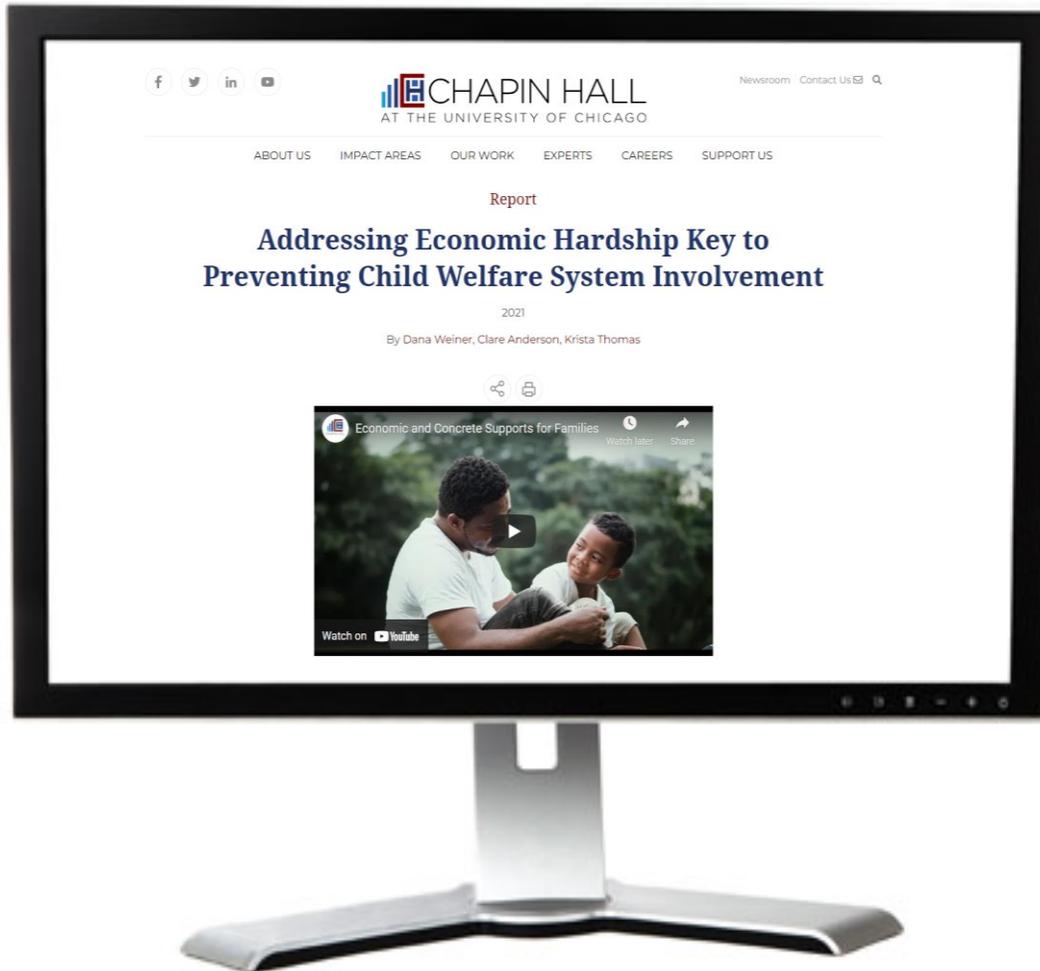


Child and Family Well-being System: Economic & Concrete Supports as a Core Component

Chapin Hall Resources



www.chapinhall.org/economicsupports

(Weiner, Anderson & Thomas, 2021)

(Anderson, Grewal-Kök, Cusick, Weiner & Thomas, 2021)

New Briefs in 2022

2022-2024
FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

We promote programs and resources proven by science that enable kids, families, and entire communities for generations to come. PCA America includes a nationwide network of chapters and one of the most million voluntary home visits every year.

Evidence shows that children's early experiences impact them throughout life—both positively and negatively. Kids raised in **safe, stable, and nurturing relationships and environments** are more likely to enjoy good physical and mental health, succeed academically and socially, and go on to contribute to economic prosperity for everyone.

Exposure to violence early in life is linked to **leading causes of death** like heart disease and lung cancer, and can increase the likelihood of homelessness, addiction, and unemployment. It can also heighten the risk of behavior problems in school, depression, and suicide.⁶

Prevention services and supports are critical for families and communities. Working alongside family foundation for children and for the success of the entire family. Poverty, unemployment, inadequate housing, and conditions like these that put our children at risk. We directly address social determinants of health, including ensuring equitable access to high quality services and supporting communities to effectively address health.

TOGETHER, IF WE TAKE THE STEPS OUTLINED IN THIS DOCUMENT AND ADD AT THE NATIONAL, STATE, AND LOCAL LEVELS, WE CAN PREVENT CHILD ABUSE BECAUSE CHILDHOOD LASTS A LIFETIME.

Reauthorize and increase funding for the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) \$750 million for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) grants (Title II) in the first increase to \$1 billion and \$1.5 billion respectively over five years.

CAPTA is due to be reauthorized by Congress. In March 2021, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the CAPTA Reauthorization Act of 2021 (H.R. 1927), which built on the reforms made by the House bill. Both bipartisan bills increase funding levels to \$270 million for Title II and \$270 million for Title III and make important reforms to strengthen the law's emphasis on prevention and family strengthening services.

Expanding CAPTA would be transformational for communities and families. It will grow our capacity as a nation to create environments where families get the support they need before they are in crisis, thereby preventing child welfare system involvement. CBCAP grants are instrumental in providing preventative supports in all 50 states, including voluntary evidence-based home visiting services, community-based parent support programs, early childhood and childcare programs, family resource centers, and coordination with mental health, substance use, and domestic violence services, among others.

PCA America supports a strong and comprehensive CAPTA reauthorization bill that includes significantly higher funding levels, increases transparency and accountability in the program, strengthens the law's emphasis on primary prevention and family strengthening services, and promotes race equity.

Prevent Child Abuse (PCA America) and services that and communities child development abuse and neglect

IN THE US 1 IN 7 EXPERIENCE AND/OR

Updated February 2022

ISSUE BRIEF
TRANSFORMING CHILD WELFARE SYSTEMS

How do economic supports benefit families and communities?

Access to basic necessities — housing, food, clothing, medical and behavioral health care services, legal representation, transportation, and early care and education — is fundamental to the well-being and economic success of every family.¹ Providing these types of tangible resources can strengthen both families and communities by averting and de-escalating crises, reducing parental stress, increasing access to safe housing and reliable child care, and ensuring children have the material items they need to thrive. Research on the use and effects of economic supports — and how they can prevent families from coming to the attention of a child protection agency — continues to grow. **Studies show** that supporting families to access and receive adequate and effective economic supports can prevent family separation, decrease time to permanency for children who have been removed from their parents, decrease the risk of subsequent abuse or neglect, and enhance child and family well-being.²

This brief outlines key themes that are emerging, as well as ongoing areas for work.

