architects had planned that workers would help parents seeking modification to complete financial affidavits at the conference, this occurred in only 1 percent of the conferences held at each site. Not surprisingly, the main issues discussed at the conference were the incomes of the noncustodial and the custodial parent. Discussions about which parent was to receive credit for the health insurance premium was the next most common topic discussed at review conferences, especially in Denver, when it was raised 62 percent of the time. Shared physical custody and overnight visits was discussed in 58 percent of Denver conferences, but only 16 percent of ones held in Pueblo.

Table 43. Help Received from CS Worker and Guidelines, Discussed at Review Conference

	Denver	Pueblo	Total
Someone from child support helped the part(ies) complete the financial statement Number	1% (247)	3% (162)	2% (409)
Guideline factors discussed at settlement conference			
★ Noncustodial parent's income	89%	96%	92%
★ Custodial parent's income	78%	93%	84%
★ Either parent's income from overtime	44%	10%	31%
★ Parent to receive credit for health insurance premium	62%	43%	54%
★ Amount of shared physical care (overnights) Number	58% (243)	16% (166)	41% (409)

★ Chi square is significant between sites at .05 or less.

Conference Outcomes

Across the two counties, conference outcomes were equally divided among the parties reaching an agreement (36%), failing to reach an agreement (32%), and having the review terminated (33%). Pueblo had a significantly higher agreement rate than did Denver (47% versus 29%). The parties could not reach an agreement in 37 percent of the review conferences conducted in Denver and 23 percent in Pueblo. Some Denver workers suggested that parents failed to agree because they preferred to have “their day in court.” Pueblo workers received training in mediation techniques at the start of the project. Finally, the review was terminated in 34 percent of Denver conferences and 30 percent of those conducted in Pueblo.

Terminations occurred for a variety of reasons, including a determination that no change in the order amount was warranted, which was the case for 46 percent of terminations; the failure to provide financial information (19%); or another reason, such as parents deciding not to pursue the review any further because of an unanticipated increase or decrease in the new order amount (34%). The increase in the minimum wage that went into effect on January 1, 2007, might have resulted in unexpected order increases that led to the decision to drop the request.

Table 44. Outcomes of Review Conferences

	Denver County	Pueblo County	Total
★ Outcome			
Parties reached agreement	29%	47%	36%
Parties could not reach agreement	37%	23%	32%
Review terminated Number	34% (268)	30% (154)	33% (422)
New MSO			
MSO agreed to at conference:			
Mean	\$367	\$338	\$354
Median	\$339	\$324	\$331
Range	\$48-\$1,309	\$31-\$987	\$31-\$1,309

Table 44. Outcomes of Review Conferences

	Denver County	Pueblo County	Total
★ Percentage with increase in MSO (greater than \$10)	20%	41%	30%
★ Percentage with decrease in MSO (greater than \$10)	27%	53%	39%
★ Percentage with MSO same as original (+/- \$10)	53%	5%	31%
If MSO increased, mean increase	\$181	\$200	\$194
★ If MSO decreased, mean decrease	\$144	\$211	\$187
Number	(84)	(74)	(158)
★ Reason review terminated			
Requesting party failed to provide financial information	14%	30%	19%
Not a 10% change	42%	55%	46%
Other	44%	16%	34%
Number	(81)	(44)	(125)

★ Chi square is significant between sites at .05 or less.

Nearly half of Pueblo cases that went to conference (48%) resulted in the order being modified. In other words, 74 of the 154 conferences resulted in an order modification. This was the case for 31 percent of Denver orders, or 84 of the 268 conferences that were held. Modified orders averaged between \$338 and \$367 per month, depending on the site.

A comparison of modified and original order amounts for cases where a review conference was held revealed that modification activity was significantly higher when parties were able to reach a settlement as compared with going to court. In 151 cases where the parties reached an agreement in the settlement conference, nearly a third agreed to increase, decrease, and keep the support order unchanged, respectively. Among cases that failed to reach an agreement in the conference and went to court, only 21 percent resulted in an order increase, 10 percent resulted in an order decrease and more than two-thirds (68%) were unchanged. When support orders were raised or lowered, the change was approximately \$200 per month in both directions.

Table 45. Comparison of Modified and Original Orders in Cases with a Review Conference

	Agreement in settlement conference (n=151)	No agreement in settlement conference, case went to court (n=271)
★ Percentage with increase in MSO (greater than \$10)	32%	21%
★ Percentage with decrease in MSO (greater than \$10)	38%	10%
★ Percentage with MSO same as original (+/- \$10)	31%	68%
If MSO increased, mean increase	\$194	\$215
If MSO decreased, mean decrease	\$188	\$201

★ Chi square is significant between sites at .05 or less.

Chapter 11: Reactions to Simplified Modification

Proponents of the simplified modification procedures developed for the Colorado project hoped that it would make the modification process more accessible and understandable to parents. Another goal was to shorten the time frames associated with modification and reduce the contentiousness of the process. Finally, it was expected that simplified procedures might improve customer satisfaction and lead to more favorable impressions of the child support agency.

To gauge user reactions to simplified modification procedures in the Colorado project, telephone interviews were conducted with noncustodial parents in child support cases for which a request for review and adjustment was filed using the simplified process developed for the project. Respondents were asked whether they recalled initiating or responding to a request for review and adjustment. Those who recalled filling out financial forms to change their child support order were asked about the ease of completing the forms. Those who recalled going to a conference to discuss the order change were asked about various features of the meeting and their helpfulness. And those who failed to attend the conference were asked about the salience of a variety of potential barriers to attending. The interview included questions on outcomes of the conference, including changes in the child support order, satisfaction with the child support order, self-reported payment behaviors, and financial stress. The interview concluded with questions on the accessibility of child support workers and ratings of the worker, the child support agency, and, for those who went to court, the judge who handled their child support case.

Interviews were conducted with 180 noncustodial parents who were involved with cases with a request for review and adjustment processed using simplified procedures during 2007 through March 2008. They represented 18 percent of the 978 noncustodial parents eligible to be interviewed. Nearly half (41%) of targeted noncustodial parents could not be reached because of wrong numbers (n=229), phone disconnections (n=121), and other factors such as language barriers or custodial parent status that made them ineligible to be interviewed. A total of 244 respondents (25%) could not be reached after more than 10 phone attempts per number. Only 36 targeted respondents declined to be interviewed, which translates into a hard refusal rate of 3.7 percent. Another 54 respondents were unavailable because the phone number led to businesses where the respondent was unknown, had been previously employed, or could not answer calls on company time.

The interviews were conducted during May 2008 through December 2008. Nearly 40 percent of the interviews took place approximately nine months after the modification request had been filed, while 58 percent were completed nearly a year to a year and a quarter past the request date. Less than 5 percent of completed interviews took place more than a year and a half past the enrollment date.

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The 22-minute survey was conducted by 19 interviewers with eight interviewers conducting 78 percent of the completed surveys. Most frequently, POL assigned male interviewers to the project to gain rapport with noncustodial respondents and 69 percent of completed interviews were conducted by male interviewers. POL placed 5,673 calls to the potential 978 respondents to generate 180 completed interviews. The number of phone attempts placed per completed interview ranged from one to 20, with the average number of calls per completed survey being 4.28. The attempts were staggered by day of the week and time of day to accommodate for respondents' availability. Interviewers were instructed to ask for a better phone number to reach the individual if told they no longer could be reached at the telephone number attempted. When no phone number was supplied for the noncustodial parent, interviewers phoned the custodial parents' home number in an attempt to reach the noncustodial parent. In 24 percent of the completed surveys the respondent was reached at a different number than the first number attempted.

To improve the response rate, CPR mailed pre-notification postcards to prospective respondents at their last known address and offered a \$20 Target gift card upon completion of the interview. The postcard indicated POL's toll-free number and mentioned the Target gift card.

Ratings of Actions by Workers and Assessments of their Helpfulness

More than half of interviewed noncustodial parents in both Denver (69%) and Pueblo (56%) recalled initiating a request for review and adjustment. The rest recalled responding to a request initiated by the custodial parent. Request patterns reported by interviewed noncustodial parents matched those reported by workers in the two counties, with custodial parents initiating requests at higher rates in Pueblo County as compared with Denver. Nearly two-thirds recalled filling out financial papers needed to process the review and adjustment. While the new forms were shortened and dropped the notarization requirement, they were still characterized as "somewhat" or "very" difficult by more than a third of interviewed parents. Program architects underestimated the difficulty that parents experience when they try to complete financial forms. Even though the new forms were meant to be user friendly, they were off-putting to 32 percent of responding noncustodial parents in Denver and 47 percent in Pueblo.

Table 46. Recollections of the Simplified Modification Process Reported by Noncustodial Parents, by Site

	Denver (n=144)	Pueblo (n=35)	Total (n=179)
In the last year, the NCP filled out a form saying he or she wanted to change the child support order	69%	56%	66%
The NCP received papers, either in the mail or by service, because the CP wanted to change the child support order	37%	46%	39%
The NCP filled out financial papers to change the child support order	62%	57%	61%
Overall ease of filling out the forms			
Very easy	21%	15%	20%
Somewhat easy	46%	39%	45%
Somewhat difficult	24%	39%	27%
Very difficult	8%	8%	8%

One new feature of the simplified modification process was the introduction of an in-person settlement conference to be conducted within 15 to 25 days after a request was received to facilitate a stipulation between the parties. Program architects thought that workers could use the conference to help parents complete their financial forms, explain the calculation used to determine a new order, promote agreement making between parents on new orders, and lead to productive discussions of visitation and other issues dealing with the children.

Table 47 shows that approximately half of interviewed noncustodial parents in Denver (52%) and two-thirds in Pueblo (66%) recalled attending a conference regarding a modification request. Overall, the conference inspired fewer than half (44%) of Denver respondents and 61 percent of Pueblo respondents to rate it as “very” or “somewhat” helpful. When asked about the helpfulness of specific features of the conference, respondents’ ratings were dramatically higher. This included help with filling out financial forms, explaining the calculation child support uses to develop a new order and generating interparty agreements or discussions about visitation and other issues. The problem was that many respondents did not recall the worker doing these types of helpful things during the conference. Less than one-third in either county recalled receiving help with financial forms, only 31 percent in Denver recalled the worker trying to get the custodial parents to understand the noncustodial parent’s situation and only 34 percent of Denver respondents recalled the worker helping the two parties reach an agreement about support. Pueblo respondents were significantly more apt to recall workers doing helpful things during the conference including explaining how child support calculates whether an order should be changed.

Table 47. Reactions to the Modification Conference Reported by Noncustodial Parents, by Site

	Percentage who received services		If received services, the percentage who found it very or somewhat helpful	
	Denver (n=145)	Pueblo (n=35)	Denver (n=75)	Pueblo (n=23)
NCPs who went to a meeting with the child support worker to change the child support order	52%	66%	44%	61%
Of those who did attend the meeting with the child support worker	Denver (n=76)	Pueblo (n=23)	Denver	Pueblo
Assistance filling out financial forms	28%	32%	71%	100%
An explanation of how child support calculates changes to the order	★63%	87%	88%	75%
Help the CP understand the NCP's situation	★31%	67%	100%	89%
Help the NCP understand the CP's situation	41%	57%	90%	92%
Help the NCP reach an agreement about support with the CP	34%	50%	92%	91%
Help the NCP talk with the CP about visitation and other issues about the children	12%	4%	67%	100%
Help the parents decide who should provide health insurance	35%	44%	77%	80%

★Chi square is significant at .05 or less.

Nearly half of Denver respondents and a third of Pueblo respondents did not attend the conference to review modification requests and try to produce agreements on new orders. This is comparable to the rate of dropped modification requests under the older, more complicated, and time-consuming procedure. To better understand why noncustodial parents failed to utilize this new reform, respondents were asked whether a variety of factors were barriers. Table 48 shows that the most commonly reason noncustodial parents in both counties gave for failing to appear at the conference was “did not know they were supposed to go to a meeting to modify the order.” Although workers mailed letters notifying parents about the date and time of their scheduled conference, more than one-third of responding parents in each county claimed not to know about the appointment. This underscores the importance of making telephone contact with noncustodial parents and the dangers of relying on mailed letters and notices.

Other reasons for not attending given by at least a fifth of responding noncustodial parents were feeling that the custodial parent would not cooperate (24%), not trusting the other parent (24%), not trusting the child support agency (23%), not trusting the child support worker to change the order amount (21%), and having trouble filling out the financial forms or getting financial documents (20%).

Table 48. Barriers to Attending the Modification Conference Reported by Noncustodial Parents, by Site

Of those who did not attend the meeting with the child support worker, the percentage who reported the following as barriers to attending the meeting	Denver (n=69)	Pueblo (n=12)	Total (n=81)
Lack of transportation	10%	0%	9%
Distance or travel time involved	15%	33%	18%
CP would not cooperate	24%	25%	24%
Work schedule	13%	25%	15%
Had trouble filling out the financial forms or getting financial documents	21%	17%	20%
NCP did not know he or she was supposed to go to a meeting to modify order	38%	36%	38%
It was not convenient	16%	33%	19%
It was not worth the time	6%	0%	5%
NCP did not think the child support worker would change the order amount	23%	8%	21%
NCP does not trust the child support agency	22%	25%	23%
NCP does not trust the other parent	27%	8%	24%

Outcomes of Modification Requests

Interviewed noncustodial parents reported a variety of outcomes in their modification cases. Approximately one-third (36%) in Denver and nearly one-half in Pueblo (49%) reported that they and the other parent reached an agreement. The proportion that did not reach an agreement and had to go to court was significantly higher in Denver (47%) as compared with Pueblo (21%). This may reflect the fact that modification workers in Pueblo were trained on mediation techniques and were presumably more adept at getting parties to compromise and agree. Another factor that undoubtedly affected the higher agreement rate in Pueblo was the lower proportion of custodial parents who failed to attend the meeting (26%). To contrast, 42 percent of responding noncustodial parents in Denver reported that the custodial parent had failed to attend the conference to discuss the request to modify.

Only a fraction of the requests described by these respondents were terminated because the noncustodial parent failed to provide the necessary paperwork or failed to appear (13%). In approximately one-third of the cases, the child support agency determined that the order could not be changed.

Overall, respondents were almost equally likely to say that as a result of applying for a review and adjustment, their orders had either gone up (36%), down (29%) or stayed the same (36%). More than half (55%) characterized their new support order as “not at all fair.” Nevertheless, most respondents indicated that they paid everything they owed (70%), with most of those who did not pay everything reporting that they generally pay “more than half” of what they owe.

Table 49. Outcomes of Modification Requests Reported by Noncustodial Parents, by Site

	Denver (n=141)	Pueblo (n=34)	Total (n=175)
Percentage of NCPs reporting the following happened			
The review was terminated because the NCP did not bring the necessary paperwork or did not attend the meeting about the modification	13%	12%	13%
The CP did not attend the meeting	42%	26%	40%
The child support agency said the order could not be changed	38%	29%	37%
The CP and NCP reached an agreement on the child support order	36%	49%	38%
★ The CP and NCP did not agree on a new child support order at the meeting and had to go to court	47%	21%	42%
Percentage of NCPs reporting that their child support order			
Increased	34%	44%	36%
Decreased	29%	27%	29%
Stayed the same	37%	29%	36%
Percentage of NCPs reporting their new child support order is			
Very fair	21%	26%	22%
Somewhat fair	25%	20%	24%
Not at all fair	55%	54%	55%
Percentage of NCPs who said this was how much of the MSO they actually paid			
Everything	63%	97%	70%
More than half	19%	3%	16%
About half	5%	0%	4%
Paid some, but less than half	11%	0%	9%
Paid nothing	2%	0%	2%

★Chi square is significant at .05 or less.

Explaining User Reactions

One difference between the two counties that might explain the user reactions is that Pueblo workers were trained in mediation techniques that emphasize methods of making each party feel “heard,” finding areas of common ground, and helping parties to compromise. The training in third-party dispute resolution techniques that Pueblo workers received might help to explain the higher rates of agreement and more favorable user reactions reported in that setting.

Other differences that might explain these user reaction patterns are the employment status and earning levels reported by respondents in the two counties. Pueblo respondents were more apt to report being employed full time, earning higher income, and feeling as though their income covered their financial needs. To contrast, Denver respondents were more apt to be unemployed, earn less money, and feel as though their financial needs far exceeded their income level. Thus, the lower conference ratings given by Denver respondents may reflect (in part) their lower socio-economic status and the higher financial stress levels they experienced.

