

Culture change: Implementing a new approach to child support

Jennifer L. Noyes, Lisa Klein Vogel, and
Lanikque Howard

TAKEAWAYS

A child support agency-led intervention that includes case management, employment, and parenting components offers a feasible and promising approach to promoting the reliable payment of child support.

Keeping noncustodial parents engaged in program services requires a well-developed and flexible approach.

Culture change within child support agencies, from an enforcement-oriented to a service-oriented approach, is necessary to improve the way child support services are delivered.



**Institute for
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Changes in family structure have led to a substantial increase in single-parent households. The child support system is designed to ensure that noncustodial parents contribute financially to the upbringing of their children, but for many families it does not work well. As detailed in the introduction to this issue, the Child Support Noncustodial Parent Employment Demonstration Program (CSPED) offered a new approach to child support, intended to make child support payments by unemployed noncustodial parents more consistent. CSPED was a rigorous, randomized controlled trial with three primary study components; an implementation analysis, an impact analysis, and a benefit-cost analysis. This article summarizes the key findings of the implementation analysis; the second article summarizes the impact and benefit-cost analyses.

Our research questions include:

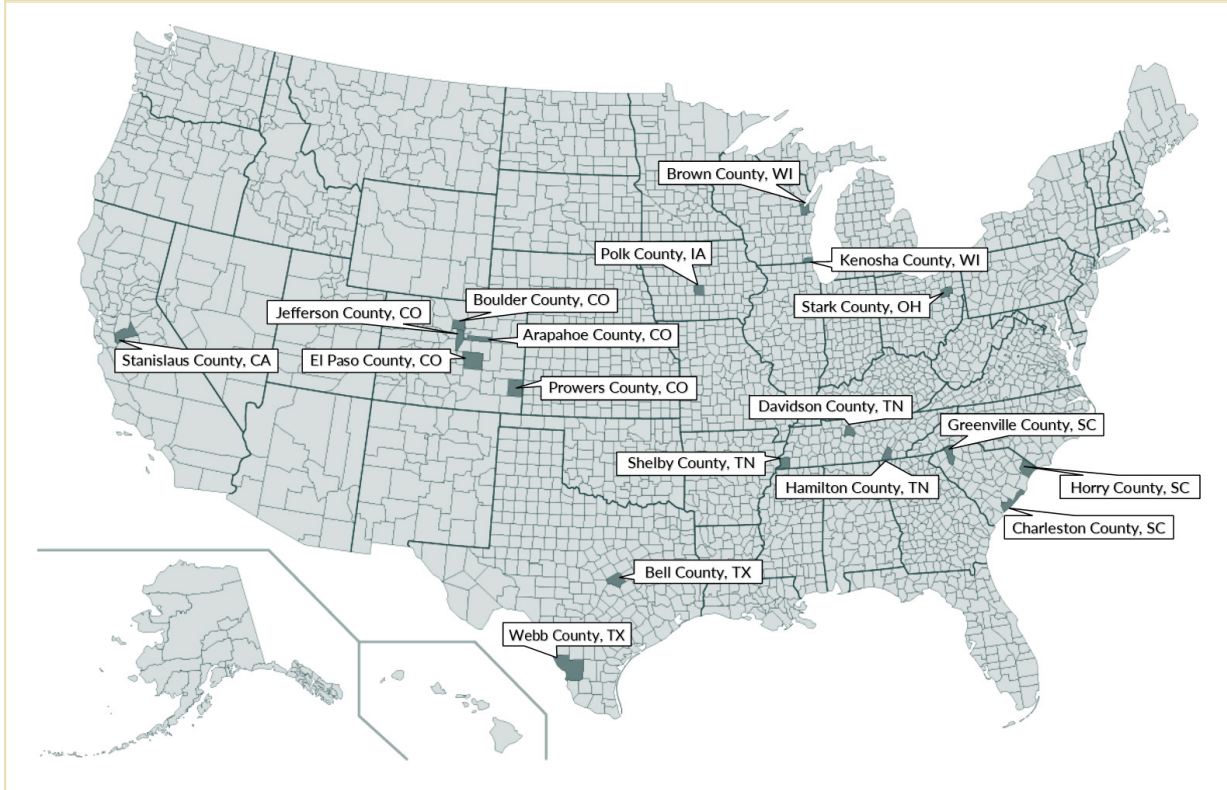
- How did CSPED programs operate?
- What services did participants receive?

In addressing these two questions, we sought to identify the challenges states faced in implementing CSPED programs as well as the promising strategies they developed to overcome these challenges. These research questions were assessed for the 18 sites across eight states (California, Colorado, Iowa, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Wisconsin) that participated in the CSPED demonstration (Figure 1). States had one year of planning time to develop participant recruitment and service delivery systems, and approximately three years to enroll participants. During this time, one-half of the noncustodial parents enrolled in each state were randomly assigned to receive CSPED services (the treatment group), and the other half to a control group that did not receive the extra services associated with CSPED. This randomized control structure allowed the research team to assess the effects of the intervention (see the second article in this issue for a summary of the results of this analysis).