Child protection agencies are not in positions to eradicate poverty, but they can initiate and help drive community-based strategies, connections, and collaborations that offer economic supports to address families' basic needs, keeping children safe and families together. These include housing supports,

casey family programs

casey.org | 1

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Historical Context



Intersection of Family Economic Insecurity, Income, & Child Welfare Involvement



Context of Family Economic Insecurity, Income, & Child Welfare Involvement



Racial Economic Disparities May Contribute to Disproportionate Child Welfare System Involvement



Evidence: The Relationship Between Economic & Concrete Supports and Maltreatment and Child Welfare Involvement

- What does the evidence suggest happens when economic & concrete supports are reduced?
- What does the evidence suggest happens when economic & concrete supports are increased?

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 Economic Supports Provide Stability & Are Associated With Improved Mental Health and Well-being

 Is Attending to Economic & Concrete Supports in Evidence-Based Programs More of an Active Ingredient Than Currently Understood?

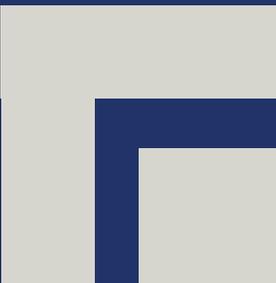
 Relationship Between Macroeconomic Factors & Child Welfare Involvement Suggests the Need for a Population-Level Public Health Approach to Prevention

 Elevating Federal Policies that Promote a Child & Family Well-being System

 Elevating State Policies & Other Organizations' Efforts that Promote a Child & Family Well-being System

 Building a Child & Family Well-being System

Historical Context



Child Welfare's Historic Structure

- Historically, child welfare has been **reactive**—responding to allegations of maltreatment with investigations & foster care
- From the onset of child and family services, **policymakers repeatedly separated programs designed to address poverty from programs designed to protect children**
- **Prevention** services receive less consistent funding
- **Root causes** of maltreatment have not been consistently addressed, perpetuating family separation & recapitulating structural racism and intergenerational trauma
- Economic & concrete support policies and programs are administered as if **unrelated to child welfare**



Policy Milestones: Bifurcation of Concrete and Social Supports

Mother's Pensions

for poor single mothers recognized the importance of financial supports to address economic hardship & promote family stability. However, these supports were largely limited to white, widowed mothers.

Flemming Rule (FR)

implemented in response to states denying ADC benefits to families, mostly Black, because their homes were deemed "unsuitable." It required states to either 1) provide supports to these families OR 2) remove the children and place them in foster care.

CAPTA

requires state mandated reporting laws but does not include standard guidelines, training, or opportunities for reporters to explore alternative family support options. This has resulted in high reporting rates by teachers, the majority of which are unsubstantiated.

1935

1961

2018

Early 1900s

1960

1974

Social Security Act

bifurcates supports to families by nesting Aid to Dependent Children (ADC, later AFDC) under the Social Security Administration but social services under the Children's Bureau.

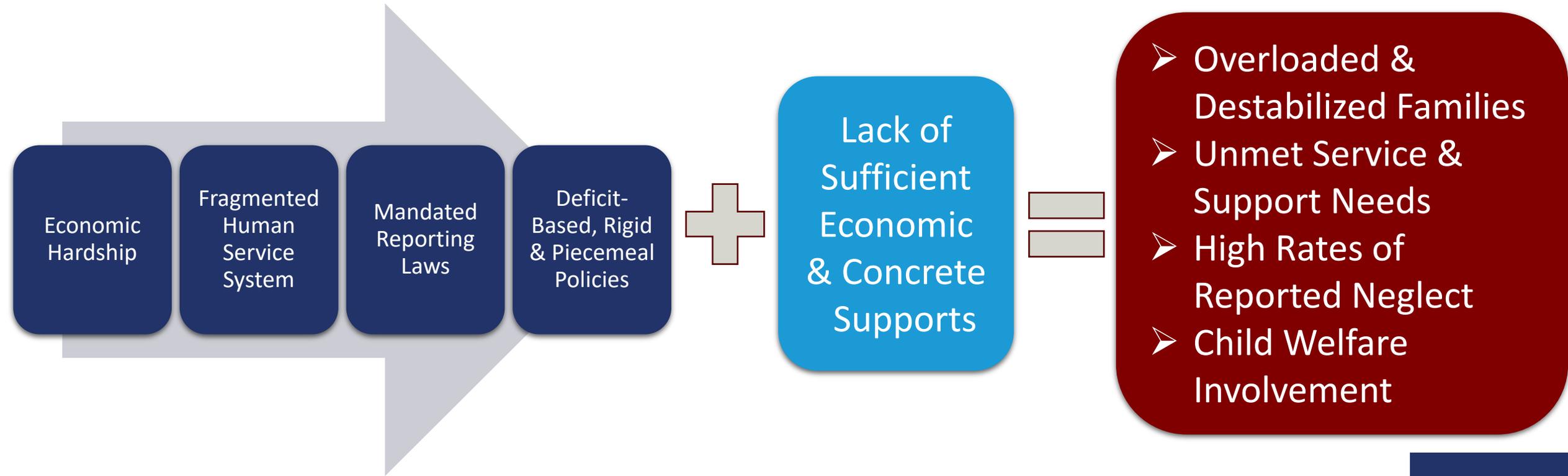
Social Security Act Amendments

establish AFDC-FC (later title IV-E) as an open-ended entitlement for foster care services (part 2 of FR) without analogous funding for family support services (part 1 of FR)

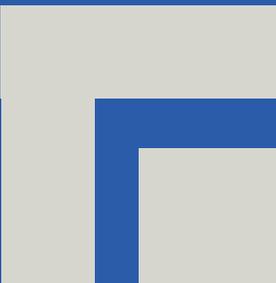
Family First Prevention Services Act

does not explicitly include economic & concrete supports and focuses on treating the parent or child rather than the context.