Noncustodial parents in Denver who reported making less than full payments cited financial reasons to explain their payment lapses. At least half of these delinquent respondents said that they

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did not have the money (85%), had to stop working or were working fewer hours (80%), felt that the order was too high (76%), and/or had another family to support (60%).

Table 50. Employment, Earnings, and Financial Stress Reported by Interviewed Noncustodial Parents, by Site

	Denver (n=145)	Pueblo (n=35)	Total (n=180)
NCP reported employment status			
Employed full time	55%	80%	60%
Employed part time	10%	11%	10%
Work occasional or temporary jobs	9%	0%	7%
Self-employed	4%	3%	4%
Not working	22%	6%	19%
NCP reported gross annual income from all sources			
Less than \$20,000	45%	33%	43%
Between \$20,000 and \$39,999	37%	33%	37%
Between \$40,000 and \$59,999	9%	24%	12%
\$60,000 or more	8%	9%	8%
NCP response to how well their income covers their financial needs			
Very well	3%	6%	3%
Somewhat well	19%	29%	21%
Not very well	31%	37%	32%
Not at all	47%	29%	44%
Of the NCPs who reported paying less than the full child support amount, the percentage who said the following were reasons they did not pay the full amount			
You do not have the money	85%		85%
The child support order is too high	76%		76%
You have another family to support	60%		61%
You have had some disagreements about visitation	42%		43%
You have had some disagreements about how the child support is spent	32%		33%
The child support payment goes directly to the welfare department or state, not to the children	19%		19%
The other parent doesn't need the money	10%		12%
The other parent has a new partner who can help support the children	14%		16%
You do not think the child is yours	5%		5%
You did not want the child	6%		6%
You had to stopped working or were working less hours	80%		81%
Number	(53)	(1)	(54)

▲ Too few respondents from Pueblo reported paying less than their full child support amount to report these results.

Assessments of Workers, the Child Support Agency, and the Court

Lacking interviews with noncustodial parents who pursued review and adjustments using traditional procedures, CPR cannot determine whether simplified approaches led to improvements in customer service ratings. Respondents who were exposed to simplified procedures, however, reported mixed communication patterns with child support workers. While nearly all interviewed parents in both counties reported knowing the telephone number to call at child support for answers to their questions (78%), only one-third (31%) said that it was easy to reach someone at child support

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when they wanted to talk. Pueblo respondents were more likely to have a direct telephone number for their child support worker (71% versus 33%), know their worker’s name (51% versus 54%), talk with a child support worker by telephone (100% versus 80%), and talk with a child support worker in person (75% versus 65%).

Table 51. Communication with Child Support Workers Reported by Noncustodial Parents, by Site

Percentage of NCPs who replied yes to the following statements	Denver (n=145)	Pueblo (n=35)	Total (n=180)
Do you know what number to call at the child support agency if you have questions or your work situation changes?	78%	80%	78%
Do you know your child support worker's name?	54%	71%	58%
★ Do you have a direct number for your child support worker?	33%	71%	40%
Have you ever talked with a child support worker in person?	65%	74%	67%
★ Have you ever talked with a child support worker by telephone?	80%	100%	84%
Is it easy to reach someone at child support when you want to talk?	30%	34%	31%

★ Chi square is significant at .01 or less.

Overall, no forum or party that deals with child support issues receives strong user satisfaction ratings by most interviewed noncustodial parents. An identical 35 percent of respondents characterized their meetings with a child support worker and the judge who handled their child support case favorably. Only 27 percent rated their child support worker in such favorable terms. And even fewer (18%) gave the child support agency a favorable rating.

Table 52. Ratings of the Child Support Worker, Agency, and Court, by Noncustodial Parents

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Rating of the child support worker (n=173)	8%	19%	31%	42%
Rating of the child support agency (n=175)	4%	14%	33%	50%
Rating of the meeting with the child support worker (n=146)	8%	27%	27%	38%
Rating of the judge who handled your child support case (n=131)	17%	18%	26%	39%

The many open-ended comments volunteered by interviewed noncustodial parents who were asked whether they wished to comment about the experiences they had modifying their child support order offer some clues on why user ratings are so low. A few comments were positive, indicating that the simplified approach was having the effect that program architects intended.

Everything went real smooth, everything went real well. I was very surprised. We got everything turned around.

When I went through it, it was a fairly simple process. Me and the other party met with the caseworker. We sat down, gave her our income numbers. She told us how

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they figure out the child support amount based off of the percentage of overnight stays. I think I have a good caseworker. They are just plugging numbers into a formula to go about finding out the child support.

While the simplified process is clearly capable of producing positive results when competently implemented, nearly all of the 30 pages of comments were extremely negative. Most respondents felt that the process was lengthy and biased in favor of custodial parents. Many complained about unreturned phone calls, lost paperwork, and rude treatment. The following comments are illustrative.

When I tried to modify my order, it took nine months before they got back to me to make changes. They never told me all of the things that I needed to do to get the modification rolling. After this, my worker doesn't call me back when I call and treats me like a bad person.

I agree the absent parent should help out, but I think they should look at both sides and work with both people to get the job done instead of just throwing a large amount of money at them and telling them that they have to pay it and there's nothing you can do about it. They need to get both sides to discuss these issues, but they wouldn't know because they don't try. All I'm looking for is someone to work with me.

I had the hardest time contacting somebody, and when I did talk to someone at the child support agency, they were all for the mother.

I have tried to contact my child support worker. I have never been able to talk to her. I always talk to an operator. I get papers with her name on it but when I call, someone else always takes the call.

The mother never shows up with the information so the child support worker just goes on word of mouth. The mother never gives proof of daycare costs and how much she makes per hour, they take her word. When I asked for modification I asked her to bring in this information but she never has. And they don't seem to want to help and make her bring in the check stubs.

It was a long process. It started July of 2007, they lost the paperwork and didn't find it until November 2007, and the orders didn't go through until June of 2008. My modification never went down because the other parent never shows up to the

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meetings. Never wants to sign any paperwork. It's basically up to her what she wants to do and I feel that she is the only one in charge and no one wants to help me out.

The child support system is understaffed, over worked and under trained. We've had problems with professionalism and tact. They couldn't care less.

The length of time just takes forever. It's frustrating and expensive. It takes forever to happen. It's been four months since I filed, and I still haven't gotten anything settled.

They don't care about your income, even though my job doesn't exist anymore, it was cut by the governor. It was the restitution program and funded by Senate bill 94. The support order basically stayed the same. The worker said, "If you made it before, you could make it again."

When I have questions, no one wants to talk with me. They just say, hire a lawyer. They don't want to give you advice or tell you what your rights are.

Chapter 12: Outcomes Associated with Simplified Modification

Generating a Comparison Group for Simplified Modification Procedures

The cases exposed to simplified modification procedures were compared to a sample of cases with modification requests from the year prior to the new procedures. The comparison was to determine whether simplified modification procedures produced changes in the percentage of cases that were denied modifications, had their requests terminated, or resulted in reviews, and to see whether the simplified procedures altered the amount of time required to resolve the modification request or changed the nature of the order or payment. As was the case in the evaluation of early intervention techniques, it was impossible to use an experimental design and randomly assign cases with modification requests for simplified and conventional treatments. Both Denver and Pueblo began to process all modification requests using simplified approaches when this component of the project became effective in March 2008. As a result, we adopted a quasi-experimental approach and compared cases processed using the simplified approach with modification requests handled in a conventional manner during 2006. Like the early intervention evaluation, we relied on computer programmers with Colorado's Automated Child Support Enforcement System to generate the sample of cases in the comparison group.

The 1,015 noncustodial parents using the simplified modification process were compared to 1,216 noncustodial parents requesting a modification in 2006. This includes 807 comparison NCPs in Denver and 409 in Pueblo. Only one modification per noncustodial parent was included in the analysis.

To determine whether the experimental and comparison groups were fairly comparable, they were compared on a number of pre-modification factors. As Table 53 shows, most of the noncustodial parents in each group had never been married to the custodial parent. Approximately half of the NCPs in Denver and three quarters in Pueblo had never had children receiving TANF. Although there were some differences between the experimental and comparison groups in Denver with respect to the age of their orders, the differences were modest. On average, the experimental group had received their order 5.9 years prior to the modification request, while the figure was 4.7 years for the comparison group. In Pueblo, both groups had orders that were approximately 5 years old.

Experimental and comparison cases were also comparable on the number of children on the order for which a modification was requested. In each group in each county, the average was approximately 1.5 children. Similarly, in both groups at each site, noncustodial parents had an average of two child support cases open on ACSES. The order levels on the cases for which

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modifications were requested were also quite comparable across the experimental and comparison groups at each county, at approximately \$300 per month.

Table 53. Profile of Comparison and Experimental Groups

	Denver		Pueblo		All	
	Experimental Group (839)	Comparison (807)	Experimental Group (175)	Comparison (409)	Experimental Group (1,014)	Comparison (1,216)
Parents marital status						
Never married	77%	75%	60%	63%	74%	71%
Married	8%	10%	12%	10%	9%	10%
Separated/divorced	14%	16%	28%	27%	16%	19%
TANF status						★
Current TANF	20%	23%	5%	7%	18%	18%
Former TANF	35%	30%	17%	19%	26%	32%
Never TANF	45%	48%	78%	73%	56%	51%
Age of child support order in years (from order establishment to modification request date)		★★				★★
Mean	5.9	4.7	5.3	5.2	5.8	4.9
Median	5.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	5.0	4.0
Range	0-20	0-19	0-18	0-19	0-20	0-19
Number of children on order						
Mean	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.5
Median	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Range	1-6	1-6	1-4	1-7	1.6	1-7
Original support order amount (MSO)						★★
Mean	\$318	\$307	\$304	\$266	\$316	\$294
Median	\$286	\$264	\$288	\$215	\$286	\$245
Range	\$0-\$1,600	\$0-\$1,664	\$0-\$1,200	\$0-\$1,033	\$0-\$1,600	\$0-\$1,664
Percentage of cases with \$0 MSO amount	4%	4%	9%	6%	6%	5%
Total number of cases NCP has on ACSES		★★				★★
Mean	2.3	2.2	2.0	2.0	2.3	2.1
Median	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
Range	1-13	1-18	1-7	1-8	1-13	1-18
	(839)	(807)	(175)	(409)	(1,014)	(1,216)
Party requesting modification review		★				★
Custodial parent	31%	47%	44%	46%	33%	46%
Noncustodial parent	62%	48%	55%	52%	61%	50%
Child support enforcement unit	4%	5%	1%	2%	3%	4%
ACSES generated for TANF cases	3%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%
	(823)	(807)	(175)	(409)	(998)	(1,216)

★ Chi square of experimental and comparison is significant at .05 or less.

★★ T-test of difference between experimental and comparison group means significant at .05 or less.

As shown in Table 53, the experimental and comparison groups in Denver differed somewhat with respect to the party making the modification request. Just over 60 percent of the simplified cases involved a modification request by an NCP, while the comparison group was evenly divided between requests by NCPs and CPs. In Pueblo, by contrast, the experimental and comparison groups were very comparable with respect to the party requesting the modification.

Cases Denied or Terminated from the Modification Process

In both Denver and Pueblo, there were experimental and comparison group differences with respect to whether the modification request progressed to a review. However, the differences by group are not consistent across the counties. In Denver, comparison group cases were more likely to proceed to a full review than were experimental cases. In Pueblo, the opposite was true. When only Denver cases that were referred for a review and adjustment by an early intervention worker are considered, the experimental and comparison groups look quite comparable. In other words, the experimental cases in Denver referred by other sources are those that tend not to proceed to a full review.

Table 54. Description of the Modification Process for Experimental and Comparison Groups

	Denver		Pueblo		All	
	Experimental Group	Comparison	Experimental Group	Comparison	Experimental Group	Comparison
Outcome of review request		★		★		★
Request denied	9%	2%	2%	8%	8%	4%
Review began, terminated at discovery	37%	31%	22%	28%	34%	30%
Review completed	54%	67%	76%	65%	58%	66%
	(807)	(823)	(175)	(409)	(998)	(1,216)

★ Chi square of experimental and comparison is significant at .05 or less.

Table 55. Outcome of Modification Request by Referral Source

	Denver		
	Experimental Referred by early intervention worker	Other referral source	Comparison
Outcome of review request		★	
Request denied	5%	13%	2%
Review began, terminated at discovery	35%	38%	31%
Review completed	60%	48%	67%
	(401)	(422)	(807)

★ Chi square of experimental and comparison is significant at .05 or less.

Among those cases denied a review, the primary reason in the comparison groups, in both Denver and Pueblo, is that it has been less than 36 months since the previous modification request. Among experimental group cases in both Denver and Pueblo, most cases that were denied a review were simply coded “unspecified” with respect to reason.

Among those cases that begin the review process but are terminated, the primary reason for both experimental and comparison groups in both counties is the lack of financial information for one or both parents. Among experimental cases, another common reason for termination is that the case meets the criteria for closure and this action is taken rather than a modification. The same is not true for comparison group cases. The factors that make cases eligible for closure include such things as

the lack of current support obligations and minimal arrears or the party receiving the child support payment requests closure.

Table 56. Description of the Modification Process for Experimental and Comparison Groups

	Denver		Pueblo		All	
	Experimental Group	Comparison	Experimental Group	Comparison	Experimental Group	Comparison
Reason modification request was denied	★		★		★	
Less than 36 months since last review	24%	69%	0%	68%	23%	68%
Youngest within 1 yr of emancipation	16%	0%	33%	29%	17%	21%
Pending court action to modify Request for mod of parenting time	4%	15%	0%	0%	4%	5%
Child not reached age of emancipation	7%	8%	0%	3%	6%	4%
Unspecified denial	3%	8%	0%	0%	3%	2%
	47%	0%	67%	0%	47%	0%
	(75)	(13)	(3)	(31)	(78)	(44)
Reason review was terminated	★					
No financial information on CP or NCP	72%	88%	69%	81%	72%	85%
CP requests closure	1%	1%	0%	2%	1%	1%
CP location unknown	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%
NCP location unknown	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Initiating jurisdictions requests closure	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%
CP not cooperating	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%
Case meets other closure criteria▲	25%	10%	31%	16%	26%	12%
	(302)	(250)	(39)	(114)	(341)	(364)

★ Chi square of experimental and comparison is significant at .05 or less.

▲ Key reasons include closure of the public assistance case and no outstanding arrears, arrears only cases with only minor or no arrears, or a caretaker requesting the case be closed.

Table 57 shows that modification requests made by custodial parents are more likely to proceed to a full review than are requests from noncustodial parents. This is true even if cases that are closed are removed from the analysis.

Table 57. Outcome of Modification Request by Party Requesting

	Denver				Pueblo			
	Experimental Group		Comparison		Experimental Group		Comparison	
	Mod request by:		Mod request by:		Mod request by:		Mod request by:	
	CP	NCP	CP	NCP	CP	NCP	CP	NCP
Case was not denied or terminated (proceeded to full review)	★		★		★		★	
	55%	40%	67%	59%	79%	68%	67%	54%
	(257)	(512)	(378)	(390)	(76)	(98)	(188)	(212)

★ Chi square of experimental and comparison is significant at .05 or less.

A final point with respect to termination of the review process is noteworthy. Cases in the experimental group were less likely than comparison group cases to be terminated due to the lack of

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financial information for one or both parents. This suggests that the intervention was successful in increasing the information available in cases.

Table 58. Reason for Modification Termination★		
	Experimental	Comparison
Terminated due to		
No financial information on CP or NCP	72%	85%
Other reasons	28%	15%
	(341)	(364)

★ Chi square of experimental and comparison is significant at .05 or less.

Outcomes in Cases with a Full Modification Review

Among cases that proceeded through the full review process, there were no differences by experimental or comparison group in the percentages that were resolved by stipulation of the parties, default, or court hearings. The vast majority of cases were resolved by stipulation, followed in frequency by court hearings and default orders. Thus, despite the emphasis on pre-hearing conferences, experimental group cases in both Denver and Pueblo were not significantly more likely to settle by stipulation.

The amount of time required to resolve the case — through denial, termination, or completion of the review — was shorter for experimental versus comparison group cases in Pueblo (48 days versus 86 days). This was not true in Denver, where the experimental cases actually took longer to resolve (64 days versus 54 days). Similarly, among cases proceeding through a full review, the number of days elapsing from the modification request to the completion of the review was shorter for the experimental versus the comparison group in Pueblo (48 days versus 94 days), but not in Denver (80 days versus 60 days).

These patterns are summarized in Table 59.