Methods

We used multiple sources and methods to collect a mix of qualitative and quantitative information about CSPED to understand how the program was implemented. We conducted two rounds of site visits, including on-site interviews, in all eight CSPED states, first between May and August 2014, interviewing 177 staff from child support and partner agencies, as well as leadership staff; and then again between June and August 2016, just prior to the end of random assignment, interviewing a total of 54 individuals.¹ Two web-based surveys were administered to child support and partner staff in May 2014 and February 2016. Qualitative analysis software was used to code, organize, and synthesize staff interview data. We also examined participation data collected across the full implementation period from the web-based system used to perform random assignment and track program participation. A baseline survey of program applicants was administered to all participants at the time of enrollment.²

Figure 1. CSPED was implemented in 18 sites across eight states.



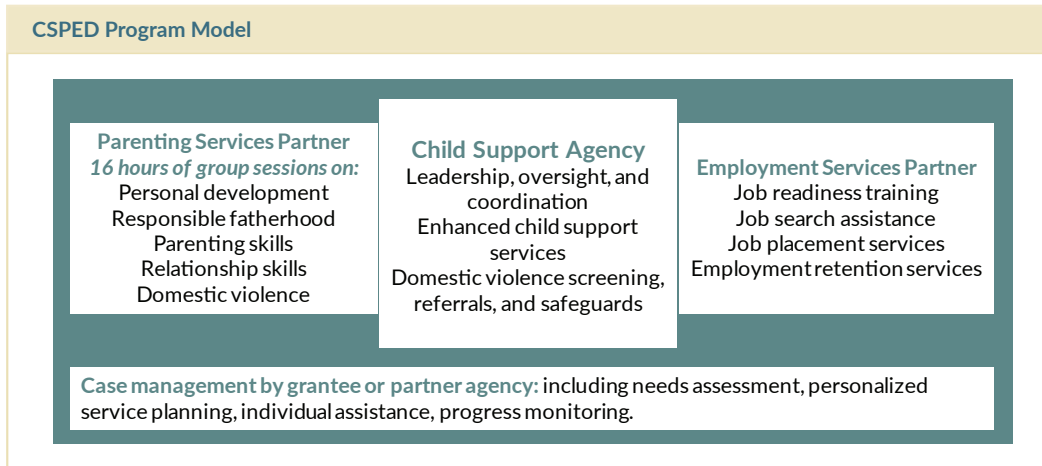
Finally, we reviewed program documents that were developed for the CSPED evaluation or developed by CSPED states in order to support service delivery.

CSPED design features

CSPED was created and funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE), which is housed within the Administration for Children and Families. OCSE wanted to test whether providing a specific set of services through the child support agency could have an impact on the payment of child support. OCSE asked each state to design a new program that met the following criteria:

1. the lead agency for each program must be a child support agency;
2. a comprehensive set of specific core services must be provided including case management, enhanced child support services, employment services, and parenting services; and
3. child support agencies should partner with other agencies to deliver employment and parenting services.

Using the child support agency as the door through which noncustodial parents access employment and parenting services was a novel approach. In the past, child support agencies have been focused on enforcement actions. However, for several reasons, OCSE saw untapped potential in the child support agencies' ability to link noncustodial parents who are behind in their child support to services that might improve their payment of that support. Child support agencies already have access to the target population of noncustodial parents. Child support agencies are more motivated than other agencies to see increasing child support payments as an explicit goal. In addition, child support agencies are well-positioned to address some of the barriers to employment to which the



enforcement system itself contributes (such as license suspension). As shown in the “CSPED program model” text box, serving as the hub, child support agencies participating in CSPED worked with employment service providers and parenting service providers to deliver the range of services outlined by OCSE.

Program operation

In order to implement the CSPED program model, child support agencies in each CSPED state needed first to recruit and enroll eligible participants, and then to deliver services in the four key areas in cooperation with their parenting services and employment services partners.

OCSE provided direction to states about the eligibility criteria that should be used to select CSPED participants, including that they:

1. had established paternity;
2. were being served by the child support program; and
3. were not regularly paying child support, or were expected to have difficulty making payments, due to lack of regular employment.

States were also able to modify or develop additional eligibility criteria, and most did so, as shown in Table 1. Most referrals of potential CSPED participants came from child support staff; some referrals also came from community-based providers, the courts, and other program participants.

Table 1. Most states modified or added CSPED eligibility criteria.