Impact of Historical Policy Choices



Intersection of Family
Economic Insecurity, Income, &
Child Welfare Involvement



ACYF Well-Being Framework

April 2012 ([ACYF-CB-IM-12-04](#))

Appendix 1: ACYF Well-Being Framework

	Intermediate Outcome Domains		Well-Being Outcome Domains			
	Environmental Supports	Personal Characteristics	Cognitive Functioning	Physical Health and Development	Emotional/Behavioral Functioning	Social Functioning
Infancy (0-2)	Family income, family social capital, community factors (e.g., institutional resources, collective socialization, community organization, neighborhood SES)	Temperament, cognitive ability	Language development	Normative standards for growth and development, gross motor and fine motor skills, overall health, BMI	Self-control, emotional management and expression, internalizing and externalizing behaviors, trauma symptoms	Social competencies, attachment and caregiver relationships, adaptive behavior
Early Childhood (3-5)	Family income, family social capital, community factors (e.g., institutional resources, collective socialization, community organization, neighborhood SES)	Temperament, cognitive ability	Language development, pre-academic skills (e.g., numeracy), approaches to learning, problem-solving skills	Normative standards for growth and development, gross motor and fine motor skills, overall health, BMI	Self-control, self-esteem, emotional management and expression, internalizing and externalizing behaviors, trauma symptoms	Social competencies, attachment and caregiver relationships, adaptive behavior
Middle Childhood (6-12)	Family income, family social capital, social support, community factors (e.g., institutional resources, collective socialization, community organization, neighborhood SES)	Identity development, self-concept, self-esteem, self-efficacy, cognitive ability	Academic achievement, school engagement, school attachment, problem-solving skills, decision-making	Normative standards for growth and development, overall health, BMI, risk-avoidance behavior related to health	Emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, motivation, self-control, prosocial behavior, positive outlook, coping, internalizing and externalizing behaviors, trauma symptoms	Social competencies, social connections and relationships, social skills, adaptive behavior
Adolescence (13-18)	Family income, family social capital, social support, community factors (e.g., institutional resources, collective socialization, community organization, neighborhood SES)	Identity development, self-concept, self-esteem, self-efficacy, cognitive ability	Academic achievement, school engagement, school attachment, problem solving skills, decision-making	Overall health, BMI, risk-avoidance behavior related to health	Emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, motivation, self-control, prosocial behavior, positive outlook, coping, internalizing and externalizing behaviors, trauma symptoms	Social competence, social connections and relationships, social skills, adaptive behavior
<i>Social and Emotional Well-Being Domains</i>						