Table 59. Method of Resolution and Time to Resolution						
	Denver		Pueblo		All	
	Experimental Group	Comparison	Experimental Group	Comparison	Experimental Group	Comparison
Method of modified order establishment						
Stipulation	70%	70%	96%	91%	76%	80%
Default	9%	11%	2%	4%	8%	8%
Court	21%	19%	2%	5%	16%	13%
	(403)	(390)	(131)	(316)	(534)	(706)
Days from modification request to resolution (completed review, denial, terminated review)	★★		★★			
Average	64.2 (750)	53.9 (794)	48.4 (172)	85.7 (378)	61.2 (922)	64.1 (1172)
Days from modification request to result for cases with a review completed	★★		★★			
Mean	79.5	60.4	47.9	94.0	72.3	71.4
Median	61.0	43.5	37.0	54.5	54.0	50.0
Range	0-358 (448)	0-440 (544)	15-275 (132)	0-556 (264)	0-358 (580)	0-556 (808)

★ Chi square of experimental and comparison is significant at .05 or less.

★★ T-test of difference between experimental and comparison group means significant at .05 or less.

▲ Key reasons include closure of the public assistance case and no outstanding arrears, arrears only cases with only minor or no arrears, or a caretaker requesting closure.

The outcome in cases that completed the review process is shown in Table 60. In both Denver and Pueblo, downward modifications were slightly more likely in comparison versus experimental cases. Table 61 shows that this pattern holds when controlling for the party making the modification request. When noncustodial parents or custodial parents request a review, downward modifications are more common among the comparison than the experimental group.

Table 60. Outcomes of Processed Modifications						
	Denver		Pueblo		All	
	Experimental Group (839)	Comparison (807)	Experimental Group (175)	Comparison (409)	Experimental Group (1,014)	Comparison (1,216)
If not terminated or denied, result of modification request	★		★		★	
Downward modification	45%	50%	33%	50%	42%	50%
No change	12%	9%	20%	6%	14%	8%
Upward modification	43%	40%	47%	44%	44%	41%
Change in medical support order	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	1%
	(448)	(544)	(132)	(264)	(580)	(808)

★ Chi square of experimental and comparison is significant at .05 or less.

Table 61. Modification Outcome				
If not terminated or denied, result of modification request	All Counties			
	Modification requested by CP		Modification requested by NCP	
	Experimental	Comparison	Experimental	Comparison
Downward modification	7%	21%	68%	80%
No change	83%	72%	17%	11%
Upward modification	10%	5%	14%	9%
Change in medical support order	0%	2%	0%	0%
	(218)	(398)	(320)	(371)

★ Chi square of experimental and comparison is significant at .05 or less.

Finally, the source of the modification request among experimental cases does not appear to be related to the outcome of the modification request. The requests by noncustodial parents who were referred by the early intervention workers were not more likely to receive downward modifications relative to the comparison group or experimental group cases referred by others.

Table 62. Outcome of Modification Request by Referral Source for NCP Modification Requests			
★ If not terminated or denied, result of modification request	Denver		
	Experimental		Comparison
	Referred by early intervention worker	Other referral source	
Downward modification	65%	72%	80%
No change	18%	18%	11%
Upward modification	18%	10%	9%
	(166)	(154)	(371)

★ Chi square of experimental and comparison is significant at .05 or less.

Table 63 shows the average monthly obligation at the time of the modification request and at the time of the extract. Only open cases that had a modification review are included in the table. The only significant difference is in the Pueblo experimental group, where averages orders were higher at the extract than at the modification request.

Table 63. Modification Outcome★						
	Denver		Pueblo		All	
	Experimental Group	Comparison	Experimental Group	Comparison	Experimental Group	Comparison
Order amount at modification request	\$319	\$337	\$292	\$281	\$313	\$318
Support order amount at extract	\$324	\$351	\$347	\$298	\$329	\$333
	(396)	(371)	(396)	(109)	(505)	(559)

★ Only cases with modification reviews. Excludes \$0 orders.
 ★ ★ T-test of means comparing pre and post is significant at .05 or less.

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Table 64 summarizes the arrears status of cases at the time of the data extract. A comparison of the comparison and experimental groups demonstrates that the comparison groups in both Denver and Pueblo were less likely to have arrears than were experimental group cases. Arrears levels were higher in the experimental group in general and also among the subset of cases proceeding to a full modification review.

Table 64. Modification Outcome						
	Denver		Pueblo		All	
	Experimental Group	Comparison	Experimental Group	Comparison	Experimental Group	Comparison
Arrears balance as of extract date (of those with modifications processed)	★ ★				★ ★	
Mean	\$8,922	\$5,499	\$5,810	\$4,195	\$8,209	\$5,073
Median	\$3,422	\$300	\$795	\$77	\$2,736	\$172
Range	\$0-\$74,537 (448)	\$0-\$81,003 (544)	\$0-\$58,978 (133)	\$0-\$83,066 (264)	\$0-\$74,537 (581)	\$0-\$83,066 (808)
Arrears balance as of extract date (all cases)	★ ★				★ ★	
Mean	\$9,499	\$5,900	\$7,343	\$5,304	\$9,127	\$5,700
Median	\$3,695	\$435	\$915	\$150	\$3,161	\$272
Range	\$0-\$105,797 (839)	\$0-\$106,771 (807)	\$0-\$89,561 (175)	\$0-\$137,713 (409)	\$0-\$105,797 (1,014)	\$0-\$137,713 (1,216)
Percentage of cases with no arrears balance	★		★		★	
Open cases (Of those with modifications processed)	17% (402)	33% (420)	19% (115)	32% (202)	18% (517)	33% (622)
Percentage of cases with no arrears balance	★		★		★	
Open cases (all cases)	15% (723)	30% (629)	17% (151)	30% (318)	15% (874)	30% (947)

★ Chi square of experimental and comparison is significant at .05 or less.

★ ★ T-test of means comparing experimental and comparison group is significant at .05 or less.

Payment Patterns in Treatment and Comparison Groups

The final set of tables deal with payment patterns for experimental and comparison group cases. As Table 65 shows, payments in the 18 months preceding the modification request were somewhat higher in the comparison group in Denver. In Pueblo, and when both counties are combined, the experimental and comparison groups did not differ in the percentage of support paid in the 18 months prior to the modification request.

Table 65. Payment Prior to Group Assignment, All Cases

	Denver		Pueblo		All	
	Experimental Group	Comparison	Experimental Group	Comparison	Experimental Group	Comparison
Percentage of the current support due that was actually paid in the 18 months prior to intake	★★					
Mean	47.3% (765)	51.1% (718)	55.7% (160)	51.5% (335)	48.7% (925)	51.2% (1,053)

★★ T-test of means comparing experimental and comparison group is significant at .05 or less.

As Table 66 shows, there were no differences between experimental and comparison group cases in the percentage of current support paid in the 18 months following the modification request. Both groups in both counties paid a little more than half of the amount they owed. Further, as Table 67 indicates, both experimental and comparison groups paid higher percentages of their obligations in the 18 months following the modification request compared to the 18 months prior to the request. The increases were between 7 and 9 percentage points overall.

Table 66. Payment Post-Group Assignment, All Cases

	Denver		Pueblo		All	
	Experimental Group	Comparison	Experimental Group	Comparison	Experimental Group	Comparison
Percentage of the current support due that was actually paid in the 18 months post- modification request						
Mean	54.3% (797)	57.0% (737)	64.3% (169)	59.4% (365)	56.1% (966)	57.8% (1,102)

Table 67. Payment Post-Group Assignment for Cases with Obligations at Group Assignment

	Denver		Pueblo	
	Experimental Group	Comparison	Experimental Group	Comparison
Paired T-test	★★		★★	
Percentage paid pre-group assignment	47.5%	51.5%	55.9%	51.9%
Percentage paid post-group assignment	54.6%	58.5%	64.7%	60.8%
	+7.1 percentage points	+7 percentage points	+8.8 percentage points	+8.9 percentage points
	(755)	(681)	(159)	(319)

★★ T-test of pre and post is significant at .05 or less.

Chapter 13: Summary and Conclusions

Conducted in Denver and Pueblo, two large urban counties, Colorado's Section 1115 demonstration grant aimed to improve child support payments and reduce arrears by utilizing early intervention strategies and simplified modification procedures. Workers were asked to contact noncustodial parents in a wide range of case types to establish positive relationships, explain orders, provide appropriate referrals, address barriers to payment, and monitor payment. On an as-needed basis, they were also asked to contact custodial parents and employers to help to locate obligors and establish effective wage withholding orders. With respect to simplified modification, CSE developed a streamlined review and adjustment procedure that involved a simplified form to request an order modification, financial affidavits that did not require notarization, reduced time frames for notification and response, and in-person negotiation conferences to facilitate agreement-making between the parties.

The project evaluation involved the analysis of records maintained by workers on proactive actions they attempted and those that they achieved with cases in the experimental group, telephone interviews with noncustodial parents who were targeted for early intervention and simplified modification procedures to gauge their reactions and focus groups with child support staff. It also involved the examination of child support records for cases exposed to project treatments and a groups of cases processed using conventional techniques to determine rates of child support payment, arrears balances, and enforcement activity.

Unlike several previous experiments dealing with early intervention, the Colorado project tested the feasibility of having general child support workers incorporate early intervention into the normal range of activities they are expected to perform with their regular caseload, rather than using specialized personnel. Colorado also tested the efficacy of using early intervention techniques on older delinquency cases, as well as those more typically targeted for early intervention, namely cases with newly established orders.

From July 2006 through January 2008, four child support workers who handle enforcement cases in Denver and three in Pueblo applied proactive contact techniques to 1,250 cases, 817 and 433 cases in the two counties, respectively. From March 2007 through June 2008, workers in the two counties processed 1,367 requests for review and adjustment (1,145 in Denver and 222 in Pueblo) using simplified procedures developed for this project. During 2008, professional interviewers with the Public Opinion Laboratory of Northern Illinois University conducted telephone interviews with 182 noncustodial parents targeted to receive early intervention treatments and 180 noncustodial parents whose review and adjustment cases were processed using simplified modification procedures.

During June 2009, programmers at CSE generated an automated extract showing payment activity, arrears balances, enforcement actions, and various case processing time frames for cases

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exposed to early intervention and simplified modification treatments. They also generated groups of cases that were treated using conventional techniques and produced similar information on case characteristics and outcomes pertaining to payments, arrears balances, and time frames for case processing.

Although programmers made every attempt to match the sample of cases in the treatment and comparison groups, the cases they identified that were processed using conventional techniques differed from the cases that were processed using early intervention in some fundamental ways that limit the reliability of the analysis. While the treatment and comparison groups for the analysis of simplified modification procedures were more equivalent, the increase in the minimum wage that became effective in Colorado on January 1, 2007, is a potential source of bias. The comparison group was comprised of cases with requests filed in 2006, a time period that preceded the rise in minimum wage, while the treatment group was generated in 2007 to 2008, a time period that followed wage change.

The following are highlights from a comprehensive program evaluation using these various data collection techniques.

Early Intervention Strategies

- **It was extremely challenging for child support workers with a regular complement of enforcement cases to select cases from their very large caseloads that were suitable for early intervention outreach activities.** While it was relatively easy for workers to flag cases with new orders, it was more difficult for them to identify delinquency cases of different durations that might benefit from proactive outreach. Although CSE made a new tool available to workers that showed payment performance for cases for which they have responsibility, it needed to be reviewed manually. Case volume remained low, with workers ultimately identifying 1,250 cases for early intervention treatment over 19 months, which was an average of 65 per month across the seven project workers, or 9.4 cases per worker.
- **It was also challenging for general workers with caseloads of 350 to 650 enforcement cases to handle early intervention activities on top of their regular caseload responsibilities.** A key early intervention activity is to conduct a telephone call with noncustodial parents to establish a relationship, answer questions, identify payment barriers, and make appropriate referrals. Workers reported that these calls were time consuming, typically taking 20 minutes. The data collection duties for the project evaluation compounded the time burdens associated with early intervention and further discouraged workers from pursuing early intervention activities.
- **Without developing a specialized caseload, most cases that regular enforcement workers have that are available for early intervention treatment are older delinquency cases.** Only 13 percent of the project cases, flagged by the seven workers in Denver and

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Pueblo counties that participated in the project, involved new orders and were “fresh” to the child support system. Most cases that they flagged for early intervention treatment (68%) were older cases with payment delinquencies of various lengths of time. Small and similar percentages of project cases had older orders but were new to the child support system (11%) or had newly modified orders (11%).

- **Workers reported reaching noncustodial parents by telephone in half the cases targeted for early intervention.** Although it was a project goal to conduct a relationship-building call with noncustodial parents in every project case, workers in the two counties reported that they attempted to do this in 66 percent of the cases flagged for early intervention treatment and were successful in reaching noncustodial parents in 52 percent of all cases. Workers agreed that telephone calls with noncustodial parents were valuable, but found it difficult to locate parents due to outdated telephone numbers, especially in older cases that had accumulated delinquencies. Workers often found it helpful to contact custodial parents to obtain updated locate information; workers contacted employers when payments stopped to verify employment and/or uncover new job activity.
- **Workers in both counties tended to rely on more conventional outreach techniques, such as mailing materials to targeted noncustodial parents, rather than conducting telephone calls and in-person meetings.** Workers reported doing mailings in 72 percent of cases targeted for early intervention, as compared with telephone contact in about 50 percent of cases and in-person meetings in 6 percent of cases.
- **Workers reported rarely engaging in referral activities.** Although one goal of early intervention is to identify and address barriers to payment, workers reported that they rarely engaged in referral activities. They reported making referrals for community-based services dealing with employment or access and visitation in only 3 percent of the cases, although this might reflect the failure to report referral activities rather than their absence. Approximately 5 and 15 percent of interviewed noncustodial parents recalled their workers giving them referrals for problems with employment and visitation, respectively. Workers said they were frustrated with the lack of job opportunities and mediation resources for noncustodial parents and wanted additional training in this area.
- **Workers reported rarely engaging in other early intervention activities.** Workers rarely did other things anticipated by program architects, such as recommending that noncustodial parents pursue review and adjustment procedures (5%), sending thank-you cards to obligors who made three monthly payments of support (12%), and filing a contempt action (9%), although workers may have underreported these activities since higher proportions of interviewed obligors recalled outreach dealing with review and adjustment. While workers agreed that parents appreciated receiving a hand-written thank-you card, they felt that were

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“too busy putting out fires” and dealing with non-payers to acknowledge the receipt of payment.

- **Through calls to noncustodial parents and/or their employers, workers often learn about employment activity.** As a result of proactive outreach calls, workers in the two counties reported that they learned about employment activity in 35 percent of the cases, confirmed employment in 43 percent of the cases, and put a wage withholding order in place in 48 percent of the cases. Based on these contacts, they subjectively determined that 40 percent of the noncustodial parents in each county (41% in Denver and 38% in Pueblo) lacked the ability to pay his or her child support. The proportion of noncustodial parents in the two counties viewed by workers as being highly cooperative and able to pay was only 11 and 10 percent, respectively.
- **Workers reported no difference in their ability to reach obligors for proactive calls in new versus older, delinquent cases.** Although other early intervention studies conducted in Nebraska and Iowa concluded that early intervention was more effective in cases with new orders, workers in Colorado reported identical patterns of contact with noncustodial parents in new versus older case types. Across the two counties, workers reported reaching 55 percent of noncustodial parents in new cases and 52 percent in older delinquency cases. They reported conducting in-person meetings with an identical 6 percent in both groups. To the extent that there were differences by case type, older delinquency cases appeared to be associated with the lowest levels of telephone contact, the highest rates of under-the-table employment, lower rates of employment and wage withholding, and less favorable subjective ratings by workers of willingness and ability to pay.
- **The employment status of noncustodial parents varied by case type, with obligors in newly modified orders being significantly more likely to have a verified employer (74%) and the least likely to be unemployed (14%).** In contrast, cases with new and older delinquencies had the highest rates of unemployment (33% and 32%, respectively), and the lowest rates of verified employment (32% and 29%, respectively). Cases with new orders and existing cases that were new to the child support agency fell between these extremes, with workers reporting that half of the noncustodial parents in such cases had verified employers and that approximately 20 percent were unemployed.
- **Noncustodial parents were more likely to recall receiving conventional forms of communication than early intervention outreach efforts.** In telephone interviews, noncustodial parents in the early intervention treatment group were most apt to recall receiving conventional forms of communication from the child support agency, with three-quarters reporting that they received a letter notifying them about their obligations and nearly half reporting receiving a letter about a missed payment. They were far less likely to recall

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being the recipients of more proactive, early intervention measures including “relationship-building” telephone calls, special mailings, and/or community referrals. Across the two counties, 32 percent said that they had received outreach telephone calls, 24 percent said that they had received special mailings, and 19 percent reported receiving referrals for community services. While this fell below the level of telephone activity reported by workers in Denver (52%) and Pueblo (56%), it was higher than worker reports of the rate of special mailings and referral activity that they pursued.