State	Allowed child support cases from adjacent counties	Allowed arrears-only cases	Allowed \$0 order cases	Allowed cases in the process of paternity or child support order establishment	Excluded full-time students	Excluded noncustodial parents for prior program participation
California	X					
Colorado				X	X	X
Iowa				X ^a		X
Ohio			X	X ^a		
South Carolina	X	X ^b				
Tennessee						
Texas		X ^c		X		
Wisconsin						

^aIf the noncustodial parent was unemployed.

^bAllowed on a case-by-case basis; added in January 2016 (after commencement of random assignment).

^cIf the noncustodial parent faced contempt for nonpayment of arrears.

Recruitment challenges

Each state was asked to recruit 1,500 study participants over a three-year period. In order to recruit the target population for the study, states used a variety of approaches, including referrals from child support staff, the courts, and other agencies, and direct recruitment methods such as letters and phone calls. Most states found it challenging to generate sufficient referrals to meet enrollment targets, for several reasons. First, to generate sufficient sample members for the CSPED evaluation's random assignment design, grantee staff were required to enroll twice as many participants into the study as they planned to provide with CSPED services. Grantees found that some potential participants resisted taking the time to go into the child support office, or to go through the effort of the random assignment process, when they had only a 50 percent chance to receive CSPED services. Additionally, random assignment and intake often lasted an hour or longer. Grantees found that some participants had difficulty with the time required to complete this process.

Another common challenge, particularly early on, was some noncustodial parents' negative perception of child support agencies. Participation in the demonstration was voluntary for noncustodial parents, many of whom had prior negative experiences with the child support program in its role as an enforcement agency. CSPED offered a new approach to child support, and participants often did not initially believe that the program would be beneficial to them.

Lack of buy-in among child support staff also contributed to participant recruitment difficulties early on, as child support staff who were not invested in the program did not prioritize identifying and referring prospective participants to CSPED. During the demonstration, child support agencies still needed to provide regular child support services, both to those in the CSPED control group, and to those not participating in the demonstration. Although most of the child support staff who worked exclusively on CSPED embraced the program, attitudes among the broader child support staff were mixed, particularly at the start of the demonstration. Some child support workers resisted the changes needed in order to implement CSPED as intended.

Overall, program staff found that recruitment sources that they expected to be highly productive, such as court-based referrals and mass mailings, did not work as well as anticipated. Many states also underestimated the number of staff required to generate high-quality referrals and recruit participants.

Recruitment solutions

CSPED staff used a variety of strategies to overcome recruitment challenges. These included placing child support staff in offices that were accessible to the public, sending recruitment letters in envelopes without the child support agency's logo to prevent the letter from being misidentified as a bill for child support, and making use of partner agencies, of which participants often had a more positive opinion. As one employment and parenting partner said:

*You have to have a partner who can get outside of the traditional realm of child support. Someone who can provide these services and create this trusting environment and help build that bridge to child support... Though child support has an equal amount of expertise on that side, it is great to have someone on this side because there are a lot of guys who will call here that would **never** call child support.*

Partner agencies were included in recruitment by, for example, having the employment partner agency director share information about CSPED to potential program participants

waiting to attend court hearings related to their child support order, or having CSPED staff attending partner agency and other community events.

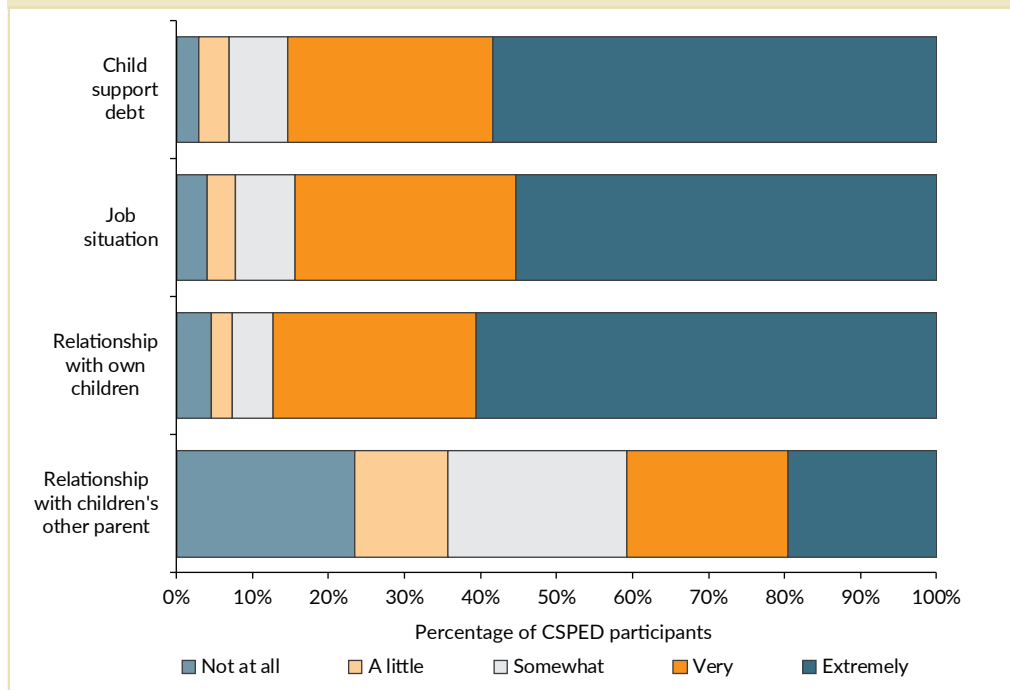
In order to get more buy-in to the program from child support staff, several states found it helpful to send these staff newsletters and emails about CSPED participant progress, highlighting success stories, and providing staff with information on child support receipt trends over time. As child support staff saw participants they worked with succeeding, their views towards the program became increasingly positive.