Family Protective Factors

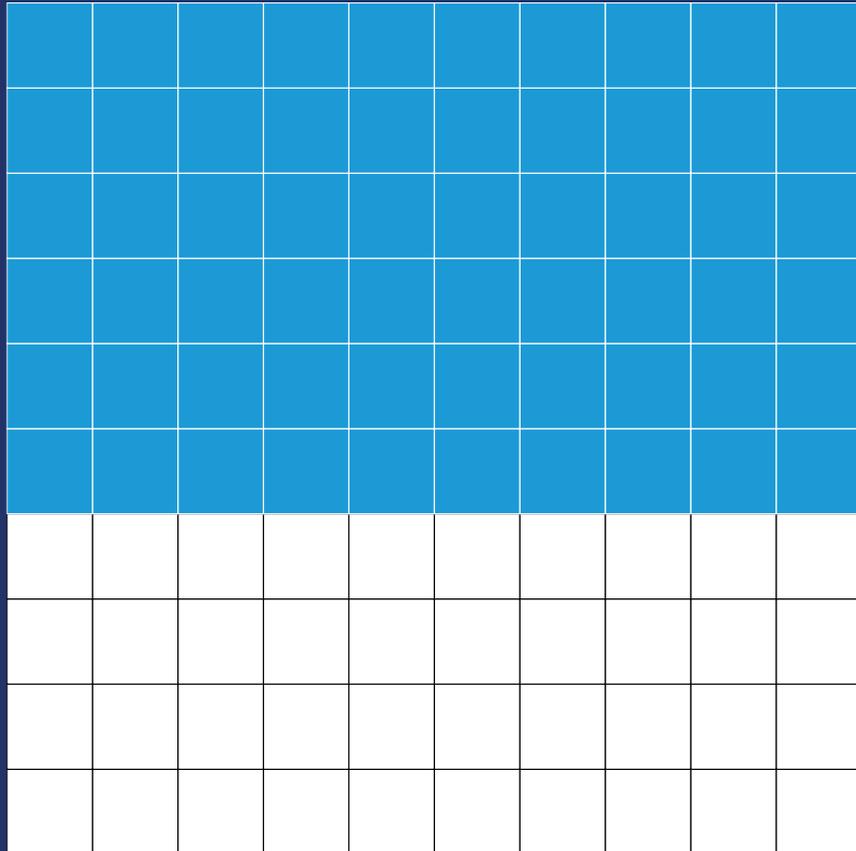
Parental resilience

Social connections

Knowledge of
parenting and child
development

Concrete support in
times of need

Social and
emotional
competence of
children



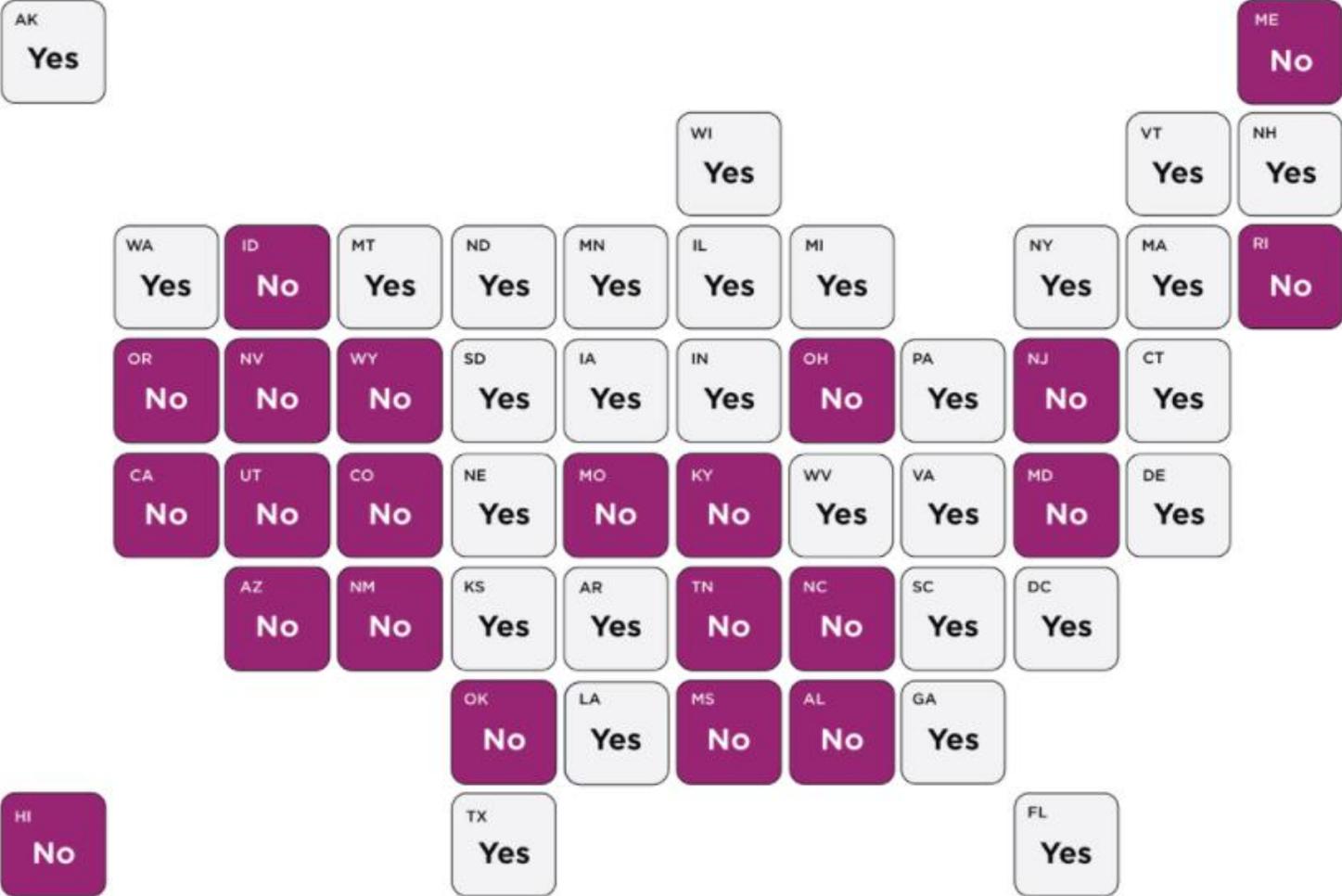
60%+

of substantiated CPS responses nationally involve **neglect only**

...and provision of economic & concrete supports is associated with decreases in *both* neglect and physical abuse

Nearly Half of All States Do Not Exempt Families' Financial Inability to Provide From Their Definition of Neglect

States that do not have exemptions for financial inability to provide for a child

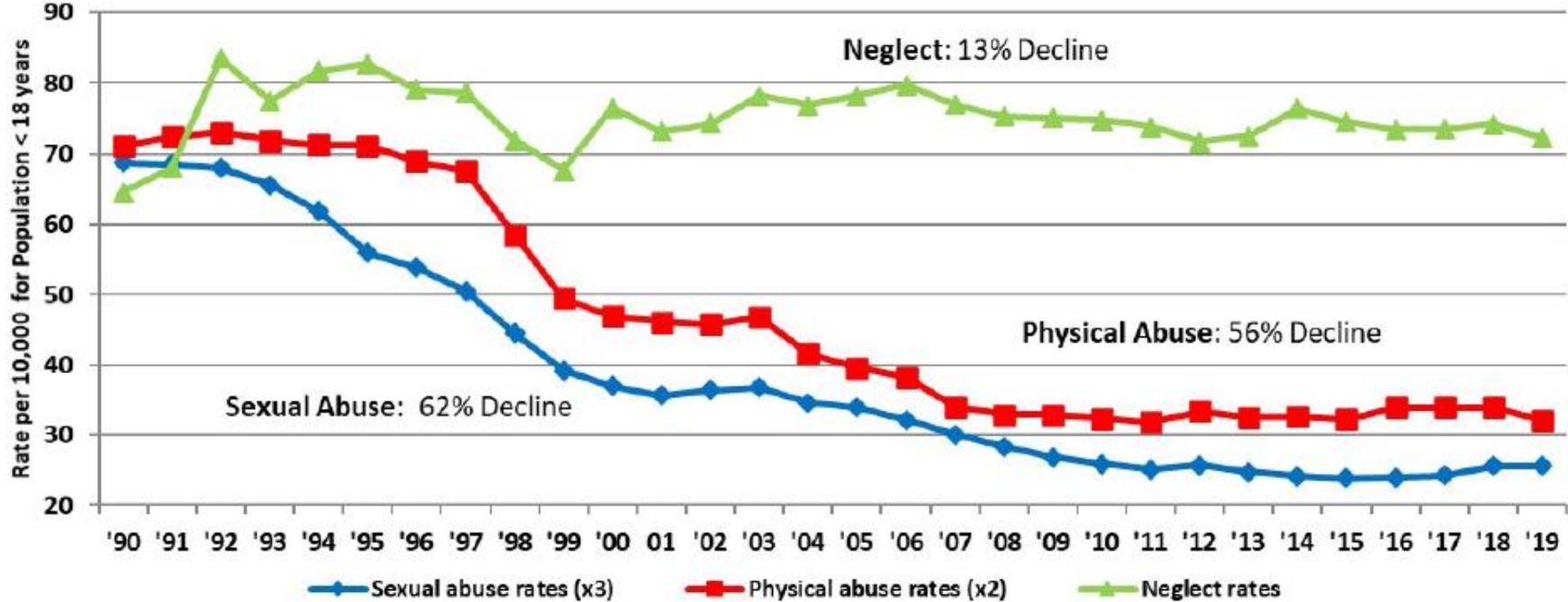


- Inclusion of income-related factors in definitions of neglect without any exemptions **may be funneling families into the child welfare system**
- However, poverty exemptions in neglect statutes do not guarantee sharp reductions in neglect cases without **strategic practices** & assessing neglect through a **harm specification lens**

(Child Trends, 2022)
(DeGuerre, 2021)

Rates of Neglect Remain Unchanged (as of 2019)

U.S. Maltreatment Trends: 1990-2019



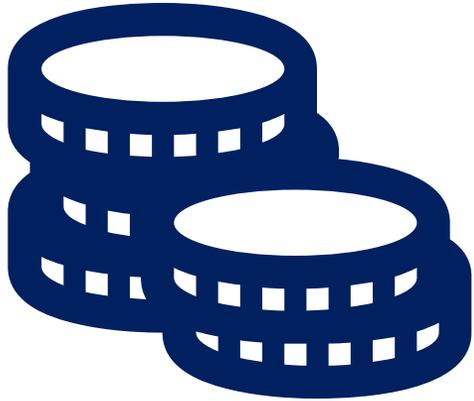
Note: Physical & sexual abuse are and continue to be a small percentage of child maltreatment relative to neglect. Trend lines in this table have been multiplied to emphasize reductions over time

Note: Trend estimates represent total change from 1992 to 2019. Annual rates for physical abuse and sexual abuse have been multiplied by 2 and 3 respectively in Figure 1 so that trend comparisons can be highlighted.

¹ The statistics in Table 1 and Figure 1 concern substantiated cases of sexual abuse, physical abuse and neglect. A substantiated case means a case that has been reported to a child protection agency, investigated and deemed to have occurred according to a “preponderance of evidence.” The child maltreatment cases referred and investigated by state child protection agencies primarily involve abuse by caregivers. The cases do not include many involving stranger abusers, unless some element of caregiver neglect was involved.