- **Interviewed noncustodial parents rated most early intervention actions as at least somewhat helpful, especially in-person meetings and telephone calls.** The actions with the highest helpfulness ratings were referrals for help with visitation (66%), referrals for help with employment (58%), and a letter of thanks for making regular payments (43%).

- **Interviewed obligors rated workers more highly in their enforcement duties than in their relationship-building role.** Even though they were exposed to early intervention actions, most interviewed noncustodial parents viewed workers as doing a “very good job” in their conventional enforcement role (*e.g.*, explaining what will happen if you do not pay) and doing a “poor job” in a relationship-building role (*e.g.*, making you feel like that they care about you), or a referral role (*e.g.*, telling you how to get help with employment and visitation).

Interviewed obligors reported that it was difficult to reach their worker at child support by telephone. While some respondents volunteered that their interactions with workers had improved over time, and nearly all had talked with a child support worker at some time by telephone, the majority of interviewed noncustodial parents complained that it was difficult to reach someone at child support when they wanted to talk.

Early intervention did little to improve the image of the child support agency. Half of interviewed project participants rated the worker, the agency and the court as “very” or “somewhat” unfair. As one respondent explained, “The call with my worker was helpful in that they explained the process. It was unhelpful in that the law is completely intolerant of any circumstances outside of the norm. The law is so restrictive; the worker has no discretion and can’t go on a case-by-case basis. They don’t work with you. They just read the computer screen and follow a flow chart.”

Most interviewed project participants say they do not pay child support before they do not have the money. The interviews with noncustodial parents suggest that early intervention may do little to promote voluntary payment of child support, since the chief reason for nonpayment cited by respondents was not having the money to pay (87%). Half reported being employed full time, two-thirds (63%) reported that their salary did not cover their needs, and half reported having another family to support (53%).

- **Interviewed project participants reported facing many difficult financial circumstances and complained that their workers were unresponsive.** In their unsolicited comments, respondents repeatedly complained about high orders during prison sentences, losing a job and being unable to reduce their orders, incurring arrears while not knowing that they had a child, paying support and losing their driver's licenses, being unable to see their child, and experiencing accounting errors and lengthy modification process. Although it will take more than a relationship-building phone call to redress the powerlessness that many respondents reported feeling, more responsive customer service approaches would be an important first step.

Simplified Modification Procedures

- **Early intervention procedures can generate referrals for review and adjustment, particularly from paying obligors with low arrears balances.** Nearly half the requests for review and adjustment were referred by the seven workers who staffed the early intervention component of the project and were instructed to suggest that noncustodial parents explore the feasibility of obtaining an order modification. Requests for review and adjustment were filed by engaged, paying parties with low arrears balances. They rarely involved cases established by default and/or nonpaying parties with high arrears balances.
- **Simplified modification procedures can attract more noncustodial parents to apply.** More than half the requests in both counties (61% in Denver and 56% in Pueblo) were filed by noncustodial parents seeking a downward modification, frequently due to job loss, a pay cut, an injury, or disability. Pueblo generated a significantly higher proportion of requests by custodial parents (42% versus 30%), who frequently sought an upward modification due to an increase in the minimum wage, which became effective in Colorado on January 1, 2007.
- **Workers terminated many requests for failure to supply financial information, although the termination rate was lower in Pueblo because workers were willing to help parents complete the financial forms at the settlement conference.** To make the review and adjustment process more accessible to parties and to facilitate agreement making, the process was amended to include an in-person settlement conference to be held within 15 to 25 days after a request was filed. Despite these objectives, 60 percent of requests were terminated in Denver and only 39 percent of cases proceeded to the conference stage. In Pueblo, workers were more flexible and reported that they allowed parents to bring their financial documents to the conference rather than requiring that they submit them prior to scheduling. Accordingly, Pueblo workers scheduled conferences in 93 percent of cases with a modification request.
- **In both counties, most review conferences that were scheduled were held (74% in Denver and 80% in Pueblo).** The major reason why they were not held was the failure of

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the requesting party to appear. Custodial parents were more likely to request modifications and attend review conferences in Pueblo, while noncustodial parents were apt to request and attend conferences in Denver. While most Denver conferences were held with both parties in the same room (58%), only 30 percent of Pueblo conferences involved both parties participating simultaneously. Another 20 percent involved the use of shuttle techniques across two rooms, and 10 percent involved one party participating by telephone. Most conferences lasted less than 60 minutes.

- **Across the two counties, conference outcomes were equally divided among the parties reaching an agreement (36%), failing to reach an agreement (32%), and having the review terminated (33%), but there were differences by county.** Agreement rates were higher in Pueblo (47%) than in Denver (29%). Denver workers attributed the lower success rate to the contentiousness of their clientele. Pueblo workers received training in mediation techniques. In both counties, a third of the conferences were terminated, typically because the requesting party withdrew the request following an unanticipated increase or decrease in the new order amount.
- **Across the two counties, conference settlements were equally divided among parties agreeing to an increase in support (30%), a decrease (39%), and no change (31%), but there were differences by county.** Nearly half of Pueblo cases that went to conference resulted in an order modification, with 41 percent going up, 53 percent going down, and only 5 percent remaining unchanged. Only a third (31%) of Denver cases resulted in an order modification, with 20 percent going up, 27 percent going down, and 53 percent remaining unchanged. Average increases and decreases for modified orders was approximately \$200 per month.
- **Modification activity was significantly higher when parties were able to reach a settlement in a conference as compared with going to court.** In 151 cases where the parties reached an agreement in the settlement conference, nearly a third agreed to increase, decrease, and keep the support order unchanged, respectively. Among cases that failed to reach an agreement in the conference and went to court, only 21 percent resulted in an order increase, 10 percent resulted in an order decrease, and more than two-thirds (68%) were unchanged. When support orders were raised or lowered by the parties and the court, the change was approximately \$200 per month in both directions.
- **Most interviewed noncustodial parents recalled initiating a request for review and adjustment, but a substantial proportion still found the forms difficult to complete.** More than half of interviewed noncustodial parents in both Denver (69%) and Pueblo (56%) recalled initiating a request for review and adjustment. The rest recalled responding to a request initiated by the custodial parent. Although the forms were shortened and the

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notarization requirement was dropped, a third of Denver respondents and 47 percent in Pueblo characterized them as “somewhat” or “very” difficult to complete.

- **Half of the interviewed noncustodial parents who recalled attending a modification settlement conference rated it as helpful, although the most helpful feature was getting help with filling out financial forms, which was rarely done.** Half of interviewed parents in Denver (52%) and two-thirds in Pueblo recalled attending a conference regarding their modification request. It was characterized as “very” or “somewhat” helpful by 44 percent of Denver respondents and 61 percent of Pueblo respondents. Although the most helpful features of the conference were help with filling out financial forms, explaining the child support guideline, and discussing visitation issues, only about a third of respondents recalled that the worker provided this type of assistance.
- **The chief reasons interviewed noncustodial parents gave for not attending the conference was not receiving a mailed notice and/or having trouble filling out financial forms.** Nearly half of Denver respondents and a third of Pueblo respondents did not attend the conference. More than a third of respondents in each county claimed not to know about the conference appointment which was mailed to the parties. About a fifth of responding parents, respectively, did not attend because they did not trust the other parent, the child support agency, the child support worker, and/or had trouble filling out financial forms.
- **Interviewed noncustodial parents were equally apt to say their orders had gone up, down, or stayed the same and half remained very displeased with the outcome.** A third of Denver (36%) and half of Pueblo (50%) respondents reported that they and the other parent had reached an agreement in the conference. Those who did not reach an agreement had to go to court. Overall, respondents were almost equally likely to say that as a result of applying for a review and adjustment, their orders had either gone up (36%), down (29%), or stayed the same (36%). More than half (55%) characterized their new orders as “not at all fair.”
- **Interviewed noncustodial parents who said they paid less than the full amount due in child support said they did not have the money and/or had lost their job.** As was the case with early intervention interviews, noncustodial parents who reported paying less than the full amount due said that they did not have the money (85%), had lost their job or had lower earnings (80%), felt that the order was too high (76%), and/or had another family to support (60%).
- **Interviewed noncustodial parents knew how to reach their child support worker but complained that it was difficult to get through to their worker and have a conversation.** Respondents who were exposed to simplified procedures reported mixed communication

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patterns with child support workers. While nearly all interviewed parents in both counties reported knowing the telephone number to call at child support for answers to their questions (78%), only one-third (31%) said that it was easy to reach someone at child support when they wanted to talk.

- **Overall, no forum or party that deals with child support issues receives strong user satisfaction ratings by most interviewed noncustodial parents.** An identical 35 percent of respondents characterized their meetings with a child support worker and the judge who handled their child support case favorably. Only 27 percent rated their child support worker in such favorable terms. Even fewer (18%) gave the child support agency a favorable rating.
- **Interviewed noncustodial parents felt that the modification process was lengthy and biased in favor of custodial parents.** While some comments volunteered by respondents were positive, indicating that the simplified modification approach when competently implemented was having the intended effects, most respondents felt that the process was lengthy and biased in favor of custodial parents. Many complained about unreturned phone calls, lost paperwork, and rude treatment.

Payment Patterns Associated with Early Intervention Strategies

- **The comparison group generated for the evaluation of early intervention differed from the treatment group in important ways that favored payment by the comparison group.** Despite attempts to generate comparable treatment and comparison groups for evaluation purposes, the two groups differed with the 1,240 cases processed using convention methods being significantly newer, having higher order levels, better payment patterns, and lower arrears balances. As a result, the few differences in payment patterns following project enrollment that were found tended to favor the comparison group rather than the group processed using early intervention techniques.
- **Payments in both the treatment and comparison group increased significantly over time.** Overall, the rate of child support payment in the 18 months prior to and following project enrollment rose significantly for both groups and went from 36.6 to 42.1 percent in the treatment group and 38.7 to 48.1 percent in the comparison group. The percentage of obligors in both groups who paid 75 percent or more of their monthly obligation increased and the percentage paying nothing decreased.
- **There were differences in payment by case type that favored cases with new orders and newly modified orders.** New order cases and newly modified cases in both groups exhibited significant improvements in payment following project enrollment, while delinquent cases in the treatment group did not improve at all, with obligors paying 37.1 percent of the support they owed prior to and following enrollment in the project.

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- **Payment improvements tended to occur during the first three to four months following project enrollment, with obligors in the treatment group paying an average of 45 percent of what they owed.** Early intervention cases showed the most substantial improvements in payment during the first three to four months following project enrollment, with payment rates rising to 45 percent, after which payments leveled off. Eighteen months after enrollment, obligors in treatment cases paid an average of 40 percent of what they owed.
- **Payment ratios peaked at different levels for different cases types, with improvements coinciding with the duration of the early intervention treatment.** In the treatment group, payment performance peaked for new order cases in month three, when obligors paid 51 percent; month six for cases new to the child support system, when obligors paid 61 percent; month six for newly modified cases, when obligors paid 67 percent; and month three for delinquent cases, when obligors paid 39 percent. These improvement patterns coincided with the duration of the early intervention treatment, which lasted an average of 3.8 months and a median of 3.4 months.
- **Rates of payment improved the most among treatment cases exposed to direct worker contact.** The best payment patterns were found among early intervention cases in which workers were able to reach obligors and/or employers by telephone and/or conduct an in-person meeting with obligors. No payment benefits were associated with mailing letters to obligors and/or attempting but failing to make phone calls.

Payment Patterns Associated with Simplified Modification Procedures

- **A comparison of modification requests processed using simplified and conventional approaches found few differences.** A comparison of 1,216 cases processed using conventional modification procedures and 1,014 cases processed using simplified approaches found only a few differences in the nature of the request, the outcome, and the amount of time it took to process the request.
- **Noncustodial parents were more apt to apply using the simplified approach, although this might reflect the fact that early intervention workers referred many obligors they contacted for a modification.** The simplified approach attracted more applications by noncustodial parents than the conventional process (61% versus 50%). Nearly half (48%) of the modification requests filed using the simplified approach were referred by early intervention workers.
- **Many requests for review and adjustment were terminated using simplified and conventional approaches, but the rate of completion dropped using the newer approach, perhaps as a result of the increased number of requests by noncustodial**

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parents. Overall, requests for review were completed in 58 percent of experimental cases and 66 percent of comparison group cases, with about a third of cases in both groups being terminated at discovery. In both groups, the primary reason for a review termination was the lack of financial information for one or both parents, although cases in the experimental group were less likely to be terminated for this reason, suggesting that the simplified approach was more effective in eliciting financial information. In both groups, modification requests made by custodial parents were more likely to proceed to full review than were requests made by noncustodial parents.

- **The simplified approach (and the use of a negotiation settlement conference) did not increase the rate of stipulations.** In both groups, cases that proceeded through the full review were equally apt to be resolved by stipulation (76% versus 80%) suggesting that the conference held as part of the simplified approach did not generate more stipulations.
- **Across the two counties, the simplified approach did not shorten the amount of time from application to result, although there were differences by county.** The number of days from the modification request to the completion of the review was shorter for the experimental versus the comparison group in Pueblo (48 days versus 94 days) but not in Denver (80 days versus 60 days). Across the two counties, there was no difference in the average days to complete a review, which was 72.3 for cases in the treatment group and 71.4 for cases in the comparison group.
- **The simplified process was associated with a lower rate of downward modifications.** Downward modification occurred in 50 percent of cases in the comparison group and 42 percent of cases in the experimental group. Among requests filed by noncustodial parents, the patterns were more pronounced, with 80 percent of comparison group cases but only 68 percent of experimental group cases resulting in a downward modification. This pattern might reflect the fact that an increase in the minimum wage went into effect in Colorado on January 1, 2007. As previously noted, cases processed using the simplified approach were generated after the wage change, while comparison group cases consisted of requests filed before wage change.
- **There were no differences between experimental and comparison group cases in the percentage of current support paid in the 18 months following the modification request.** Obligor in both groups of cases in both counties paid a little more than half of the amount they owed (56.1% versus 57.8%). And both groups paid significantly more than they had paid in the 18 months prior to the request, with rates of payment rising between 7 and 9 percent.

Conclusions

The Colorado project shows over time, payments improved for cases processed using early intervention and conventional techniques, although payment performance remained low among obligors in both groups. While early intervention was not associated with any particular increases in child support payment patterns, payment improvements tended to occur during the first three to four months following project enrollment—a time period that coincided with the duration of the early intervention treatment. Interviews with noncustodial parents indicate that most non-payment problems were due to basic financial limitations including job loss, low income, and other families to support.

The best payment improvements occurred in new order cases that were fresh to the child support system where workers actually achieved contact with noncustodial parents and conducted relationship-building calls. Few benefits were discerned for older delinquent cases and/or cases with mailed contact or voice mail messages. These findings are consistent with those observed in previous studies of early intervention and argue for focusing early intervention efforts on new order cases.

Colorado's decision to assign regular enforcement workers to do early intervention along with their other case responsibilities did not work. It led to low case volume and relatively low levels of contact with noncustodial parents. It also had questionable customer service benefits. Telephone interviews with 182 obligors indicated that regular workers were hard to reach by telephone and were often unresponsive and unsympathetic. A better strategy might be to assign early intervention duties to a specialized unit with a customer-service orientation and the capacity to make multiple telephone attempts to reach obligors.

Despite efforts to simplify the modification process, it continued to be perceived as complicated by many interviewed obligors and did not consistently shorten the time from filing to outcome, with reductions achieved in Pueblo but not in Denver. Nor did the simplified process address the fact that a large proportion of requests (especially in Denver) continued to be eliminated for failure to provide required financial information. The higher rate of agreement-making in Pueblo conferences suggests that the approach has the potential to improve rates of stipulation, but, like Pueblo workers, workers need to be trained in facilitation. Obligor cases were processed using simplified and conventional approaches did a better job of paying over time, but no increases in payment could be tied to the use of the simplified approach and payments still fell far short of being complete. Interviewed obligors attributed their lack of payment to financial factors including job loss, wage cuts, other families to support, disability, and illness.

