

## THE BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS FOR CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES PROJECT

### In Colorado, a behaviorally informed intervention led to increased collections

BICS is a five-year 1115 demonstration grant funded by the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE). Colorado was one of eight agencies selected. The demonstration project period runs from September 30, 2014 to September 29, 2019. The total budget is \$390,000 dollars in grant funds which is eligible for Federal Financial Participation (FFP), thereby allocating \$1.1 million dollars to the project in five years.

The first year of the project was devoted to planning. Grantee sites worked closely with OCSE and the Technical Assistance and Evaluation team to identify problem areas and design their first intervention.

In Colorado, the initial grant demonstration sites in Phase I were Denver, Garfield, Pitkin, and Rio Blanco. Arapahoe and El Paso counties were added later. Phase I started in August 2016. It primarily served noncustodial parents during the Administrative Process Action's (APA) negotiation conference at which a child support order is establishment in the local child support office rather than with the court system. Parents with existing orders (mostly established in court) were added later. The other cases were included in the selection criteria in order to boost the enrollment numbers. By the time the first phase concluded in January 2018, 697 cases had been randomly assigned to the Treatment and Control groups.

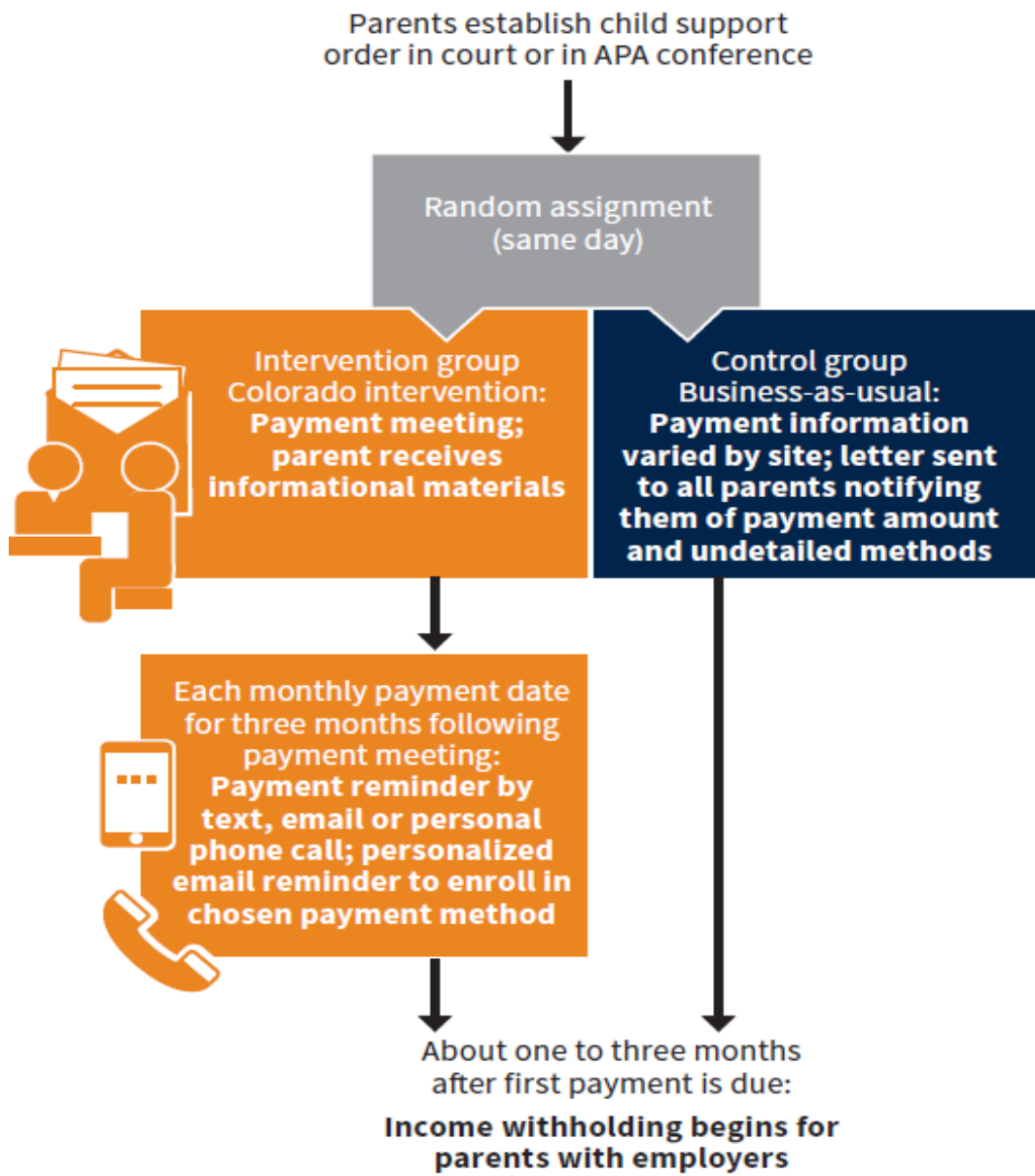
#### The intervention

The technicians spent about **10 minutes** to go over payment options. They obtained a commitment from the parent about a payment method (income withholding order, direct pay etc.) and frequency of payment. They also sent payment reminders (text messages or emails) every month for three months after the establishment of the order or Intake.