(Finkelhor, 2021)
(Bullinger, 2019)

Family Economic Insecurity is Associated with Child Welfare Involvement



- Children in **economically insecure households** are:
 - **5x** more likely to experience maltreatment
 - **7x** more likely to experience neglect
(compared to other children)
- Nearly **85% of families investigated by CPS** earn below 200% of the federal poverty line (*\$43,920 for a family of 3 in 2021*)
- Families living below the poverty line are **3x more likely** to be substantiated for child maltreatment

Experiencing Material Hardship is Associated with Increased Risk for Child Welfare Involvement – Both Neglect & Abuse

If families experience at least one material hardship

- Likelihood of being investigated for neglect increases nearly 3x
- Likelihood of being investigated for physical abuse increases nearly 4x

If families experience multiple types of hardship *(after experiencing no hardships)*

- Likelihood of being involved in a CPS investigation increases 4x
- Likelihood of being investigated for physical abuse increases 7x

The Intersection of Family Economic Insecurity & Child Welfare Involvement

Most reliable **economic predictors of child welfare involvement**

- Income Loss** 
- Cumulative Material Hardship** 
- Housing Hardship** 

(Conrad-Hiebner, 2020)

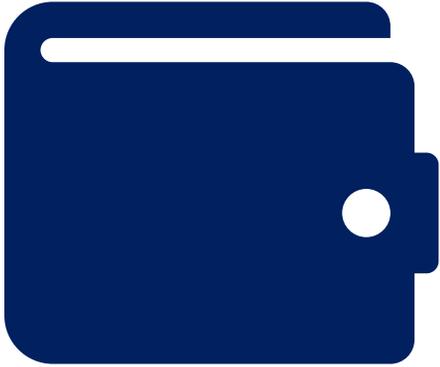
Strongest predictors of **investigated neglect reports**

- Food pantry use** 
- Cutting meals** 
- Short duration of residence** 
- Difficulty paying rent** 
- Utility shutoffs** 
- Inability to receive medical care for sick family member** 
- Public benefit receipt** 

(Slack, 2011)

Negative Earnings Shocks Are Associated with Increased Risk for Subsequent Child Welfare Involvement

For low-income families with recently closed CPS investigations:



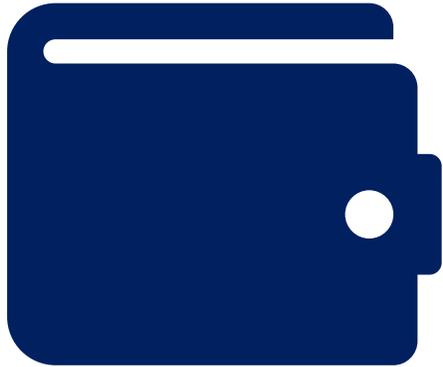
- Experiencing a **negative earnings shock** (*reduction quarterly by 30% or more*):
 - Increases risk of subsequent CPS investigation by 18%
 - Increases risk of physical abuse investigation by 26%
- Each additional negative earnings shock is associated with a **15% greater likelihood** of CPS involvement
- But each consecutive quarter with stable income is associated with a **5% lower risk** of CPS investigation

About 10% of low-income adults with children have experienced an economic shock resulting in a **50% income drop** over one year

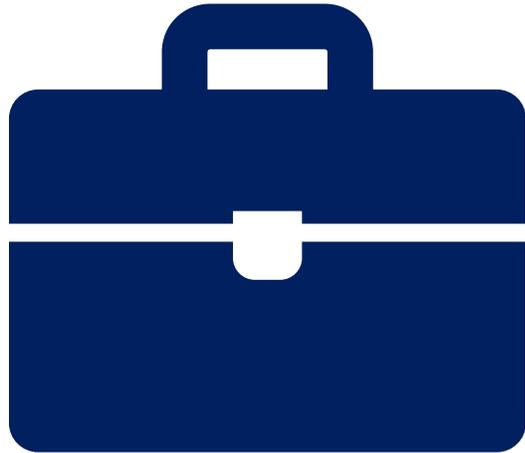
But the Association Diminishes When Negative Earnings Shocks Are Offset by Public Benefits

For low-income families with recently closed CPS investigations:

- Research suggests that **accessing sufficient public benefits** when negative earnings shocks occur serves to **effectively buffer against the risk of child maltreatment**
 - Buffer is particularly strong for families with young children (ages 0–4) who are associated with a:
 - **12% decrease** in risk for CPS involvement
 - **50% decrease** in risk for physical abuse investigation



Increased Unemployment Rates Are Associated with Increased Child Maltreatment Reports



- A 1% increase in the monthly unemployment rate in an urban midwestern county is associated with an **increase of 61 screened-in child maltreatment reports** (*excluding “neglect only” reports*)
- A 1% increase in the county unemployment rate is associated with a **20% increase** in substantiated neglect reports

(Weiner, 2020)

(Brown, 2020, national data set 2004–2012)

Increased Unemployment Rates Are Associated with Increased Child Abuse



During the Great Recession (2007–2009):

The rate of abusive head trauma (AHT) for children < 5 years old was **significantly higher** than during the period immediately before

- AHT rate **increased** from 8.9 in 100,000 children before the recession to 14.7 in 100,000 children during the recession

Increased Male Unemployment Rates Are Associated with Increased Child Maltreatment Rates

Decreases in male employment are significantly associated with **increased child maltreatment**

- For every 10% decrease in the male employment rate (*among 20- to 34-year-olds*), the child maltreatment rate rises by 9.62%
- A 1% increase in the male mass layoff rate increases the child maltreatment rate between 4.7 and 13%

Once poverty, male employment, & single-parent households are accounted for, race does not play a role in maltreatment rates



(Cherry, 2016, state-level employment data 2000–2012)

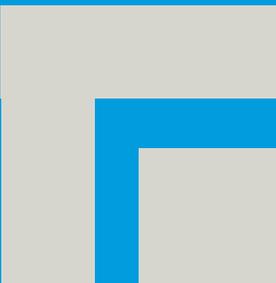
(Lindo, 2018, California county-level data 1998–2012)

Lower Family Income Is Associated with Longer Time to Reunify

Children in foster care take longer to reunify with their families when:

- ❑ Their reason for placement is **neglect** (*compared to physical abuse*)
- ❑ Their mothers have **lower average monthly incomes** post placement
 - *Every \$100 increase in a mother's post-placement income increases her child's speed of reunification by 6%*
- ❑ Their mothers **lose a significant amount of cash assistance** post placement
 - *Percentage of children remaining in foster care after a year whose mothers lost a significant amount of income from cash assistance post placement is more than double that of children whose mothers did not lose income from cash assistance post placement (87% vs. 41%)*
- ❑ Their mothers must **pay the state for the costs of foster care**
 - *\$100 increase in the monthly child support order amount is predicted to increase the time to reunification by 6.6 months*

Exploring the Context of Family Economic Insecurity, Income, & Child Welfare Involvement