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Appendix A Materials for Early Intervention



- ✔ These checklists are designed to help you keep track of points to cover in telephone calls and in-person meetings with noncustodial parents (NCPs), custodial parents (CPs) and employers.
- ✔ Every worker will come up with a different way of saying things.
- ✔ The checklists help to guarantee a little uniformity across workers.
- ✔ They also clarify the purpose of each type of call.
- ✔ The evaluators will be assessing whether the calls make a difference and produce improvements in payments.
- ✔ To help them reach accurate conclusions about the impact of different calls, try to cover the points that are noted for each call.
- ✔ If some of the points are not needed, let the evaluators know and they will revise the checklists and eliminate these unnecessary items.
- ✔ **For the experiment to be valid, we need every worker in the project to do and say roughly the same sorts of things.**
- ✔ **Please make three phone attempts over two or more days before you give up on a phone call substitute a letter for a phone contact.**

Thanks for your help!



Type of Call: Relationship-Building
Informational Call by Enforcement Workers 1-2 weeks post order

Type of Case: Cases with New Orders
New Cases with Existing Orders
Newly Modified Orders

- Purpose:**
- To establish personal contact with NCPs;
 - Explain orders and payment arrangements (especially the first payment);
 - Emphasize the importance of communicating with a CSE worker; and
 - Describe the types of services CSE can offer.

Topics:

- Introduce yourself:
You will be working their case and hope to have a good working relationship.
 - Explain the purpose of the call:
You are calling to:
Review order and payment arrangements,
Explain responsibilities and answer questions,
Make sure contact information is correct, and
Help them understand what having an order and being in the child support system means.
 - Offer to schedule a meeting:
You would like to cover all the information face-to-face or, if preferred, to go over everything by phone.
 - Try to continue the call:
Only schedule a new time to talk if now is not a good time.
If you must reschedule, get a specific reschedule time and phone number.
 - Explain the order:
Review order amount,
Payment frequency,
Children covered by the order.
Review arrears payments and fees.
 - Explain the medical support obligation:
Review medical support requirement.
Find out if medical support is available through NCP's employer and the cost.
Find out whether medical support is available through CP's employer and/or a step parent.
 - Make sure NCP has a copy of the order:
Send a copy if not received.
 - Review dates:
Review the order commencement date and due dates.
 - Get contact information and preferred contact time:
Mailing address, telephone number, cell phone number & email.
Determine the best time for a telephone contact during regular business hours.
 - Get secondary contact information:
Ask for someone who will also know how to reach him (mother, friend).
Explain that people often move or change numbers and forget to notify CSE.
 - Explain the importance of keeping CSE aware of new information:
Tell CSE if there are changes in your contact information or employment, changes in employment, and other changes to avoid falling behind and bad things from happening.
-



-
- ✓ Review employer information:
Verify accuracy.
If no employer, check if has recently found employment.
-
- ✓ Review wage withholding or RAW arrangements for self-employed:
Emphasize the importance of checking to make sure payments are being deducted from paycheck to be sure withholding is in effect.
-
- ✓ Explain responsibility to send payments until wage withholding begins:
Review arrangements for 1st payment including making a direct payment to FSR.
Emphasize need to send a check with case number to avoid a delinquency.
Give address and phone number of FSR.
-
- ✓ Explain enforcement remedies:
Explain it is for information only.
Use a conversational, informational tone and not a threatening one.
-
- ✓ Explain options for review and adjustment:
Explain this can occur if circumstances or employment change.
-
- ✓ Provide your direct phone number for easy communication:
Reiterate importance of keeping in touch
Explain the value of having a direct number and not having to go through customer service.
Also provide the general child support number: xxx-xxx-xxxx.
-
- ✓ Explore problems with access and visitation and employment:
Note that CSE can refer people with problems to workforce programs and mediation services.
Refer to the booklet.
-
- ✓ Explore reconciliations and changes of custody:
Note that changes in these types of things can affect child support orders.
Instruct the NCP to contact you.
Provide appropriate referrals if needed.
-
- ✓ Direct to CSE's interactive website: www.childsupport@state.co.us
-
- ✓ Explain schedule of future contact:
Note you are mailing an informational brochure and that you will be calling if the first payment doesn't arrive on time.
-
- ✓ Offer to answer questions:
Ask if NCP has any questions that haven't been covered.
-
- ✓ Thank NCP:
For taking the time to talk and for his commitment to children.
Remind the NCP that you are here to help.
-



Type of Call: Relationship-Building
Informational Call by Enforcement Workers 1-2 weeks post order

Type of Case: Cases with New Orders
New Cases with Existing Orders
Newly Modified Orders

- Purpose:**
- To establish personal contact with CPs;
 - Explain orders, payment arrangements and enforcement remedies;
 - Emphasize the importance of communicating with a CSE worker; and
 - Describe the types of services CSE can offer.

Topics:

- Introduce yourself:
You will be working their case and hope to have a good working relationship.
 - Explain the purpose of the call:
You are calling to:
Review order and payment arrangements,
Explain the importance of working together, and
Answer questions about the child support system.
 - Offer to schedule a meeting:
You would like to cover all the information face-to-face or, if preferred, to go over everything by phone.
 - Try to continue the call:
Only schedule a new time to talk if now is not a good time.
If you must reschedule, get a specific reschedule time and phone number.
 - Explain the order:
Review order amount,
Payment frequency,
Children covered by the order.
 - Explain the medical support obligation:
Review medical support requirement and health insurance arrangements for the child(ren).
Explore availability of health insurance through CP or step-parent's employer.
Find out if medical support is available through NCP's employer and the cost.
Refer the CP to CHP+ or Medicaid, if appropriate.
 - Explain payment arrangements
If wage withholding order is in effect, explain that payments will be deducted from NCP's paycheck.
Explain that payments are made through the Family Support Registry
Explain that direct payments are prohibited.
 - Review enforcement remedies:
Explain how automated enforcement works.
Explain time frames for various remedies/actions.
 - Review NCP contact and employer information:
Review NCP contact information.
Verify accuracy of NCP employer information.
 - Explain the importance of keeping CSE aware of new information for both parents and provide direct telephone number for easy communication.
Explain importance of good information to obtain payment.
Review NCP address, telephone number, and cell number.
Review NCP employment information
Request CP to contact you if there are changes in NCP contact information and employment
-



Colorado

Early Intervention

Procedures for Collecting Child Support

Ask CP to tell CSE if there are changes in CP contact information
Provide direct phone number.

☑ Explain options for review and adjustment:

Explain the importance of having an order that is reasonable and based on actual earnings and living arrangements.
Review the legitimate reasons to pursue review and adjustment: changes of custody, changes in employment, layoffs, unemployment, disabilities, multiple orders, and medical insurance payments.
Explain that orders can go up or down when a review is conducted

☑ Explore problems with access and visitation and employment:

Note that CSE can refer people with problems to workforce programs and mediation services.
Refer to the booklet.

☑ Explore reconciliations and changes of custody:

Note that changes in these types of things can affect child support orders.
Instruct the CP to contact you.
Provide appropriate referrals if needed.

☑ Direct to CSE's interactive website: www.childsupport@state.co.us

☑ Explain schedule of future contact:

Note you are mailing an informational brochure.

☑ Offer to answer questions:

Ask if CP has any questions that haven't been covered.

☑ Thank CP:

For taking the time to talk and for working with CSE., and
Remind the CP that you are here to help.



Type of Call: Call to Custodial Parents when Locate Information is Not Available
Informational Call by Enforcement Workers 1-2 weeks post order

Type of Case: Cases with New Orders
New Cases with Existing Orders
Newly Modified Orders

- Purpose:**
- To establish a personal relationship with the CP;
 - To let the CP know that you are trying to get child support payments started;
 - To explore health insurance arrangements for the child(ren);
 - To find out how to reach the parent who is supposed to be paying support; and
 - To find out about changes or problems that might cause partial or nonpayment.

Topics:

- Introduce yourself:
You are the person who is working their child support case and trying to collect support.

 - Explain the purpose of the call:
You want to acknowledge that CSE is trying to get payments started.
You want to see if she can help you get payment started.

 - Request CP help:
"Help us help you."
Explain importance of good information to obtain payment.
Request NCP address, telephone number, and cell number.
Request NCP employment information.
Request name and number of someone who will know how to reach the NCP.

 - Explore changes:
Check to see if the CP knows of changes in custody, reconciliation, AV problems, NCP employment.
Provide appropriate referrals for AV problems.

 - Review enforcement remedies:
Explain how automated enforcement works.
Explain time frames for various remedies/actions.

 - Discuss the child's medical support status:
Review health insurance arrangements for the child(ren)
Explore availability of health insurance through CP or step-parent's employer.
Refer the CP to CHP+ or Medicaid, if appropriate.

 - Explain the importance of keeping their contact information up-to-date:
Explain that the CP should call CSE if she changes her address or phone number.
The CP should also call if she gets private health insurance.
Determine the best time for telephone contact during regular business hours.

 - Provide your direct phone number:
Ask the CP to call if new information becomes available.

 - Thank CP for taking the time to talk.
Reiterate that you are trying to get payments started or restarted and that her help is important.
-



Type of Call: Call to Employers by Enforcement Workers 1-2 weeks post order

Type of Case: Cases with New Orders, New Cases with Existing Orders, and Newly Modified Orders.

- Purpose:**
- To establish a personal relationship with the employer;
 - To exchange contact information and stress the need to keep in touch;
 - To insure that the employer has copy of the wage assignment; and
 - To determine that wage withholding arrangements are in place.

Topics:

- Introduce yourself:
You are the person who will be working their employee's child support case.
Provide the employee's name.

 - Verify that NCP is still an employee.

 - Explain the purpose of the call:
You are calling to:
Verify employment,
Review the order and payment arrangements,
Make sure order has been sent to the appropriate office or department,
Answer questions, and help the employer understand employers' legal obligations.

 - Schedule a new time to talk:
Try to finish the call now, but this is not good get a specific reschedule time and phone number.

 - Make sure employer has a copy of the wage assignment:
Confirm that it has been sent to the right payroll office.
Send a copy if not received.

 - Review the wage assignment:
Review the order commencement date and order amount.

 - Determine frequency of pay periods:
Confirm the date of first payment and how frequently payment is made.

 - Review payment arrangements:
Give FSR address and phone number.

 - Review health insurance arrangements:
Inquire about the availability of health insurance.
Review NMSN and determine whether it has been sent to the right office.

 - Get information and best contact time:
Get a name, address, telephone number, & email for payroll office/clerk
Determine the best time for a telephone contact during regular business hours

 - Direct to CSE's interactive website: www.childsupport@state.co.us

 - Explain the importance of keeping CSE aware of changes in employment & problems with wage withholding
Employees may fall behind and experience enforcement actions.
Employers who don't comply with wage withholding orders can face fines and other legal actions.

 - Provide your direct phone number.

 - Ask if employer has additional questions or concerns.
Invite the employer to call you and to check CSE's on-line resources.

 - Thank the employer for cooperating.
-



Type of Call: Call to Delinquent NCPs
(45 days after order commencement date, no payment or only partial payment based on a review of the date of last payment and amount paid noted on the Super Report)

Type of Case: Cases with New Orders
New Cases with Existing Orders
Newly Modified Orders
Newly Delinquent Cases

- Purpose:**
- To let NCP know that his payment has not been received;
 - To explain that enforcement actions will start unless he pays or makes some other arrangement with CSE; and
 - To identify problems with employment and visitation and provide appropriate referrals or review and adjustment options.

Topics:

- Introduce yourself:
You are the person who is working their child support case.
Remind them if you have had a prior conversation or sent a letter.

 - Explain the payment problem:
Review payment record.
Explain the payment amount that was due and the date it was due.
Explain that it has not arrived as of a certain date.

 - Explain the purpose of the call:
You are calling to check on the payment.
You hope to work with him and keep things positive.

 - Review payment arrangements:
Is there a wage withholding order?
Is he still with the same employer?
Was he supposed to send his first payment directly to FSR?
Did he mail the check to the right address? Is the check in the mail?

 - Explain how to make direct payments to FSR:
Give the FSR address and phone number.
Remind the NCP to add the case number to check.

 - Review enforcement remedies and time frames:
Explain that things happen automatically unless payment is received.
Mention driver's license suspension, negative credit ratings, accumulation of arrears.

 - Explore reasons for non payment and/or problems with AV, employment:
Note that CSE can refer people with problems to workforce programs and mediation services.
Offer to send a Parenting Time pamphlet.

 - Review legitimate reasons to pursue a review and adjustment
Mention changes of custody, changes in employment, layoffs, unemployment, disabilities, multiple orders, and medical insurance payments.
Describe what he should do if there are legitimate reasons to pursue a review and adjustment.

 - Provide appropriate referrals.

 - Discuss when and how payment will be made and review health insurance.
Get specifics.

 - Explain the importance of keeping in touch with you:
You can work with the NCP a little bit to keep automatic enforcement from starting.

 - Review contact information and preferred contact time:
Mailing address, telephone number, cell phone number & email.
Determine the best time for a telephone contact during regular business hours.

 - Review your expectations/agreements about payment:
Review his plans to send a child support payment.

 - Thank the NCP:
Thank the NCP for taking the time to talk. Remind him that things will go better if he cooperates.
-



Type of Call: Call to CPs in Non-Paying Cases
(45 days after order commencement date, no payment or partial payment)

Type of Case: Cases with New Orders,
New Cases with Existing Orders
Newly Modified Orders
Newly Delinquent Cases

Purpose:

- To let the CP know that you are aware that payment has not been received;
- To let the CP know you are trying to get them started or re-started;
- To find out how to reach the parent who is supposed to be paying support;
- To find out about changes that might explain partial or nonpayment.

Topics:

- Introduce yourself:
You are the person who is working their child support case.

- Explain that the purpose of the call:
You want to acknowledge that payment is not being made.
You want to see if she can help you get payment started.

- Confirm the payment problem:
Confirm the payment amount and date due.
Confirm that payment has not arrived.
Ask if he has been paying her directly.
Explain that direct payments are not permitted and will cause future troubles for both of them.

- Confirm that CSE is working hard:
Explain that you are trying to get payments started or restarted.

- Request CP help:
"Help us help you."
Explain importance of good information to obtain payment.
Review NCP address, telephone number, and cell number.
Review NCP employment information.

- Explore changes:
Check to see if the CP knows of changes in custody, reconciliation, AV problems, NCP employment.
Provide appropriate referrals for AV problems.

- Review legitimate reasons to pursue a review and adjustment
Explain the importance of having an order that is reasonable and based on actual earnings and living arrangements.
Review the legitimate reasons to pursue review and adjustment: changes of custody, changes in employment, layoffs, unemployment, disabilities, multiple orders, and medical insurance payments.
Explain that orders can go up or down when a review is conducted.
Describe procedures if there are legitimate reasons to pursue a review and adjustment.

- Review enforcement remedies:
Explain and time frames.

- Discuss the child's medical support status:
Review health insurance arrangements for the child(ren).
Explore availability of health insurance through CP or step-parent's employer.
Explore whether CP needs to make other arrangements in light of nonpayment.

- Make appropriate referrals:
Refer the CP to CHP+ or Medicaid.



-
- ✓ Explain the importance of keeping their contact information up-to-date:
Explain that the CP should call CSE if she changes her address or phone number.
The CP should also call if she gets private health insurance.
Determine the best time for telephone contact during regular business hours.

 - ✓ Provide your direct phone number:
Ask the CP to call if new information becomes available.

 - ✓ Thank CP for taking the time to talk.
Reiterate that you are trying to get payments started or restarted and that her help is important.
-



Type of Call: Call to Employers by Enforcement Workers
(45 days after order commencement date, no payment or partial payment)

1Type of Case: Cases with New Orders,
New Cases with Existing Orders
Newly Modified Orders that become newly delinquent and move from category
1 to 2 as a result of nonpayment or partial payment.

Purpose: To determine whether NCP is still employed;
 To identify and resolve any problems with wage withholding arrangements.

Topics:

- Introduce yourself:
You are the person who is working their employee's child support case and name the employee.

 - Verify that NCP is still an employee:
If the NCP is not an employee, obtain date of termination.
Get any information available about the NCP's new employment.

 - Explain the purpose of the call:
You are calling to alert the employer to unpaid child support.
You want to resolve any problems with payment of child support.

 - Schedule a new time to talk:
Try to complete the call now, but if this is not a good time, get a specific reschedule time and phone number.

 - Explain the child support problem:
Explain the amount due and the date due and confirm that no payment was made.
Explain that serious, automatic enforcement remedies will soon start.

 - Review the order:
Review the order commencement date;
The order amount:
The frequency of pay periods;
The payment arrangements.

 - Resolve any errors/problems.
Provide the FSR address and phone number.

 - Explain the importance of keeping CSE aware of changes in employment and problems with wage withholding
Employees may fall behind and experience enforcement actions.
Employers who don't comply with wage withholding orders can face fines and other legal actions.