Programs also hired new, dedicated recruitment staff, expanded eligibility criteria to allow more participants to enroll, broadened their array of referral sources and recruitment strategies, and worked with court staff to arrange additional court dates for potentially eligible participants.

The key lesson learned from the CSPED recruitment experience is that it takes creativity to reach and enroll large numbers of participants into a child support-led program. States that expected to recruit from a single source, or primarily through passive means, had to broaden their approach in order to make progress toward enrollment targets. States that faced additional external constraints, such as delayed implementation, delays related to court filings on potentially eligible participants, and recruitment from only one implementation site, had a particularly difficult time meeting enrollment targets. Child support agencies found they needed to clearly communicate the benefits of CSPED services to gain both the trust of participants, and the support of child support staff who, ultimately, were the best recruitment source for CSPED.

Despite recruitment challenges, states as a whole enrolled 85 percent of planned enrollment, and more than 10,000 noncustodial parents participated in CSPED. As shown in Figure 2, over 80 percent of participants indicated that a very or extremely important reason for applying for CSPED was their child support debt, their current job situation, and

Figure 2. Major factors cited by noncustodial parents as motivation to participate in CSPED were their child support debt, their job situation, and their relationship with their children.



Source: Baseline survey.

their relationship with their children. Participant characteristics are summarized in the “participant characteristics” text box.

Service delivery and engagement

Once individuals were recruited into the program and service delivery began, states faced a new set of challenges in effectively providing services and keeping participants engaged. CSPED provided services in four core areas: case management, enhanced child support, employment, and parenting.

Case management services

States offered an array of case management services, as detailed in the text box. The multiple complex barriers to employment faced by many participants required more intensive case management. This created variations in the intensity of services offered at various points in time, at different sites, and across different case managers. Similarly, even when intensive case management services were warranted, several states found that high caseloads limited case managers’ ability to consistently engage in case reviews and to follow up with participants. In some instances, understaffing contributed to burnout among staff who struggled to keep up with their caseloads and who were required to take on multiple roles throughout the demonstration.

A promising strategy identified by CSPED staff to address these challenges was an integrated case management approach, in which child support staff and partner staff worked together to provide overall case management in addition to providing case management services within their respective domains. This approach allowed CSPED staff to spread their resources across staff members and agencies. For example, if one staff member was not able to reach a participant, or if a case manager was out sick, or there was turnover within an agency, staff at the other agency would help out. This approach also facilitated continuity of services because more than one person was aware of the participant’s needs, circumstances, and progress. Programs also hired additional staff, and created new roles, to help address demanding workloads and meet participant needs.

While child support agencies had previously acted primarily as enforcement agencies, implementing CSPED required them to approach service delivery in a new, customer-focused manner. This required case managers to shift from an enforcement-oriented perspective to an approach involving intensive guidance and follow-up. As a CSPED project manager said:

When you come from the other side of child support, [taking this] kind of approach to case management, I think is just new. Even though it is still case management, it is just more personalized. It’s not just trying to collect money; it’s about trying to build a relationship with these people.

Participant characteristics:

- Nearly all were men (90 percent);
- Average age was 35, and most were between the ages of 25 and 39 (64 percent);
- They generally had low levels of educational attainment (26 percent had not completed high school or obtained a GED, 43 percent had only a high school diploma or a GED, and only 32 percent reported having attended college);
- More than one-quarter had major or severe major depression;
- Only 14 percent were currently married and about half had never married (52 percent); and
- Most participants identified as non-Hispanic black or African American (40 percent), non-Hispanic white (33 percent), or Hispanic or Latino (22 percent).

