

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**Aug. 2, 2016****Contact: Jon Keeling****Phone: (614) 466-6650****Email: jon.keeling@jfs.ohio.gov****Wear Green on Aug. 3 for Child Support Awareness**

COLUMBUS, OHIO – Ohioans are encouraged to wear green to work on Wednesday, **Aug. 3**, in recognition of Child Support Awareness Month. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) joins Gov. John Kasich and Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor in honoring the parents, families, caseworkers, and judicial and social services organizations that provide essential support to more than one million children around the state.

“Ohio celebrates the efforts of families, caretakers and parents, who provide love and support, as well as the many statewide partners who provide services essential to our children’s futures,” Gov. Kasich said in his resolution recognizing August as Child Support Awareness Month. “Families may change, but the need that children have for their parents’ love, guidance and support will always remain constant.”

Over the last year, Ohio has been collecting child support payments at a rate not seen since before the recession. As of April 2016, Ohio was collecting 69.9 percent of current child support owed, well above the national average of 64 percent. This was the result of “Project I-70,” an initiative to increase the state’s current support collection rate to 70 percent to help more Ohio children get the financial support they need.

The ODJFS Office of Child Support established collection goals for each county and began providing regular performance reports to county child support enforcement agencies (CSEAs) highlighting their progress. It also has encouraged CSEAs to develop innovative processes and share best practices. To make that easier, the office conducts monthly videoconferences on-site at individual CSEAs. The videoconferences highlight the extraordinary efforts CSEAs are making to reach the 70 percent target.

As a result of a new law passed after Gov. Kasich’s 2014 Mid-Biennium Review, Ohio now seizes casino, racino and lottery winnings from parents who owe unpaid child support. Individuals who win \$1,200 or more are checked against an ODJFS database. Those who owe child support have their winnings entirely or partially withheld. From the time the program started in September 2014 through May 2016, Ohio intercepted nearly \$4 million in winnings from more than 2,200 parents with unpaid child support.

In addition to Wear Green Day, CSEAs will host a variety of activities throughout August to raise awareness of the importance of both parents contributing to their children’s emotional well-being and financial support. To find out what activities are planned in your area, contact your local CSEA. A directory of county agencies is available online at jfs.ohio.gov/county.

Families with questions about child support orders can check their case information online at childsupport.ohio.gov or by contacting their CSEA.

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