 - Provide your direct phone number.

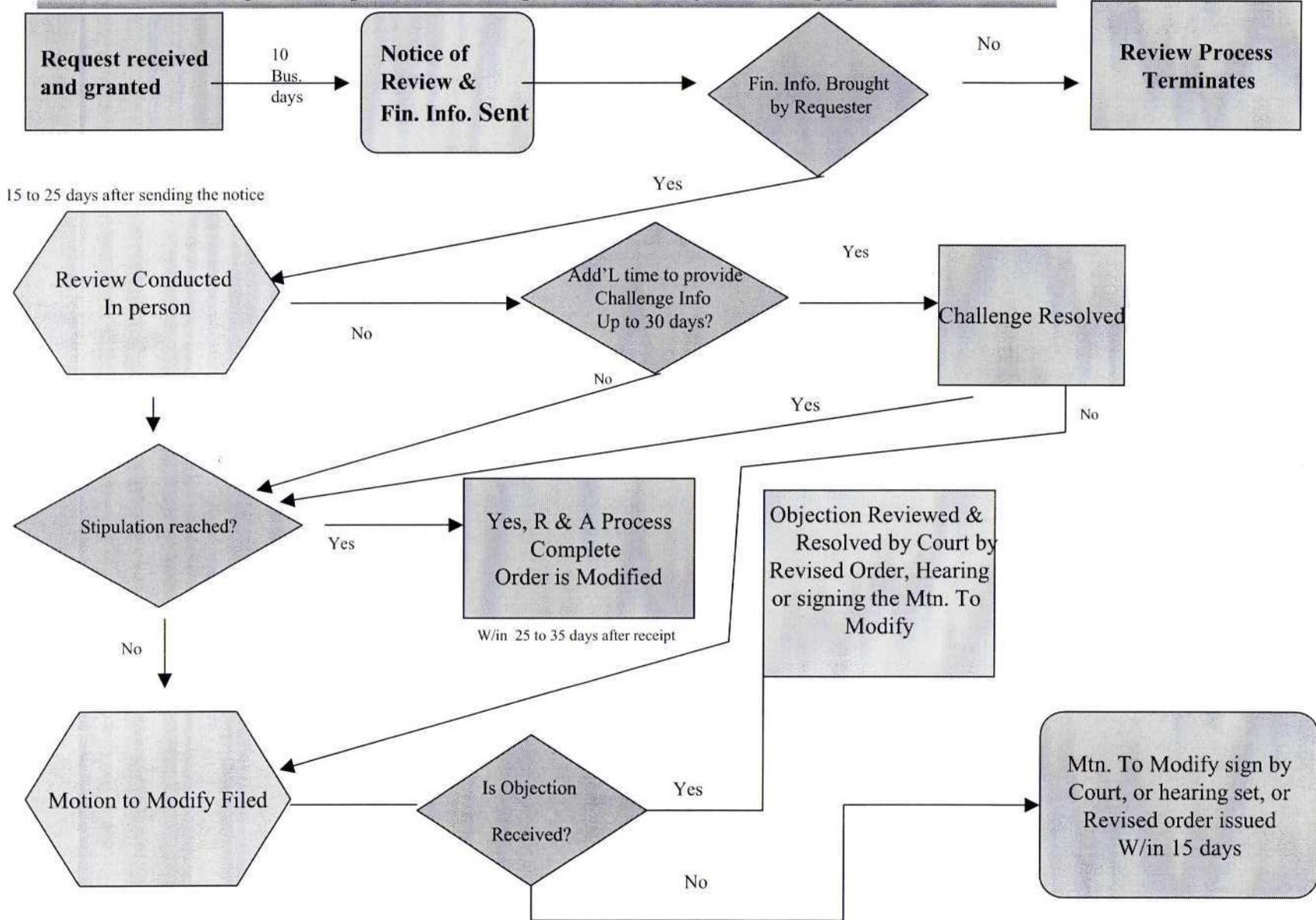
 - Ask if employer has questions or concerns.
Invite the employer to call you and to check CSE's on-line resources.

 - Thank the employer for cooperating.
-

Appendix B

Materials for Simplified Modification Process

Flowchart of R and A process - With in person review conference and proposed order



Steps in the Review and Adjustment Process

- A parent requests a review.
- Both parents provide income information.
- A child support guideline calculation is done.
- If a change is needed, parents can sign an agreement.
- If a mistake of fact or mathematical error is made, it can be corrected.
- The agreement is filed with the court or, if there is no agreement a Motion to Modify is filed with the court.

How to Request a Review

Send your request in writing to the CSE Unit handling your case.

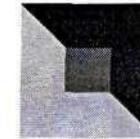
Be sure to include the following:

- * Your full name
- * Your social security number
- * The reason you need your child support order changed
- * Information which shows why the change is needed, such as, pay stubs, child care receipts, proof of health insurance, a parenting time order or agreement

An online form for requesting a review can be found at the CSE website - www.childsupport.state.co.us

Answers to Your Questions

- For questions regarding the Colorado Child Support Guidelines visit the state courts website at www.courts.state.co.us. Double click the "self help center" link, then click on the "all family law forms" and look for the link to the "child support worksheets."
- For an online review and adjustment request form and answers to frequent questions about the Child Support Enforcement program visit the Division of Child Support Enforcement's website at www.childsupport.state.co.us.
- Call the local CSE Unit for your case for specific questions about your case.



Colorado
Child Support Enforcement

Modifying Your Child Support Order



cdhs

Colorado Department of
Human Services

People Who Help People

www.childsupport.state.co.us

Is It Time for a Change?

The Colorado Child Support Enforcement (CSE) Program wants to help families by making sure that child support orders fit each family's current circumstances.

If there have been changes in your life, your child support may need to change too. Your child support order might change if one or more of the following has happened:

-  An increase in your or the other parent's income.
-  A decrease in your or the other parent's income.
-  A parent begins covering a child on health insurance.
-  An increase or decrease in child care or uninsured medical expenses.
-  A court ordered or court approved change in the number of overnights either parent has with the children.
-  A child reaches the legal age of emancipation for payment of child support.



How is a Child Support Order Changed?

The Colorado Child Support Enforcement Program uses a process called "review and adjustment" to modify child support orders. The process usually starts with a request from a parent.

When a request is received the CSE Unit that handles your case reviews it and decides whether the request is valid. If it is valid, the CSE Unit will start the process of reviewing the child support.

The Colorado Child Support Guidelines (guidelines) found at §14-10-115, in the Colorado Revised Statutes are used to see whether or not the child support order should change.

The guidelines use both parents' income and certain expense information related to the children (child care, health insurance and uninsured medical expenses) to determine the amount to be paid.

The first step in the review and adjustment process is gathering income information from both parents. When the review is started you and the other parent will receive a request to provide information by a certain date. The request may also ask you to go to the CSE office on a specific date so the child support order can be reviewed.



Changing a Child Support Order . . .

After the financial information is returned, the CSE Unit will use the guidelines to calculate the amount of child support for your children. The law says that an order may change, if this amount is at least 10% different than the current amount of the child support order.

The CSE Unit will give each parent a copy of the child support guideline calculation. The CSE Unit will try to have both parents sign an agreement, called a stipulation, for the proposed new child support amount.

If there is a mathematical or factual error in the guideline calculation, each parent will have a specific amount of time to challenge it. A factual error may be failing to give a parent who is providing health insurance credit. A mathematical error may be incorrectly calculating a parent's gross income.

If an agreement is not signed, the CSE Unit will try to change the child support order to the correct amount by filing a Motion to Modify with the court.

Deadlines Are Important!!!

During the review and adjustment process, there will be deadlines that you must meet. If you are unable to meet a deadline you must contact your CSE unit.

_____ COURT, _____ COUNTY, COLORADO	
▲ COURT USE ONLY ▲	
Attorney or Party Without Attorney:	CASE NUMBER: «86»
	DIVISION/COURTROOM: «90»
	IV-D CASE NUMBER: «75»
NOTICE OF SETTLEMENT CONFERENCE	

You are notified that a settlement conference has been set for the following issues:

A possible modification of your current monthly child support order. Your attendance is requested on the date, time and location set forth below. Please complete the request for financial information and bring it to the conference.

DATE: «106»

TIME: «107» (A.M.)(P.M.)

LOCATION: «21»
 «22»

«23»
«24»
«25»

IF YOU CAN NOT BE PRESENT ON THE DATE AND TIME SET FORTH ABOVE,
PLEASE CALL OUR OFFICE AT _____ TO REQUEST A CONTINUANCE.

By: _____
County Delegate CSE Unit

«39»

«40» «41» «42» «43»

«47»

«48»

«49», «50» «51» «52»

RE: «68»

vs.

«40» «41» «42» «43»

Court Case No.: «88»

IV-D Case No.: «85»

FSR Account No.: «89»

Dear «40» «41» «42» «43»:

This office is looking at your child support order to see if it needs to be changed. A settlement conference has been scheduled at the CSE office on _____ (Date) at ___ <Time>. At the settlement conference we will use the Colorado child support guidelines to see if your order should be lowered, go up or stay the same. We may also order either parent to obtain health insurance coverage for the children.

The CSE Unit needs correct information about both parents' income and the children's expenses to see if the order should be changed. To help us, please fill out the this Income and Expenses affidavit and bring it with you to the settlement conference. If you are providing health insurance for the children, please bring proof of the health insurance coverage and a receipt for the premium amount.

I have included a brochure, which explains the process the CSE program uses to look at your child support order. Please note, that the child support order will not change until the review process is finished. A change in the child support amount will only affect future payments. The current order must be paid until the order is changed.

The review will not address alimony/maintenance or the allocation of parental responsibilities and parenting time.

If you believe you or the child(ren) could be at serious risk if the other parent knows where to find you or the child(ren), you may request your location be withheld. If this is the case, please contact the local CSE Unit to make this request.

The attorney for the child support enforcement office represents the People of the State of Colorado. We do not represent you as an individual. You have the right to discuss this with a private lawyer.

If you have any questions, you or your lawyer may call me at _____(Phone number).. Please refer to IV-D Case No. «85» whenever you call or write this office.

Sincerely,

«86»
Legal Technician/Paralegal

«0» COURT, «105» COUNTY, COLORADO	
«154» «155» «156» «157»	▲ COURT USE ONLY ▲
Attorney or Party Without Attorney: «91» COUNTY CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT UNIT «94» «95» «96», «97» «98» «99»	CASE NUMBER: «100» DIVISION/COURTROOM : «104» IV-D CASE NUMBER: «89»
Financial Statement	

Please answer every question or state not applicable if the question does not pertain to your financial situation. If you need more space to answer a question, please attach additional sheets if necessary to fully answer any item. Be sure to attach a copy of your three most recent paycheck stubs and your last filed Federal Income Tax Return. Include your W-2s if you file jointly. Be sure to date and sign the financial statement after completion. If self-employed, attached are personal and business income tax returns, including all schedules and forms (including Form K-1, Form 1065, Form 1120S, or Form 1120C) for the last three tax years

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Phone: Home _____ Work: _____ Cell: _____
 Bank Name: _____ Address: _____
 Checking Account #: _____ Savings Account: _____

CURRENT OR MOST RECENT EMPLOYMENT/BUSINESS INFORMATION

Employer: _____ Dates Employed: From: _____

Employer Address: _____ To: _____

Employer's Phone: _____ Job Title: _____

Rate Of Pay: \$ _____ Per _____ Hours worked per week: _____ Tips: \$ _____ Per _____

If you are currently unemployed please provide the reason _____ disability _____ involuntary layoff at work _____ I am a full time student _____ other. Please Explain;

If a full time student, please list your expected graduation date: _____ (Attach proof of status).

GROSS MONTHLY INCOME

- 1. \$ _____ Salary, Wages, Tips, Commissions, Bonus or Other Designations
- 2. \$ _____ Gain or profit from a business or profession (self-employment)
- 3. \$ _____ Pension, retirement, disability, veterans, social security or insurance payments
- 4. \$ _____ Interest, dividends, rentals, royalties or other gain
- 5. \$ _____ Gain from sale, trade or conversion of capital assets
- 6. \$ _____ Unemployment insurance and workers compensation benefits
- 7. \$ _____ Benefit in lieu of compensation including, but not limited to, military pay allowances, Supplemental Social Security, Social Security Disability Income.
- 8. \$ _____ Other income (including Spousal Support received). Explain _____
- 9. \$ _____ **TOTAL GROSS MONTHLY INCOME** (add lines 1 through 8).

ALLOWABLE DEDUCTIONS

- 10. \$ _____ Monthly Payments made on support orders OTHER THAN FOR THE CHILDREN IN THIS PROCEEDING (Attach court order and evidence of payments)
- 11. \$ _____ Monthly Payments made for Maintenance/Spousal Support
- 12. I am legally responsible for minor child(ren) not of this relationship who currently reside with me. ___yes ___no If yes, attach birth certificate(s) and proof of residence (i.e., school records).
- 13. The child(ren) of this marriage/relationship regularly have uninsured health expenses in excess of \$250.00 per year. ___yes ___no
If yes, explain the reason for each cost list the average monthly cost for each expense:

Attach documentation.

- 14. If the child(ren) have extraordinary needs, which require payment on a monthly basis. Explain the needs and itemize the cost of them on a monthly basis:

Attach documentation.

HEALTH INSURANCE INFORMATION Includes: Medical, Dental and Vision

Health insurance ___is ___is not maintained for the child(ren) of this marriage/relationship.

If you provide medical or dental insurance for your child(ren) please complete the following:

Name of the Health and/or Dental Insurance Company: _____
Address of the Health and/or Dental Insurance Company: _____
Policy Number: _____ Total monthly cost for the insurance: _____
Persons covered under the policy of insurance: _____

If you can identify the exact amount of the premium each month that is solely for the child(ren) in this matter, please specify that amount. \$ _____ **Please attach to this page a copy of any health insurance or dental insurance cards that provide coverage to the child(ren).**
If the child(ren) are not covered, the monthly cost to add the child(ren) of this action to any health insurance available to you would be \$ _____ per month.

CHILD CARE (DAYCARE) COSTS

If you pay childcare costs, please complete the following for only those children that the support obligation will pertain to and **attach verification of child care expenses including the name, address and telephone number of the provider.**

The names of the child(ren) for whom child care is provided: _____

How many hours per week is child care being provided? _____

The charge for child care is \$ _____ Weekly__ Hourly__ Monthly__

List the costs, per month, of the child care expenses incurred for the past six months: _____

Do you receive any state assistance for child care? no ___ yes ___ If yes, list the monthly amount: \$ _____

Is any of this child care paid so that you can attend school or a training program? ___ yes ___ no.

If yes, please list the average monthly cost of the education related child care \$ _____

PARENTING TIME

The children of this marriage/relationship reside primarily with ___ me ___ the other parent.

Number of overnights per year with me _____ the other parent _____

Signature of person completing this Financial Statement is required.