Case management services provided at full implementation:

Intake and needs assessments
Benefit-eligibility assessments
Court-related activities
Personalized service plans
Participant progress monitoring
Referrals to other services

All services were available in all eight states

To help staff adapt to this new model of case management, states selected current child support staff who already had, or were receptive to, a more client-centered approach, and hired new staff who shared this viewpoint. Programs also provided training to case managers on appropriate services and case management approaches.

Enhanced child support services

States offered a variety of enhanced child support services to CSPED participants intended to assist noncustodial parents to consistently pay their monthly child support orders, as shown in the text box. All states were able to remove driver's license suspensions if the suspension was due to failure to pay child support. However, this suspension removal did not automatically lead to license reinstatement, as participants may have owed fines and reinstatement fees. Some states took additional steps to assist participants in reinstating their licenses while others did not.

All states also offered expedited review of child support orders, and adjustment of those orders as appropriate. However, some states found that state policy on minimum order amounts and change thresholds disqualified some participants from having their orders lowered, and that even for those who were eligible for a modification, it often did not occur as quickly as expected.

Services that were excluded from the CSPED design included access and visitation services, mediation services, and legal assistance. The need for these services was identified by CSPED staff; many participants had difficulty gaining access to their children because of poor or nonexistent co-parenting relationships with the custodial parent, and some participants were reluctant to pay their child support if they were not able to spend time with their children. A child support staff member reported the following perspective of a participant:

I'm paying my child support, I'm working, but I can't see my child. Therefore, all of this other stuff that I am doing, it doesn't mean anything. Because I feel disrespected as a parent, as a father.

In most CSPED states, child support programs did not have a role in setting parenting time orders, or in helping noncustodial parents with parenting time issues. While some programs were able to help with mediation, parenting time, and legal aid needs through partners or outside grants, most were not.

Employment services

Each CSPED participant had an employment case manager who was intended to provide participants with an individualized set of services to help them find employment; available employment services are shown in the text box.

Enhanced child support services provided at full implementation:

- Case reviews
- Debt reduction planning (five states)
- Removal of driver's license holds
- Early intervention monitoring for missed payments
- Expedited child support order review
- Family-owed arrears compromise (seven states)
- Order modification
- State-owed arrears compromise (six states)
- Suspension of enforcement tools
- Wage withholding

Services were available in all eight states unless otherwise indicated.

Employment services provided at full implementation:

- Bonding* (seven states)
- Employment assessment
- Employment plan
- English as a second language classes (six states)
- Facilitated and self-directed job search assistance
- GED classes
- Internships (apprenticeships) (four states)
- Job development services
- Job readiness training
- Job referrals
- Job retention services
- On-the-job training (six states)
- Pre-employment assessments
- Rapid re-employment
- Records expungement (four states)
- Resume and cover letter training
- Short-term job skills training
- Subsidized employment (four states)
- Unpaid work experience (two states)
- Vocational training
- Voluntary drug testing (two states)
- Work supports

Services were available in all eight states unless otherwise indicated.

*Of the states in which bonding was available, all but two provided information and education to participants rather than facilitating the bonding process.

Employment partners reported difficulty in getting participants to engage in employment services. In addition to overcoming participant reluctance due to prior negative experiences with the child support program, some participants did not believe that they needed help finding work or obtaining employment services, or did not have a full understanding of the services available to them. As one staff member said,

If participants engage in services, the program usually works for them. The issue is getting participants to the program and helping them understand that the goal is to help them. They seem to get excited about it [at enrollment] and then life happens in between.

Employment partners also reported that some participants lacked the motivation to take advantage of available employment services. As one of the employment providers stated,

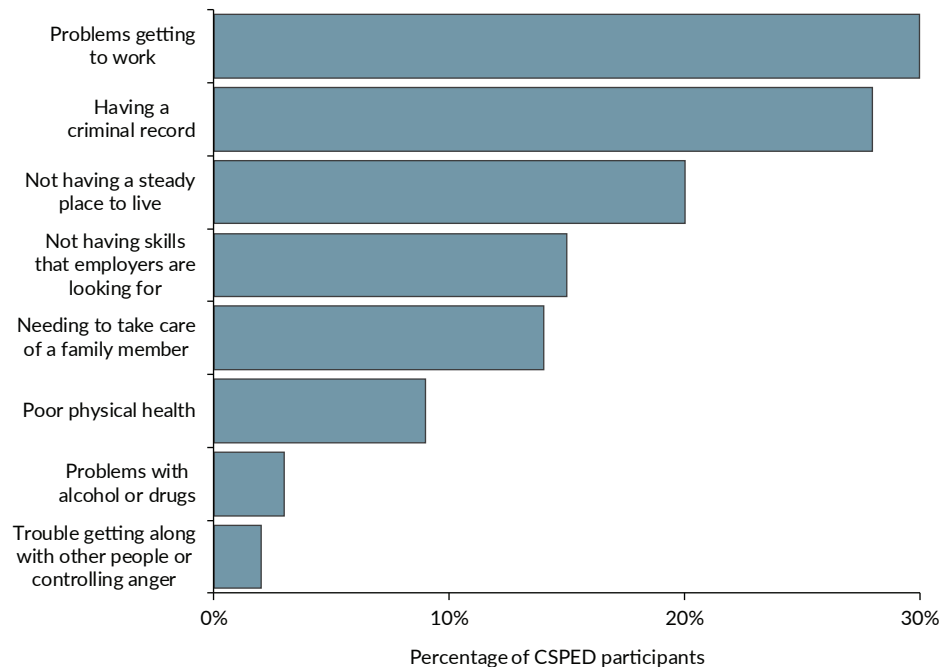
It's more than just getting a job. It's the idea in your head that, you know, I have family to support. I have obligations. My children are depending on me... A lot of these guys have never had that explained to them, someone to say, you know, you've got to get up. I know you might be sleepy. You might not be feeling well. You just started the job, you can't call in. That sense of responsibility—that has been the biggest challenge.