Economic Insecurity Is Widespread, but Families Move In and Out of Poverty

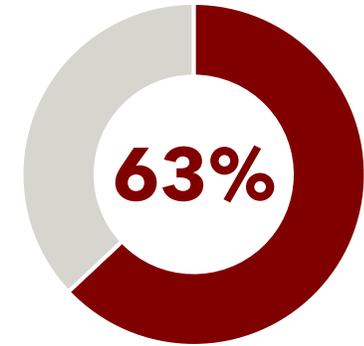
Economic insecurity is widespread

- Almost 50% of American families with young children are at risk of poverty before their child enters kindergarten
- More than 50% of all Americans will spend a year in poverty (by age 65)
- 84% of all Black Americans will spend a year in poverty (by age 65)

Families move in and out of poverty over time

- Almost 50% of those who become poor are out of poverty a year later
- **But more than 50% of those who previously left poverty will return to poverty within 5 years**

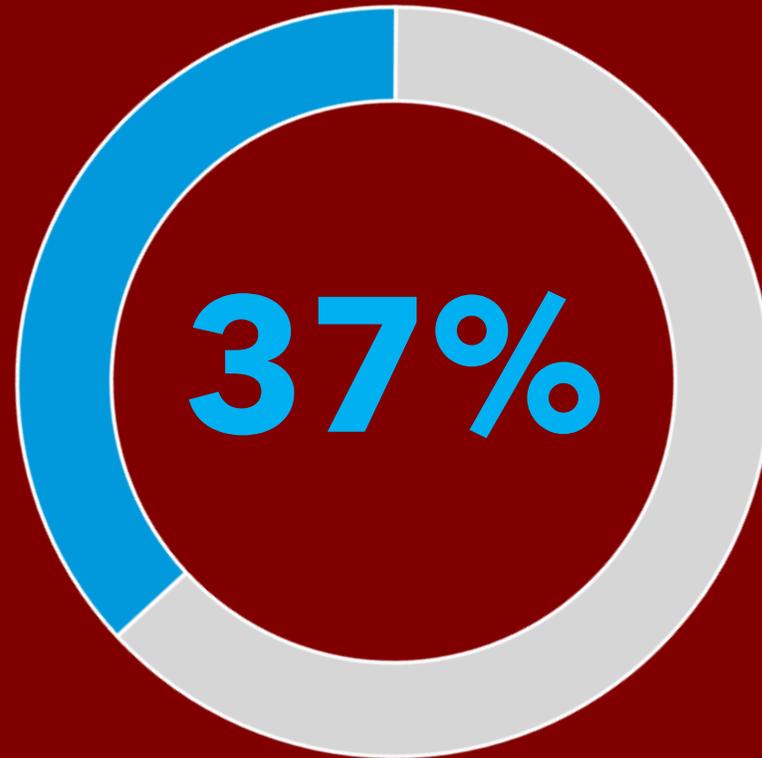
The volatility and turbulence created by entering & leaving poverty may create serious stress for parents and impact parenting



of TANF recipients are short-term (participate from 1–12 months)
(2009–2012 data)

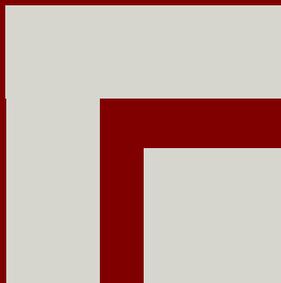
(Drake, 2014)
(Cellini, 2008)
(Mistry, 2002)
(Han, 2021)
(Irving, 2015)

The Buffer is Thin



of U.S. adults don't have \$400 in the bank to cover an unexpected expense

(Federal Reserve, 2020)



How Does Economic & Material Hardship Impact Parenting and Child Well-Being?

Family Stress Model

Economic & material hardship

Psychological distress

High cognitive loads

Drained mental resources

Increased conflict & hostility

Less nurturing, responsive, & supportive parenting

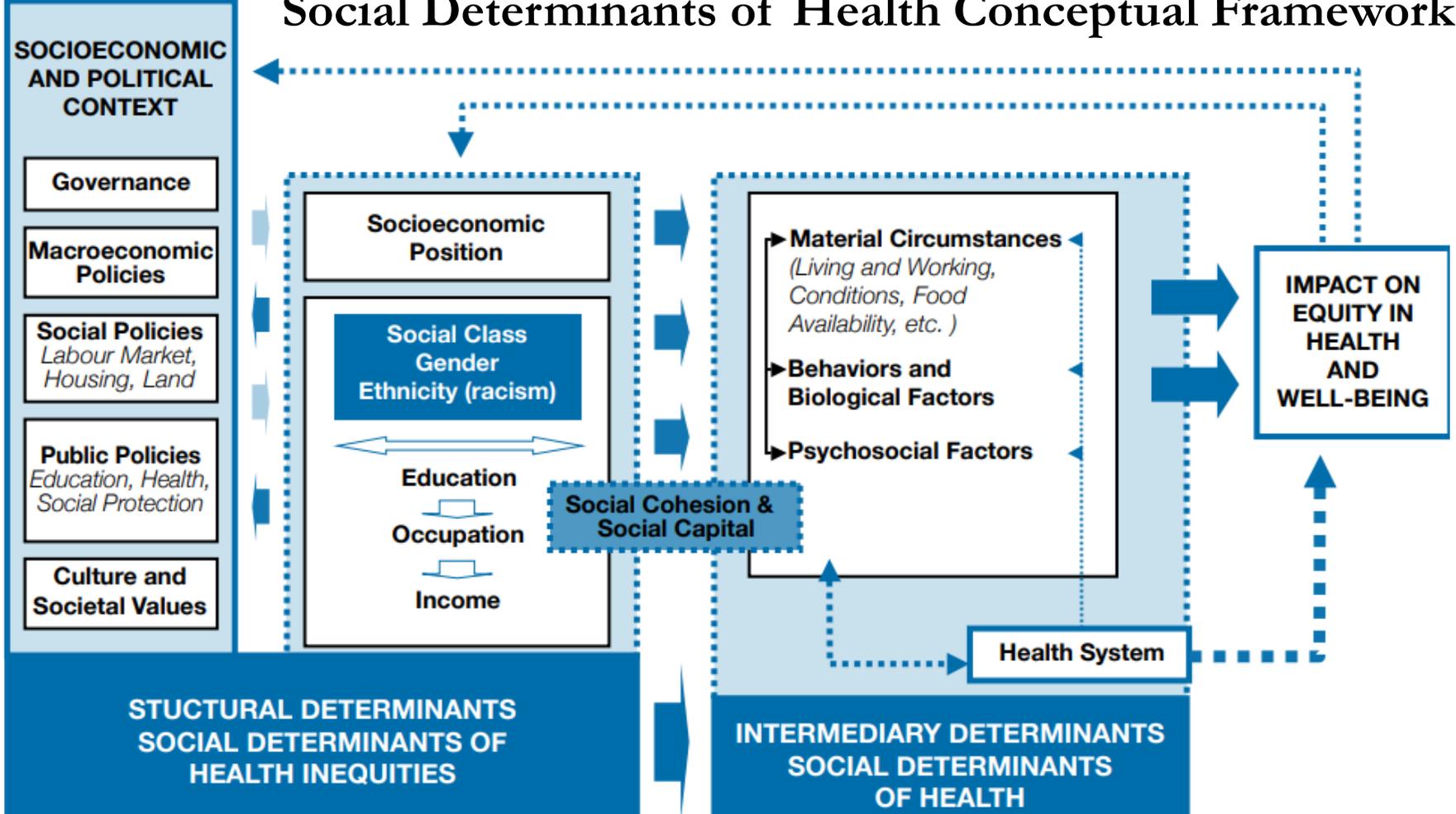
Higher risk for child abuse & neglect



(Conger, 1994) (Nepl, 2016) (Duncan, 2014) (Mistry, 2002)