### The front of the wallet card parents receive during the negotiation conference

<b>MY PAYMENT INFO</b> Name of your child(ren) _____ FSR # _____ Monthly Payment Due _____ <b>I WILL PAY:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Biweekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly Each time I make a payment I will pay: \$ _____ <small>If you cannot make your payments please call us at 800-374-6558. For more information, please visit our website <a href="https://childsupport.state.co.us">https://childsupport.state.co.us</a>. We are here to help you.</small>	I will make my first payment on _____ Make sure your full payment is processed by the 27th of each month. <table border="1"><thead><tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>Th</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td></tr><tr><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td></tr><tr><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td></tr><tr><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td></tr></tbody></table> Circle the date(s) you plan to make payments.	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	<b>ONLINE BANKING</b> ▼ Cost: <b>FREE</b> Connect to the Colorado Family Support Registry through your online bank account. You will need to enter your FSR number and the FSR address:  Family Support Registry P.O. Box 2171 Denver, CO 80201-2171  1 day to be processed.	<b>AUTOPAY ("RAW")</b> ▼ Cost: <b>FREE</b> Enroll here: <a href="http://tinyurl.com/jpnfjhw">http://tinyurl.com/jpnfjhw</a> Enrollment takes 5 days.  1 day to be processed.
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**Figure 1. Colorado Intervention Process Overview**

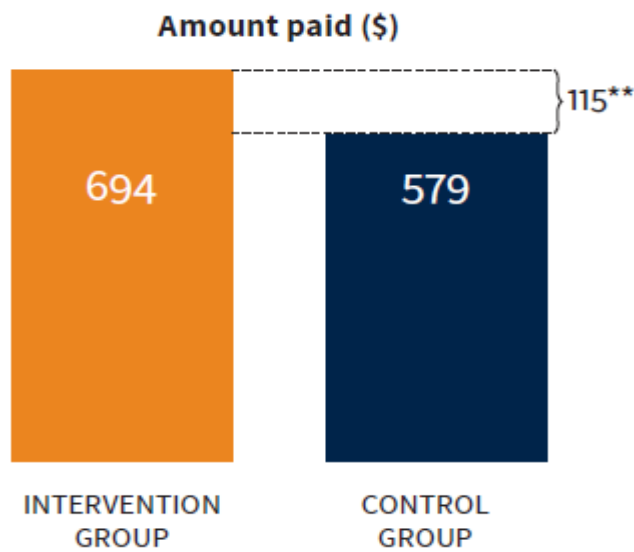


## Results

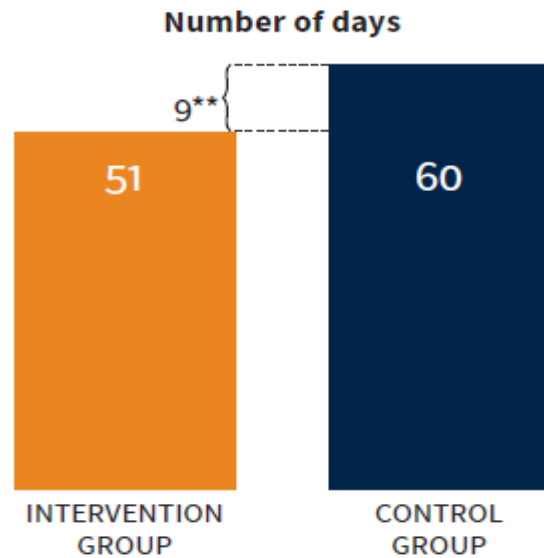
### Treatment Group Findings:

- Parents paid on average **\$115** more in child support during the next three months than parents in the Control group (\$694 vs \$579).
- Parents made their first payment 10 days (60 vs 51) days sooner.
- For parents who had their initial child support established in a county office, they paid \$197 more in owed child support.

**Figure 4. Average Payment Paid during Months 1-3, Aggregated by NCP**



**Figure 5. Average Days Until First Payment**



Additional Finding:

Parents who had their orders established in court and are in the Control group paid **\$145** more than the ones in the Intervention group. This finding merits more research on how behavioral economics impacts payment behavior between the APA and court child support systems.

Lessons Learned

The intervention is more effective during the APA conference. It may take longer to go over the payment options if the parent is unemployed and/or it is his/her first child support case.



Next Steps

The State is planning on the next phase of the project. We will incorporate the practices into our normal business processes. County IV-D administrators are expecting the upcoming changes. As part of the Integration Phase, we are working with the stakeholders to make some of them mandatory (Volume 6 rule changes) because they can lead to increased child support collections.