Signature Date

Appendix C

Data Forms for Early Intervention



Colorado

Early Intervention

Procedures for Collecting Child Support

Name:	
Site: 1- Denver 2- Pueblo	
HHN: SSN:	
Worker ID:	
Case Type at Project Entry:	<input type="checkbox"/> Case with New Orders <input type="checkbox"/> New Case with Existing Order <input type="checkbox"/> Newly Modified Order <input type="checkbox"/> Newly Delinquent Case <input type="checkbox"/> Older Delinquent Case
Order establishment date:	
Order effective date:	
Date assigned to early intervention:	
Date early intervention monitoring ended:	
Reason for going beyond 3-4 mos.	<input type="checkbox"/> Client Working on Barriers <input type="checkbox"/> Strong Relationship <input type="checkbox"/> Making Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Case Backlog <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
Interstate status:	<input type="checkbox"/> Intrastate <input type="checkbox"/> Interstate, initiating <input type="checkbox"/> Interstate, responding <input type="checkbox"/> Direct/Interstate wage assign <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
Public Assistance status:	<input type="checkbox"/> Current TANF <input type="checkbox"/> Former TANF <input type="checkbox"/> Never TANF <input type="checkbox"/> Medicaid Only <input type="checkbox"/> Foster Care
Language:	<input type="checkbox"/> English Only <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish application <input type="checkbox"/> Sent Spanish documents <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
Order established process by:	<input type="checkbox"/> Administrative <input type="checkbox"/> Judicial
Order entry method:	<input type="checkbox"/> Stipulation <input type="checkbox"/> Default <input type="checkbox"/> Contested <input type="checkbox"/> Other
NCP and CP marital history:	<input type="checkbox"/> Never married <input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced/Separated <input type="checkbox"/> Can't determine
When the case arrived at Early Intervention, was there a verified employer? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
When the case arrived at Early Intervention, was there a verified address? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
MSO:	\$
MAD:	\$
Arrears Balance	\$
Last payment amount: \$	Date of last payment:
Total number of cases NCP has on ACSES:	#
Total amount of arrears on all cases:	\$
As you work this case, check any of the following factors that may influence the outcome:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Couple reconciled, case closed	<input type="checkbox"/> Case closed, other _____
<input type="checkbox"/> NCP incarcerated	<input type="checkbox"/> Change in legal custody
<input type="checkbox"/> CP requested case closure	<input type="checkbox"/> NCP challenged paternity
<input type="checkbox"/> NCP unemployed	<input type="checkbox"/> NCP can't be located
<input type="checkbox"/> Access and Visitation problems	<input type="checkbox"/> NCP requests an order review
<input type="checkbox"/> NCP disabled	<input type="checkbox"/> Medical support obligations
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
Comments:	

NCP INTERVENTIONS

Relationship Building and Informational Call To NCP:

Case Type: Cases with New Orders, New Cases with Existing Orders, & Newly Modified Orders
When: 1-2 weeks post order/new case

Action needed: 1-Yes 2-No
Number of attempts: _____

NCP CONTACT #1

- No phone number
- Could not reach
- Contacted:
- Date: __/__/__
- Length of call/meeting: ___min.
- Met in Person
- Discussed over Telephone
- Other _____

OUTCOME

- Positive feel to call
- Negative feel to call
- Neutral feel to call
- Scheduled a Meeting
- Sent for review and adjust
- Provided other referrals/info
- Other _____

Comment

NCP CONTACT #2

- No phone number
- Could not reach
- Contacted:
- Date: __/__/__
- Length of call/meeting: ___min.
- Met in Person
- Discussed over Telephone
- Other _____

OUTCOME

- Positive feel to call
- Negative feel to call
- Neutral feel to call
- Scheduled a Meeting
- Sent for review and adjust
- Provided other referrals/info
- Other _____

Comment

NCP CONTACT #3

- No phone number
- Could not reach
- Contacted:
- Date: __/__/__
- Length of call/meeting: ___min.
- Met in Person
- Discussed over Telephone
- Other _____

OUTCOME

- Positive feel to call
- Negative feel to call
- Neutral feel to call
- Scheduled a Meeting
- Sent for review and adjust
- Provided other referrals/info
- Other _____

Comment

Mail Confirmation/Introductory Letter and Brochure and Business Card:

Case Type: Cases with New Orders, New Cases with Existing Orders, & Newly Modified Orders
When: 1-2 weeks post order/new case

Action needed: 1-Yes 2-No
Number of attempts: _____

NCP CONTACT #1

- Mailed out information to NCP:
- Date: __/__/__
- Did not mail out info, no address

OUTCOME

- Met in Person
- Discussed over Telephone
- Provided referrals/info
- Other _____

NCP CONTACT #2

- Mailed out information to NCP: Date:
- __/__/__
- Did not mail out info, no address

OUTCOME

- Met in Person
- Discussed over Telephone
- Provided referrals/info
- Other _____

NCP CONTACT #3

- Mailed out information to NCP:
- Date: __/__/__
- Did not mail out info, no add

OUTCOME

- Met in Person
- Discussed over Telephone
- Provided referrals/info
- Other _____

Mail Card Acknowledging Timely, Full Payment: Case Type: Cases with New Orders, New Cases with Existing Orders, & Newly Modified Orders
When: Following receipt of 3 months of full payment

Action needed: 1-Yes 2-No

NCP CONTACT

- Mailed card to NCP:
- Date: __/__/__
- Did not mail card, no address

Letter(s)/Phone Call(s) to Delinquent NCP: Case Type: Cases with New Orders, New Cases with Existing Orders, Newly Modified Orders, Newly Delinquent Cases
When: 45 days after order commencement, no payment or partial payment

Action needed: 1-Yes 2-No
Number of attempts: _____

NCP CONTACT #1

- Check all that apply
- No phone number
 - Could not reach by phone
 - Contacted
 - Mailed out letter to NCP
 - No letter mailed, no address
 - Date of letter or call: __/__/__

OUTCOME:

- Made payment arrangements
- Scheduled meeting
- Gave referral
- Discussed modification
- No Contact
- Other _____

NCP CONTACT #2

- Check all that apply
- No phone number
 - Could not reach by phone
 - Contacted
 - Mailed out letter to NCP
 - No letter mailed, no address
 - Date of letter or call: __/__/__

OUTCOME:

- Made payment arrangements
- Scheduled meeting
- Gave referral
- Discussed modification
- No Contact
- Other _____

NCP CONTACT #3

- Check all that apply
- No phone number
 - Could not reach by phone
 - Contacted
 - Mailed out letter to NCP
 - No letter mailed, no address
 - Date of letter or call: __/__/__

OUTCOME:

- Made payment arrangements
- Scheduled meeting
- Gave referral
- Discussed modification
- No Contact
- Other _____

Consult Enhanced Locate Resources:

- Checked ACCURINT, found new locate information
- Checked ACCURINT, did not find new locate information
- Did not check ACCURINT, locate established

Action needed: 1-Yes 2-No Number of attempts: _____

Initiate Expedited Enforcement Actions: :

- Filed contempt action with the court
- Obtained hearing on an expedited basis

Action needed: 1-Yes 2-No Number of attempts: _____

Date: __/__/__

Mailed Notice of Opportunity to Modify:

- Mailed notice to NCP
- Did not mail notice, no address

Action needed: 1-Yes 2-No Number of attempts: _____

Date: __/__/__

CP INTERVENTIONS

Introductory Letter(s)/Phone Call(s) to CP:

Case Type: Cases with New Orders, New Cases with Existing Orders, Newly Modified Orders

When: 1-2 weeks post order/new case

Action needed: 1-Yes 2-No

Number of attempts: _____

CP CONTACT #1

Check all that apply

- No phone number
- Could not reach by phone
- Contacted
- Mailed out letter to CP
- No letter mailed, no address

Date of letter or call: ___/___/___

OUTCOME:

- No Contact
- Obtained new locate information
- Provided information
- Provided referrals
- Positive feel to call
- Negative feel to call
- Neutral feel to call
- Other _____

CP CONTACT #2

Check all that apply

- No phone number
- Could not reach by phone
- Contacted
- Mailed out letter to CP
- No letter mailed, no address

Date of letter or call: ___/___/___

OUTCOME:

- No Contact
- Obtained new locate information
- Provided information
- Provided referrals
- Positive feel to call
- Negative feel to call
- Neutral feel to call
- Other _____

CP CONTACT #3

Check all that apply

- No phone number
- Could not reach by phone
- Contacted
- Mailed out letter to CP
- No letter mailed, no address

Date of letter or call: ___/___/___

OUTCOME:

- No Contact
- Obtained new locate information
- Provided information
- Provided referrals
- Positive feel to call
- Negative feel to call
- Neutral feel to call
- Other _____

Letter(s)/Phone Call(s) to CP in non-paying cases:

Case Type: Cases with New Orders, New Cases with Existing Orders, Newly Modified Orders, Newly Delinquent Cases

When: 45 days after order commencement, no payment or partial payment

Action needed: 1-Yes 2-No

Number of attempts: _____

CP CONTACT #1

Check all that apply

- No phone number
- Could not reach by phone
- Contacted
- Mailed out letter to CP
- No letter mailed, no address

Date of letter or call: ___/___/___

OUTCOME:

- Obtained new locate information
- Obtained new information on why NCP is not paying
- Provided information
- Provided referrals
- Positive feel to call
- Negative feel to call
- Neutral feel to call
- No Contact
- Other _____

CP CONTACT #2

Check all that apply

- No phone number
- Could not reach by phone
- Contacted
- Mailed out letter to CP
- No letter mailed, no address

Date of letter or call: ___/___/___

OUTCOME:

- Obtained new locate information
- Obtained new information on why NCP is not paying
- Provided information
- Provided referrals
- Positive feel to call
- Negative feel to call
- Neutral feel to call
- No Contact
- Other _____

CP CONTACT #3

Check all that apply

- No phone number
- Could not reach by phone
- Contacted
- Mailed out letter to CP
- No letter mailed, no address

Date of letter or call: ___/___/___

OUTCOME:

- Obtained new locate information
- Obtained new information on why NCP is not paying
- Provided information
- Provided referrals
- Positive feel to call
- Negative feel to call
- Neutral feel to call
- No Contact
- Other _____

EMPLOYER INTERVENTIONS

Letter(s)/Phone Call(s) to Employer To Confirm Income Assignment: <i>Case Type:</i> Cases with New Orders, New Cases with Existing Orders, & Newly Modified <i>When:</i> 1-2 weeks post order/new case		Action needed: 1-Yes 2-No Number of attempts: _____
EMPLOYER CONTACT #1 <input type="checkbox"/> No phone number <input type="checkbox"/> N/A, paying <input type="checkbox"/> N/A, no known employer <input type="checkbox"/> Could not reach <input type="checkbox"/> Sent letter <input type="checkbox"/> Contacted Date of letter or call: ___/___/___	EMPLOYER CONTACT #2 <input type="checkbox"/> No phone number <input type="checkbox"/> N/A, paying <input type="checkbox"/> N/A, no known employer <input type="checkbox"/> Could not reach <input type="checkbox"/> Sent letter <input type="checkbox"/> Contacted Date of letter or call: ___/___/___	EMPLOYER CONTACT #3 <input type="checkbox"/> No phone number <input type="checkbox"/> N/A, paying <input type="checkbox"/> N/A, no known employer <input type="checkbox"/> Could not reach <input type="checkbox"/> Sent letter <input type="checkbox"/> Contacted Date of letter or call: ___/___/___
OUTCOME <input type="checkbox"/> Confirmed Income Assignment <input type="checkbox"/> Initiated Income Assignment <input type="checkbox"/> Confirmed NMSN <input type="checkbox"/> Sent to wrong payroll office <input type="checkbox"/> Arranged for direct pay to FSR <input type="checkbox"/> No longer employed	OUTCOME <input type="checkbox"/> Confirmed Income Assignment <input type="checkbox"/> Initiated Income Assignment <input type="checkbox"/> Confirmed NMSN <input type="checkbox"/> Sent to wrong payroll office <input type="checkbox"/> Arranged for direct pay to FSR <input type="checkbox"/> No longer employed	OUTCOME <input type="checkbox"/> Confirmed Income Assignment <input type="checkbox"/> Initiated Income Assignment <input type="checkbox"/> Confirmed NMSN <input type="checkbox"/> Sent to wrong payroll office <input type="checkbox"/> Arranged for direct pay to FSR <input type="checkbox"/> No longer employed

Letter(s)/Phone Call(s) to Employer To Confirm Continued Employment and Troubleshoot Issues With Income Assignment Following Missed Payment: <i>Case Type:</i> Cases with New Orders, New Cases with Existing Orders, & Newly Modified <i>Orders that become newly delinquent and move from category 1 to 2 as a result of nonpayment or partial payment</i> <i>When:</i> 1-2 weeks after case moves from category 1 to 2		Action needed: 1-Yes 2-No Number of attempts: _____
EMPLOYER CONTACT #1 <input type="checkbox"/> No phone number <input type="checkbox"/> N/A, paying <input type="checkbox"/> N/A, no known employer <input type="checkbox"/> Could not reach <input type="checkbox"/> Sent letter <input type="checkbox"/> Contacted Date of letter or call: ___/___/___	EMPLOYER CONTACT #2 <input type="checkbox"/> No phone number <input type="checkbox"/> N/A, paying <input type="checkbox"/> N/A, no known employer <input type="checkbox"/> Could not reach <input type="checkbox"/> Sent letter <input type="checkbox"/> Contacted Date of letter or call: ___/___/___	EMPLOYER CONTACT #3 <input type="checkbox"/> No phone number <input type="checkbox"/> N/A, paying <input type="checkbox"/> N/A, no known employer <input type="checkbox"/> Could not reach <input type="checkbox"/> Sent letter <input type="checkbox"/> Contacted Date of letter or call: ___/___/___
OUTCOME <input type="checkbox"/> Confirmed Income Assignment <input type="checkbox"/> Initiated Income Assignment <input type="checkbox"/> Confirmed NMSN <input type="checkbox"/> Sent to wrong payroll office <input type="checkbox"/> Arranged for direct pay to FSR <input type="checkbox"/> No longer employed	OUTCOME <input type="checkbox"/> Confirmed Income Assignment <input type="checkbox"/> Initiated Income Assignment <input type="checkbox"/> Confirmed NMSN <input type="checkbox"/> Sent to wrong payroll office <input type="checkbox"/> Arranged for direct pay to FSR <input type="checkbox"/> No longer employed	OUTCOME <input type="checkbox"/> Confirmed Income Assignment <input type="checkbox"/> Initiated Income Assignment <input type="checkbox"/> Confirmed NMSN <input type="checkbox"/> Sent to wrong payroll office <input type="checkbox"/> Arranged for direct pay to FSR <input type="checkbox"/> No longer employed

OUTCOMES OF INTERVENTIONS

During the time the case was open at Early Intervention did the following happen?				
Did this NCP ever contact you in response to a phone call or letter/card he/she received from you (due to early intervention techniques)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No		
Did this CP ever contact you in response to a phone call or letter/card he/she received from you (due to early intervention techniques)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No		
You were able to talk with the NCP by telephone	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No		
You were able to talk with the CP by telephone	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No		
You were able to talk with the NCP in-person	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No		
You were able to talk with the CP in-person	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No		
You were able to talk with the NCPs employer	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No		
You learned that the NCP is working for cash or "under the table"	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No		
You learned that the NCP found a job or began working	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No		
You were able to confirm that the NCP is disabled or unable to work	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No		
You put a wage withholding order in place	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No		
You learned that the wage withholding order exceeds CCPA	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No		
The NCP told you that he/she does not plan to pay child support	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No		
On the date the case closed at Early Intervention, was there a known employer?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No		
How would you rate the NCP's willingness to cooperate and work with CSE?	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor
How would you rate the NCP's ability to pay?	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor
How would you rate the CP's willingness to cooperate and work with CSE?	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor



Colorado

Early Intervention

Noncustodial Parent Follow-up Interview

NCP Name:	
Date assigned to early intervention:	Date of Interview:
HHN:	SSN:
Site: 1- Denver 2- Pueblo	Language: 1- English 2-Spanish

I am calling from the Center for Policy Research. We would like to find out how the child support agency can do a better job communicating with parents about their child support. Your name won't be used on any report and the child support agency won't know what you say. Is now a good time to ask about what happened when the child support agency was trying to set your child support order?

First, let's talk about your contact with the child support agency.

Did any of the following happen to you in the last year?

	Did you get this?			If yes, was it helpful?			
	Yes	No	Don't remember	Very	Somewhat	Not very	Don't know
A phone call from a worker telling you about child support and what you owe	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Letters from the child support agency telling you that you owe child support	<input type="checkbox"/>						
A meeting with a worker to tell you about child support and what you owe	<input type="checkbox"/>						
A letter from child support thanking you for making your payments on time	<input type="checkbox"/>						
A telephone call to let you know you missed your payment	<input type="checkbox"/>						
A letter to let you know that you missed a payment	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Brochures telling you about child support	<input type="checkbox"/>						
A postcard telling you how to see if your child support can be changed	<input type="checkbox"/>						

	Did you get this?			If yes, was it helpful?			
	Yes	No	Don't remember	Very	Somewhat	Not very	Don't know
A telephone call from a worker seeing if you want to change your child support order	<input type="checkbox"/>						
The name and number of someone to call for help with getting to see your children	<input type="checkbox"/>						
The name and number of someone to call for help with employment	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Any other contact from the child support agency	<input type="checkbox"/>						

The child support agency is trying to figure out the best way to reach parents and talk about child support and what they owe. What is the best way for them to reach you and explain your child support situation?

- 1- Letter by mail
- 2- Telephone call to my house
- 3- Face to face meeting at the child support agency
- 4- Other _____

Overall, how good a job did the child support worker do in:

	Good	Fair	Poor
Explaining how child support works	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Explaining what you owe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making you feel like they care about you	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making you feel that they are working with you on your case	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making you feel as though you have a say in what happens	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Telling you how to get help with jobs so you can pay	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Telling you where to get other types of help	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Explaining how you can try to change your order	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Explaining what will happen if you don't pay	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Telling you what to do if you're having trouble paying	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being there to answer questions when you call	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

As you understand it...