States also reported that participants often found it challenging to take part in job training programs because of the need to earn money to meet short-term expenses. As one employment staff member explained,

Part of the problem with [job training] is that people have to survive. And so it's hard for them and their family to go back to school if they are paying their child support, paying their rent, and everything else.

Even when noncustodial parents were willing to engage in employment services, many faced multiple barriers to both participating in those services and finding work (Figure 3). One particularly substantial barrier was having a criminal record. As one employment provider stated:

Figure 3. Many CSPED participants reported barriers to finding employment.



Source: Baseline survey.

Note: Figure shows proportion of respondents who indicated that the barrier made it “very” or “extremely” hard to keep a job.

Many employers are not willing to hire people with criminal backgrounds, and the jobs that are available to people with backgrounds are so low-paying, participants feel like it isn't worthwhile to work.

Other challenges faced by participants included unstable housing, mental health issues, substance abuse problems, literacy needs, lack of transportation, lack of health insurance, food insecurity, and sparse work histories. Program staff made referrals to community resources to help address these challenges when they were aware of them and when resources were available. However, services to help with these concerns, particularly housing, mental health, and substance abuse-related issues, were lacking in many of the communities in which CSPED programs were located. This created challenges for frontline staff who often found that these fundamental needs had to be addressed before participants could engage in program services and make any progress towards obtaining and maintaining employment. Most child support and partner agencies found that they could not fully address all of their participants' needs.

Despite these challenges, CSPED programs did find strategies that were helpful in overcoming barriers to employment and facilitating participant engagement. Positive relationships between employment agencies and employers were a critical factor in getting participants employed, both because employers trusted the recommendations of agency staff, and because getting to know both the employer and the participant helped ensure a good fit between employer and employee. Understanding employers' future hiring needs could also help employment partners to identify training opportunities that could prepare participants for those jobs when they became available.

Employment staff also emphasized the importance of job retention services, which meant that staff were available to help participants if they had problems on a job, or needed assistance in navigating a new work environment. As one employment partner agency director said,

You're going to have someone in your corner for six months to make sure you maintain that attachment to your job. If there's any issues on your job, anything that you need to talk through with someone, that's what we're here for. So call [the case managers], don't quit a job before you have another job, that sort of thing.

Employment staff who were flexible and accommodating allowed participants to make the best use of CSPED services. For example, offering employment-related workshops at different times of the day, or one-on-one services made it easier to accommodate participants' schedules. Staff commitment to the goals of CSPED was also key. As a project manager described,

It's the passionate [employment] case managers. Every single person that said they got something out of [the program], it was because of the person they worked with, not because of the services they received. They talk about the services—the services are great—but, it always comes back to that one individual who helped them. That is the number one thing.

Strong communication and coordination across child support and partner staff also facilitated provision of employment services. Frequent meetings, informal communication, and team-based case staffing gave staff an opportunity to share information about participant needs. Co-location of child support and partner staff, when present, improved communication and facilitated coordinated delivery of services.

Finally, employment partners found that incentives and work supports increased participant uptake of services. Many noncustodial parents were motivated to participate in

CSPED services by their ability to reduce accumulated child support debt owed to the state, and the opportunity to get driver's licenses and professional licenses reinstated. Work supports such as interview clothes, bus passes, gas vouchers, and help in obtaining work-related supplies also made it easier for participants to obtain employment.

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Parenting services

CSPED was designed to provide parenting classes with peer support that covered responsible fatherhood, parenting skills, relationships skills, and personal development, with the goal of increasing participants' sense of responsibility for their children, improving their parenting and co-parenting skills, increasing reliable child support, and ultimately improving child well-being.