But Families Must be Considered within the Context of Their Communities, Cultures, Policies, & Systems

World Health Organization's Commission on Social Determinants of Health Conceptual Framework



“The single most significant lesson of [this] conceptual framework is **that interventions & policies to reduce health inequities must not limit themselves to intermediary determinants**, but must include policies specifically crafted to tackle underlying structural determinants.”

(WHO, 2010)

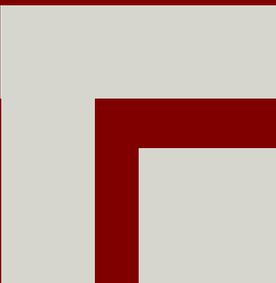
Multiple Material & Economic Hardships Overload Families and Increase Risk for Child Welfare Involvement



Adapted from: (Conrad-Hiebner, 2020) (Slack, 2011) (Sweetland, 2021)

Visual created by
Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago

Racial Economic Disparities
May Contribute to Disproportionate
Child Welfare System Involvement



Economic & Concrete Supports:

A Race Equity Strategy to Address Disparity & Disproportionality in Child Welfare

Poverty & economic hardship puts families at **increased risk of child welfare involvement**

Economic & concrete supports to stabilize families and prevent child welfare involvement may be a mechanism to **reduce racial disparities**



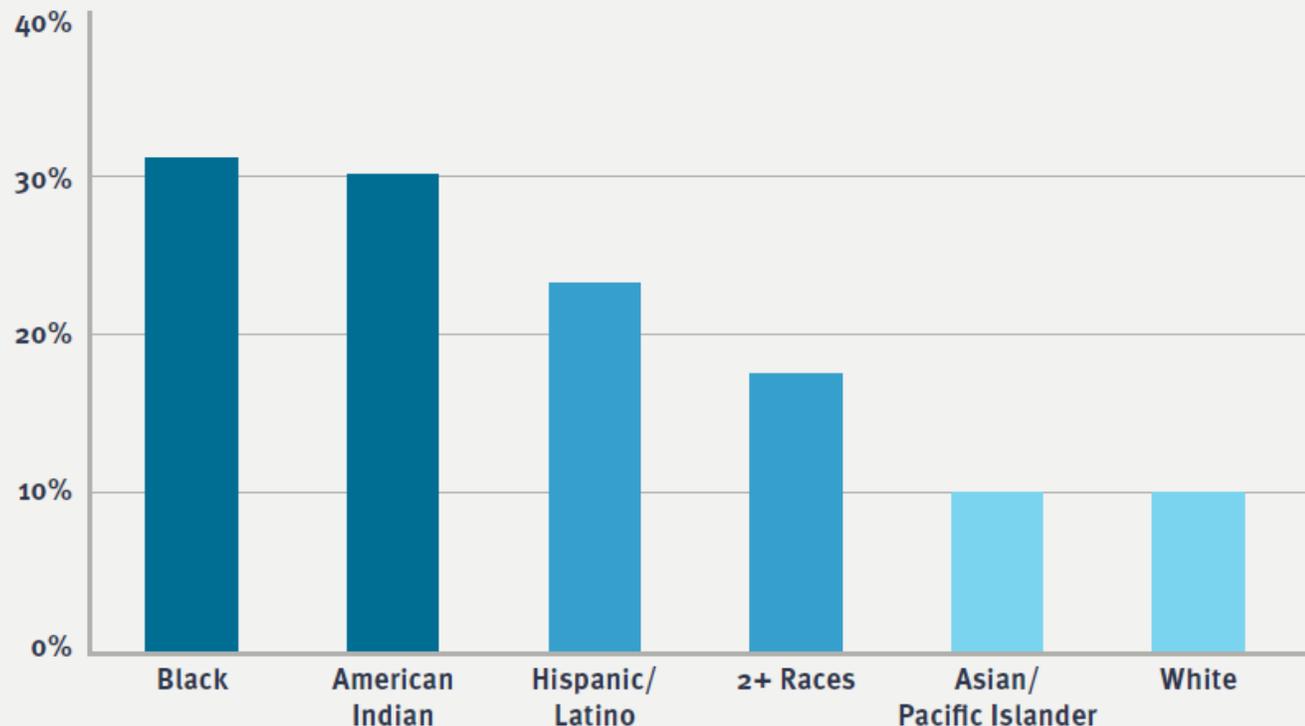
Due to systemic inequities, families of color are **more likely to experience economic hardship** & this may contribute to their disproportionate child welfare involvement

Disproportionality and disparities are due to racism both internal and external to the child welfare system (Dettlaff, 2020)

Children in Families of Color Are More Likely to Experience Poverty

US Children in Poverty by Racial Category

The 2019 share of children under age 18 who live in families with incomes below the federal poverty threshold (e.g., \$25,926 per year for a family of 4).