	True	False	Don't Know
If your children get welfare you will have to pay the money back to the state	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is your job to make sure that child support is being paid	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If your children get welfare the child support agency will try to collect money from you even if the mother doesn't ask for it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To collect child support the agency can take money out of your paycheck	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To collect child support the agency can take your tax refund	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If you don't pay, the agency can take your driver's license	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If you lose your job or the amount you earn changes you need to tell your worker right away	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
You can ask for your order to be changed if you lose or change your job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have to pay child support even if you don't get to see your children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do you know the following?

	Yes	No	Don't Know Never Tried
Do you know what number to call at the child support agency if you have questions or your work situation changes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know your child support worker's name?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a direct telephone number for your child support worker?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you ever talked with a child support worker in person?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you ever talked with a child support worker by telephone?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is it easy to reach someone at child support when you want to talk?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

We would like to know why some people do not want to talk or meet with their child support worker. Are any of the following true for you?

Check all that apply

- You forgot to go to a meeting or return a phone call
- You didn't understand what it was about
- You had to work
- You had other things going
- You don't trust the child support agency
- Your friends or family told you not to go or talk to a worker
- Other (describe)_____

B. The next questions are about your children.

B1. How often do you see the children covered by your most recent child support order?

- 1 -Not at all
- 2. Once or twice a year
- 3 - About every other month
- 4 - Once or twice a month
- 5 - About once a week
- 6 - Several times a week

B4. About how many miles do you live from your child/children? _____

B5. A non-custodial parent sometimes has trouble seeing his or her child because of transportation or other problems. Do any of these make it difficult for you to see any of your children? (Can select more than one)

a. Lack of transportation	Yes	No
b. Distance or travel time involved	Yes	No
c. Other parent doesn't want you to see them because of child support problems	Yes	No
d. Other parent doesn't want you to see them because of other reasons	Yes	No
e. Not wanting to see your children until you feel more "together"	Yes	No
f. Child Protection worker decides when you see them	Yes	No
g. Other parent has left the state with child and can't be located	Yes	No
h. Mother says you are not the father	Yes	No
i. Your work schedule	Yes	No

j. Child doesn't want to visit

Yes

No

C. The next questions are about your current employment

C1. Which best describes your current employment situation?

- 1 - Employed full-time
- 2 - Employed part-time
- 3 - Work at pick-up, occasional, or temporary jobs
- 4 - Self-employed
- 5 - Not working

C2. Employed full-time, part-time or self-employed	C2. Work at pick-up jobs or not working
What kind of work is it? How long have you had this job? _____ months	Approximately how many weeks have you been without regular employment? _____ weeks
On average, how many hours do you work at this job per week? _____ hours	Have you been looking for work within the past 3-4 months: 1- Yes 2- No
Does this job provide (circle all that apply) 1 - Paid vacation 2 - Paid sick leave 3 - Medical coverage for yourself 4 - Medical coverage for your children 5 - None of the above	If you have looked for work, why do you think you haven't found work? (Check all that apply) 1 - Lack of GED or high school diploma 2 - Lack training, experience, skills 3 - No work available in your line 4 - Illness, disability, handicap 5 - Too difficult for an ex-offender to find a job 6 - Discrimination (age, race) 7 - Don't have transportation to get to places 8 - No good job leads or referrals 9 - Don't know 10 - Other _____
What is your usual wage before taxes and deductions? \$ _____ per <input type="checkbox"/> hour <input type="checkbox"/> day <input type="checkbox"/> week <input type="checkbox"/> monthly	
How well does this salary cover your financial needs? 1 - Very well 2 - Fairly well 3 - Not very well 4 - Not at all	
Have you tried to find a better paying job within the past 3-4 months? 1 - Yes, and you found one 2 - Yes, but you haven't found one 3 - No, haven't tried	

D. The next questions are about your child support situation

D1. Do you know that you have a child support order?

- 1- Yes
- 2- No

3- Don't know

D2. How much are you supposed to pay each month in child support (total)? \$ _____ Don't Know

Is this amount a fair amount?

1- Yes

2- No

3- No opinion

D3. Do you owe past due support (arrears)?

1- Yes

2- No

3- Don't know

D4. If yes, how much do you estimate you owe in past due support (total)? \$ _____ Don't Know

Do you think that you'll ever be able to pay it?

1- Yes

2- No

3- No opinion

D5. Since getting your child support order, how much of what you were SUPPOSED to pay in child support, did you ACTUALLY pay (by percentage)? _____

(Use prompts if needed: nothing, less than 25%, less than 50%, more than 50%, all).

IF PAYING LESS THAN 100%, ask...

D6. There are lots of reasons why someone may not pay child support. I'm going to mention a few. Tell me if this was reason why you did not pay all your child support. You can select more than one reason.

You don't have the money	Yes	No
Your child support order is too high	Yes	No
You have another family to support ...	Yes	No
You have some disagreements about visitation	Yes	No
You have some disagreements about how the child support is spent	Yes	No
The child support money you pay goes to the welfare department or the state, not directly to your children	Yes	No
The other parent doesn't need the money.....	Yes	No
The other parent has a new partner who can help support the children	Yes	No
You don't think the child is yours	Yes	No
You didn't want the child	Yes	No
Other _____	Yes	No

D8. In the past few months, have you given the following to any of your children not living with you, or their other parent?

- 1 - Gave money directly to the child or the other parent
- 2 - Made car payments, purchasing a car, or loaning your car
- 3 - Paid medical bills for them
- 4 - Made mortgage or rent payments for them
- 5 - Bought clothes, furniture, bikes, or other major items for them
- 6 - Bought diapers
- 7 - Paid day care costs
- 8 - Spent money on the children when you're with them
- 9 - Anything else? _____
- 10 - None of the above

Wrap Up

Finally, we'd like to ask a few questions about your reactions to the child support agency and your worker...

E1.

How would you rate your

Child Support Worker: Excellent Good Fair Poor

Child Support Agency: Excellent Good Fair Poor

E2. What else would you like us to know about your experiences with the child support agency?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.
END.

Appendix D

Data Forms for Simplified Modification Process



Colorado

Early Intervention

Review and Adjustment

Name of Noncustodial Parent:	
Site: 1- Denver 2- Pueblo	
HHN:	SSN of NCP:
How was the request received? <i>(check all that apply)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Returned Postcard <input type="checkbox"/> Returned Simplified Request Form <input type="checkbox"/> Returned Simplified Internet/Email Request <input type="checkbox"/> Referred by Early Intervention Grant staff <input type="checkbox"/> Referred to IVD agency because <i>pro se</i> filing & court negotiation conference scheduled <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____
Date Request Was Received:	
Party Requesting Review	<input type="checkbox"/> Noncustodial Parent <input type="checkbox"/> Custodial Parent <input type="checkbox"/> TANF Agency <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____
Reason for Request	<input type="checkbox"/> Lost job <input type="checkbox"/> Cut in pay <input type="checkbox"/> Increase in pay <input type="checkbox"/> Injured or disabled <input type="checkbox"/> Incarcerated <input type="checkbox"/> Change in health insurance coverage <input type="checkbox"/> Change in overnights <input type="checkbox"/> 3 years since order entered or last review <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Not specified
Interstate status:	<input type="checkbox"/> Intrastate <input type="checkbox"/> Interstate, initiating <input type="checkbox"/> Interstate, responding <input type="checkbox"/> Direct/Interstate wage assign
Public Assistance Status of Children:	<input type="checkbox"/> Current TANF <input type="checkbox"/> Former TANF <input type="checkbox"/> Never TANF <input type="checkbox"/> Medicaid Only <input type="checkbox"/> Foster Care
Current Order was established by:	<input type="checkbox"/> Administrative (Negotiation Conference) <input type="checkbox"/> Judicial Hearing <input type="checkbox"/> Default
Current MSO:	
Current MAD:	
Order Enter Date:	
Was a modification review conference scheduled?	<input type="checkbox"/> No (<i>Specify why</i>) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (date of first scheduled conference) _____
Stop here if review conference was not scheduled.	
Did either party contact you before the scheduled conference date? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Who contacted you? (<i>Check all that apply</i>) <input type="checkbox"/> Noncustodial parent <input type="checkbox"/> Noncustodial parent's attorney <input type="checkbox"/> Custodial parent <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____ Reason for contact? (<i>Check all that apply</i>) <input type="checkbox"/> Reschedule review conference <input type="checkbox"/> Request language interpretation <input type="checkbox"/> Request parties not meet in same room <input type="checkbox"/> Request participation by telephone (specify reason) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____	
Did a review conference actually occur?	<input type="checkbox"/> No (<i>Specify why</i>) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (date of conference that occurred) _____
Stop here if review conference did not occur.	
Participants of the review conference: <i>(Check all that apply)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Noncustodial parent <input type="checkbox"/> Noncustodial parent's attorney <input type="checkbox"/> Custodial parent <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____
Did both parties appear in person?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, both parties in same room <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, but parties were in separate rooms
Did one party participate by telephone?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the custodial parent <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the noncustodial parent

How long did the conference take? <input type="checkbox"/> 60 minutes or less <input type="checkbox"/> 61-90 minutes <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	
Was a continuance to review conference granted? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (specify why) _____	
Total number of continuances granted: _____	
Did you or someone from the child support agency help the party or parties complete the financial statement(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
CUSTODIAL PARENT IS: <input type="checkbox"/> Currently employed <input type="checkbox"/> Currently not working <input type="checkbox"/> Parent is mentally or physically incapacitated <input type="checkbox"/> Parent is caretaker for joint child < 30 months old <input type="checkbox"/> Parent receives means-tested income (e.g., TANF, SSI, other) <input type="checkbox"/> Other(specify) _____	NONCUSTODIAL PARENT IS: <input type="checkbox"/> Currently employed <input type="checkbox"/> Currently not working <input type="checkbox"/> Parent is mentally or physically incapacitated <input type="checkbox"/> Parent receives means-tested income (e.g., TANF, SSI, other) <input type="checkbox"/> Incarcerated <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify)_____
Custodial parent's sources of income (check all that apply) <input type="checkbox"/> Earnings <input type="checkbox"/> Earnings from overtime <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)_____	Noncustodial parent's sources of income (check all that apply) <input type="checkbox"/> Earnings <input type="checkbox"/> Earnings from overtime <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)_____
What guidelines factors were discussed at the settlement conference? <input type="checkbox"/> Noncustodial parent's income <input type="checkbox"/> Custodial parent's income <input type="checkbox"/> Either parent's income from overtime <input type="checkbox"/> Parent to receive credit for health insurance premium <input type="checkbox"/> Amount of shared physical care (overnights) <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify)_____	
Outcome of Review Conference (final review conference if there is more than one)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Parties agreed new MSO of \$_____ Is the new MSO the guidelines amount? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Parties could not reach an agreement Why didn't the parties agree (specify)_____ <input type="checkbox"/> Review terminated Why was the review terminated? <input type="checkbox"/> requesting party failed to provide financial information or supporting documentation <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)_____	
Were the parties referred to mediation? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (specify why)_____	
Final Disposition	
Was there a challenge? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
Was there a stipulation filed with the court? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Date:_____	
Was a motion to modify filed? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Date:_____	
Did the court modify the order? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Date:_____	
New MSO: _____	

Completed by: _____ telephone: _____

Please make a copy of the guidelines worksheet used to calculate the new order amount and attach to this completed form.



Colorado

Early Intervention Modification Process

Noncustodial Parent Follow-up Interview

NCP Name:	
Date modification requested:	Date of Interview:
HHN:	SSN:
Site: 1- Denver 2- Pueblo	

I am calling from the Center for Policy Research. We would like to find out how the child support agency can help parents change their child support order. Your name won't be used on any report and the child support agency won't know what you say. Is now a good time to ask about what happened when the child support agency was trying to change your child support order?

Section A. First, let's talk about the forms you used to try and change your child support order

	Yes	No
1. In the last year, did you fill out a form saying you wanted to change your child support?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. In the last year, did you get papers because the custodial parent wanted to change the child support order?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In the last year, did you fill out financial papers to change your child support?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall, were the forms easy to complete?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section B. Next, let's talk about the modification conference

	If yes, was it helpful?						
	Yes	No	Don't remember	Very	Somewhat	Not very	Don't know
1. Did you go to a conference to change your child support order?	<input type="checkbox"/>						

If No, Skip to Section C.

If you went to the conference, did the worker...							
	Yes	No	Don't remember	Very	Somewhat	Not very	Don't know
2. Help you fill out the financial papers?	<input type="checkbox"/>						
3. Explain how they decide if your order changes?	<input type="checkbox"/>						
4. Help the other parent understand your situation	<input type="checkbox"/>						
5. Help you understand the other parent's situation	<input type="checkbox"/>						
6. Help you reach an agreement with the other parent on the "right" amount of child support?	<input type="checkbox"/>						
7. Help you talk with the other parent about visitation and other issues about your children?	<input type="checkbox"/>						
8. Help you decide which parent should provide health insurance for your children	<input type="checkbox"/>						

Section C. Are any of these reasons why you didn't go to a conference to change your child support order?

1. Lack of transportation	Yes	No
2. Distance or travel time involved	Yes	No
3. The other parent wouldn't cooperate	Yes	No
4. Your work schedule	Yes	No
5. You had trouble filling out the financial forms or getting the financial documents	Yes	No
6. You didn't know you were supposed to go for a conference at child support	Yes	No
7. It wasn't convenient	Yes	No
8. It wasn't worth the time	Yes	No
9. You didn't think that they would change your child support order	Yes	No
10. You don't trust the child support agency	Yes	No
11. You don't trust the other parent	Yes	No

Now, let's talk about what happened with your child support order

Section D. Did any of the following happen to you?

1. I didn't bring in the papers or show up and the review was terminated	Yes	No
2. The other parent didn't show up to the conference	Yes	No

3. The agency said I couldn't change my order	Yes	No
4. The other parent and I agreed on a new child support order or to no change in the order	Yes	No
5. The other parent and I did <u>not</u> agree on a new child support order at the conference and we had to go to court	Yes	No

6. Did your order...?

- 1- Go up
- 2- Go down
- 3- Stay the same

7. How do you feel about your new child support order?

- 1- Better than the old order
- 2- The same or almost the same as the old order
- 3- Worse than the old order
- 4- NA, The order did not change
- 5- Other_____

Section E. There are lots of reasons why someone may not pay child support. I'm going to mention a few. Tell me if this was a reason why you did not pay all your child support. You can select more than one reason.

1. You don't have the money	Yes	No	Not Applicable
2. Your child support order is too high	Yes	No	Not Applicable
3. You have another family to support	Yes	No	Not Applicable
4. You have some disagreements about visitation	Yes	No	Not Applicable
5. You have some disagreements about how the child support is spent	Yes	No	Not Applicable
6. The child support money you pay goes to the welfare department or the state, not directly to your children	Yes	No	Not Applicable
7. The other parent doesn't need the money	Yes	No	Not Applicable
8. The other parent has a new partner who can help support the children	Yes	No	Not Applicable
9. You don't think the child is yours	Yes	No	Not Applicable
10. You didn't want the child	Yes	No	Not Applicable
11. You've stopped working or you're working fewer hours	Yes	No	Not Applicable

12. In the past few months, have you given the following to any of your children not living with you, or their other parent?

- 1 - Gave money directly the other parent for housing or transportation
- 2 - Paid medical bills or health insurance premiums for them
- 3 - Paid day care costs
- 4 - Paid for items for the children like clothing, bikes, furniture, etc..
- 5 - Anything else? _____
- 6 - None of the above

13. Which best describes your current employment situation?

- 1 - Employed full-time
- 2 - Employed part-time
- 3 - Work at pick-up, occasional, or temporary jobs
- 4 - Self-employed
- 5 - Not working

14. How well does this salary cover your financial needs?

- 1 - Very well
- 2 - Fairly well
- 3 - Not very well
- 4 - Not at all

Section F. Do you know the following?

	Yes	No	Don't Know Never Tried
1. Do you know what number to call at the child support agency if you have questions or your work situation changes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Do you know your child support worker's name?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Do you have a direct telephone number for your child support worker?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Have you ever talked with a child support worker in person?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Have you ever talked with a child support worker by telephone?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Is it easy to reach someone at child support when you want to talk?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section G. Finally, we'd like to ask a few questions about your reactions to the child support agency, your worker, and the court...

How would you rate your

- 1. Child Support Worker: Excellent. Good..... Fair Poor
- 2. Child Support Agency: Excellent. Good..... Fair Poor
- 3. Child Support Conference Excellent. Good..... Fair Poor
- 4. Judge Excellent. Good..... Fair Poor