Across all programs, parenting partners had difficulty in getting participants to attend parenting classes. CSPED was a child-support led, employment-focused demonstration, with a primary aim of increasing child support payments. This prioritization may have contributed to participants' lack of engagement in parenting services. For example, when participants who were already working, or found work while in the program, they were generally allowed to miss parenting classes that conflicted with their work schedules. Some parenting staff observed that this prioritization also contributed to participants skipping classes when they had other conflicts or did not “feel like going.”

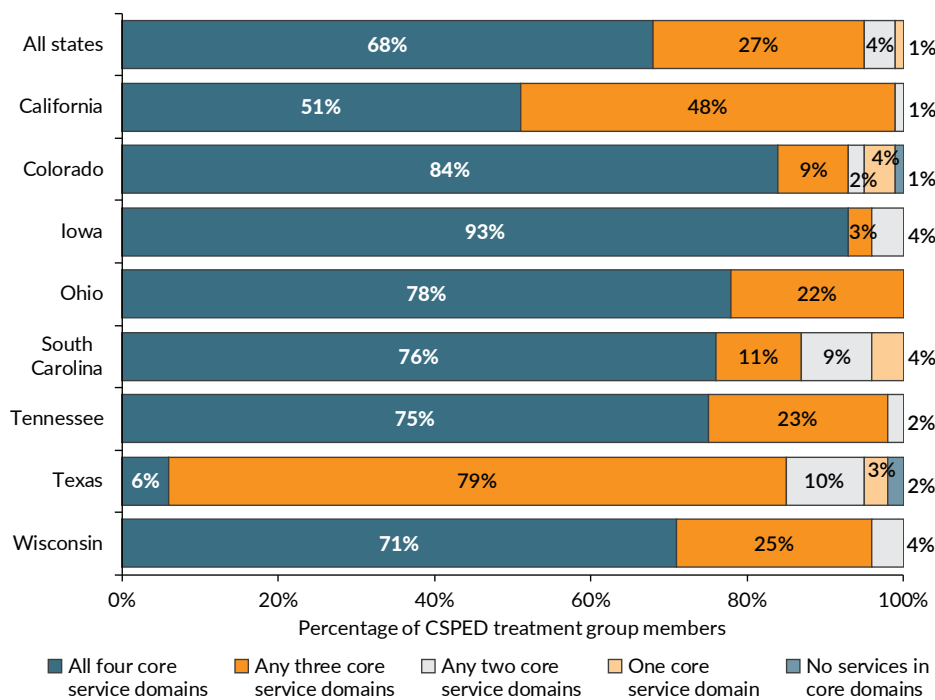
Other barriers to engagement in parenting services included lack of transportation, childcare responsibilities, the time required to complete up to 16 hours of classes, and negative feelings on the part of some participants about being in a classroom environment in general, and about being in a parenting class in particular.

Strategies for overcoming this lack of engagement included re-branding parenting classes as central to the program, offering individual makeup sessions for group classes, and modifying the times at which services were offered to better align with participants' schedules.

Amount of services received

Despite the challenges to service delivery, nearly all participants received at least one service in one of the four core service areas of case management, enhanced child support services, employment services, and parenting services. Sixty-eight percent received at least one service in all four service areas, though there was considerable variation across CSPED programs (Figure 4). On average, participants received almost 22 hours of services, comprising roughly 10 hours of employment services, 4 hours of parenting services, 3 and a half hours of child support services, and 2 and a half hours of case management services. Average hours of services across state programs ranged from 14 to 37 hours. Participants received most services during their first six months of CSPED enrollment, and nearly all

Figure 4. Nearly all CSPED participants received at least one core service, and 68 percent received at least one service in each of the four core service areas.



Source: Administrative data.

services were received during the first year. On average, about half of all service hours were provided in a group setting, and the other half were provided through individual meetings between caseworkers and participants.

Key service delivery lessons

The implementation evaluation revealed five key lessons about service delivery.

- 1. Cross-agency programs require strong partnerships and thoughtful communication strategies.** Just as including partner agencies helped CSPED programs to recruit participants, strong relationships helped in coordinating services and keeping participants engaged. Promising coordination strategies included frequent meetings and informal communication, co-location of agencies so that participants receive multiple services in the same place, clear assignment of roles and responsibilities, and presenting the case management team as a “united front” to participants.
- 2. Program staffing levels need to sufficiently address growing caseloads, participant needs, and staff turnover.** Case managers struggled at times to provide services of the intensity required to meet participants’ complex needs, particularly as caseloads grew. Promising remedies included hiring new or leveraging existing staff, cross-training staff to temporarily fill multiple roles, and sharing case management responsibilities. Programs that were able to successfully use these strategies to maintain relatively consistent staffing throughout the demonstration found this continuity helped build trust between staff and participants, which enabled participants to open up to CSPED staff about the challenges they faced. Consistent staffing also allowed staff to witness program benefits, which strengthened their dedication and commitment to the program goals.

3. **Services for noncustodial parents behind on their child support obligations should be designed to meet multiple and complex needs.** Many participants had complex concerns that limited their ability to engage in services, as well as to secure employment. These included criminal records, lack of work history, and lack of education and training. For some participants, these concerns presented barriers to program participation that CSPED programs could not overcome. Fully addressing these needs would require an expansion of the CSPED model.
4. **Sustained engagement with program services requires a well-developed and flexible approach.** Maintaining participant engagement was an ongoing challenge; promising strategies for promoting engagement included front-loading group-based classes, co-location of services to facilitate ease of access, and flexibility in service-delivery timing. Program staff also used reminder calls ahead of appointments, follow-up calls after missed appointments, incentives to maintain engagement, and work supports, such as bus passes and gas cards, to overcome barriers to participation.
5. **A new approach to service delivery requires a cultural shift within organizations.** For many child support workers, both those directly and indirectly involved in CSPED, the demonstration represented a distinct change from their previous focus on using enforcement actions to secure child support payments. Implementing this new approach required them to undergo a philosophical shift to a more client-centered approach, which differed from how most child support staff were trained. If child support leadership backed this change, the entire child support office sometimes underwent a cultural shift as child support staff saw the benefit of referring customers to CSPED. As an employment and parenting partner explained:

I know the culture has changed over at [child support]. I know it. Because they have to sit and talk to these people. You know what I'm saying? They had to become fatherhood, not [child support]. It gave [the Project Manager] and them a chance to see that [the noncustodial parents] are really trying. I'm not saying that they didn't care before. But now they say, 'OK, I should look at this person a little more...' it shows that everyone needs to be listened to.

Many states point to the cultural shift their child support agency experienced during the demonstration period as a key outcome.

Conclusions and policy implications

The experiences states had in planning and implementing their CSPED programs offer valuable considerations across the domains of planning for services; identifying, recruiting, and enrolling participants; developing partnership, leadership, and staffing structures to support service delivery; and service implementation. CSPED programs represented a new way of approaching services for noncustodial parents with barriers to meeting their child support obligations. CSPED programs identified promising strategies for overcoming recruitment difficulties, building trust among the target population, and working as partners to provide services. CSPED programs developed a variety of services intended to meet participant needs in the areas of case management, employment, parenting, and child support. CSPED implementation results suggest the potential advantage of expanding services to include additional services such as substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment services, and assistance with parenting time.

Many states point to the cultural shift their child support agency experienced during the demonstration period as a key outcome. Specifically, states that experienced culture change and buy-in among agency leadership believe that this culture change will continue, regardless of future funding. In particular, several staff stated that regardless of the services they provide, they will provide them with “more empathy and [in] a more client-centered and family-centered manner moving forward,” because “staff have changed the way they view noncustodial parents.” This attitude, coupled with an interest in continuing to work with partner agencies and making referrals for services in the community, is consistent with strong effects of CSPED on noncustodial parents’ satisfaction with child support services, detailed in the next article. The effects of this cultural shift may be felt far into the future. ■

Jennifer L. Noyes is Letters & Science Associate Dean for Operations and Staff and Distinguished Researcher at IRP, University of Wisconsin–Madison, and an IRP Affiliate; Lisa Klein Vogel is Researcher at IRP; Lanique Howard is Founder, Children First Strategy Group and Early Childhood Special Projects Coordinator at First 5 Alameda County, California.

Type of analysis: Implementation

Data sources: (1) Semi-structured interviews with CSPED staff; (2) web-based staff surveys; (3) program participation data; (4) a baseline survey of program applicants; (5) program documentation; and (6) participant focus groups.

Types of data: Survey, program participation, interview

Unit of analysis: CSPED programs within a state

Sample definition: Eight CSPED states

Time frame: October 2013 through September 2017

Limitations: Program participation data were entered by CSPED staff in each state. Data were reviewed monthly by OCSE and program staff, but not formally checked against case files or other records. Survey data are self-reported and rely on participants’ memory.

¹The evaluation team also conducted a focus group with participants during six of the eight 2014 site visits.

²A detailed evaluation of data from the baseline survey can be found in M. Cancian, A. Guarin, L. Hodges, and D. R. Meyer, “Characteristics of Participants in the Child Support Noncustodial Parent Employment Demonstration (CSPED) Evaluation,” Madison, WI: Institute for Research on Poverty, December 2018. Available at: <https://www.irp.wisc.edu/resource/csped-final-characteristics-of-participants-report/>.