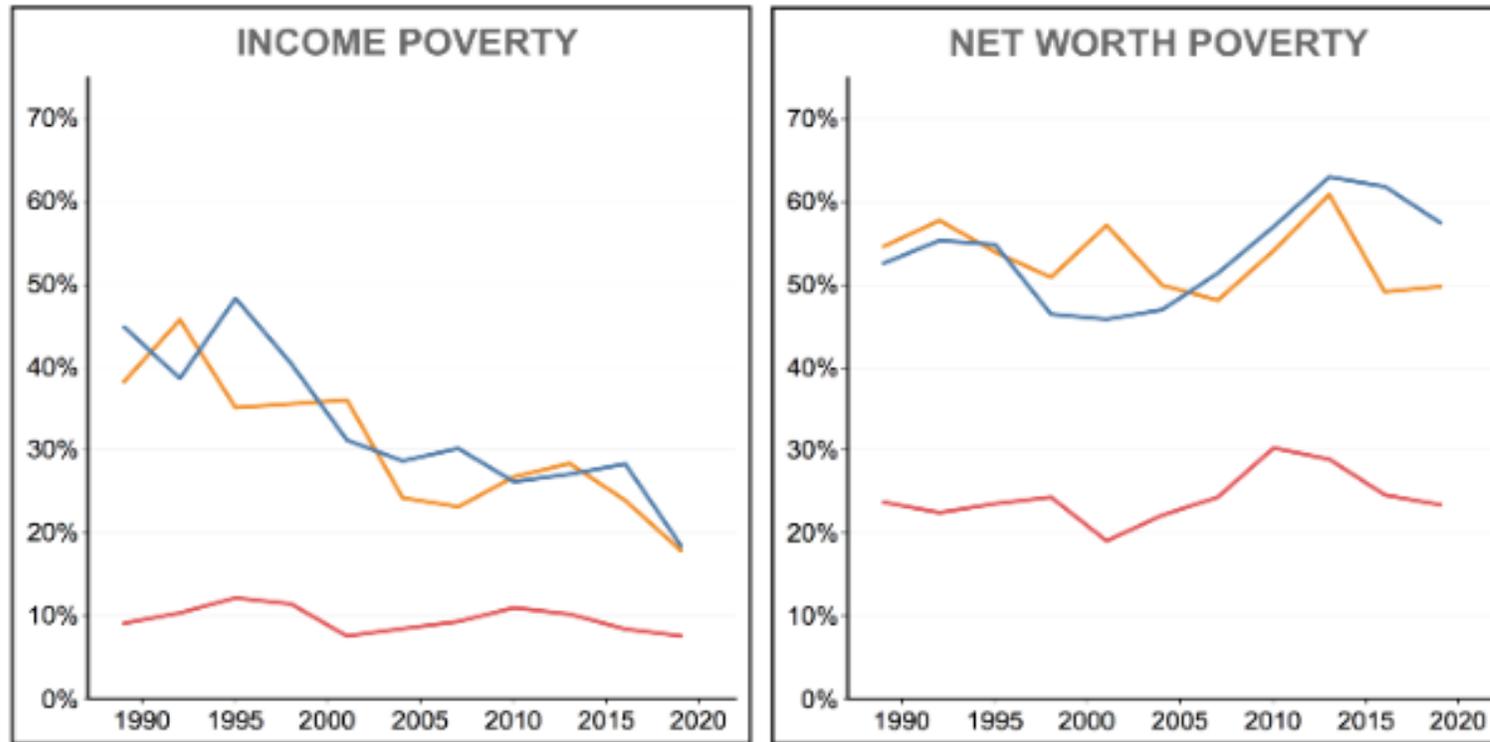
Source: KIDS COUNT Data Cent. 2020. Children in poverty by race and ethnicity in the United States. Data from U.S. Census Bureau, Am. Community Survey 2019, Annie E. Casey Found. KIDS COUNT Data Cent., Baltimore, MD.

While **14%** of U.S. children are Black, they make up **27%** of children living below the poverty line

(Kids Count, 2020)
(Census Bureau, 2020)
(Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, 2021)

Children in Black and Latinx Households Are More Likely to Experience Net Worth Poverty

TRENDS IN INCOME AND NET WORTH POVERTY BY RACE AND ETHNICITY, 1989 TO 2019



Note: Net worth poverty is defined as a level of wealth where total assets minus total debts are less than one-fourth of the federal poverty line. This threshold measures whether a household has a stock of assets sufficient to meet its basic needs, as defined by the poverty line, for 3 months.
Source: Survey of Consumer Finances
EconoFact econofact.org

In 2019, **57% of Black and 50% of Latinx** households with children were net worth poor

In any given year, **54% to 67% of Black and Latinx households** with children experience income poverty or net worth poverty (or both)

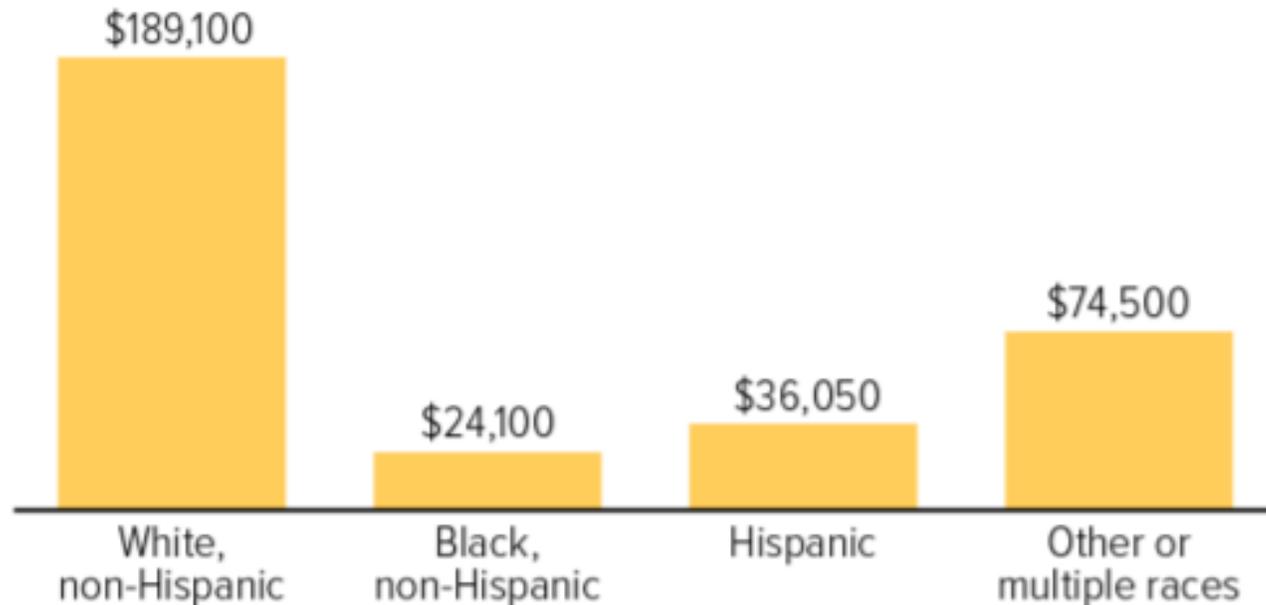
Net worth poverty = wealth (total assets minus total debts) < 1/4 of the federal poverty line
(i.e., *wealth* < \$6,500 for a family of four in 2019)

(Gibson-Davis, 2021)

The Racial Wealth Gap Further Exacerbates the Consequences of Economic Insecurity for Families of Color

White Families Hold 8 Times More Wealth Than Black Families, 5 Times More Than Hispanic Families

Median net worth, in 2019 U.S. dollars



Note: "Other or multiple races" includes all respondents who identified as Asian, American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, Pacifica Islander, other race, and those who reported more than one racial identification. Roughly 69 percent and 23 percent of respondents in this grouping reported more than one racial identification or identified as Asian, respectively.

- Black Americans represent **13%** of the U.S. population, but possess **only 4%** of the nation's household wealth
- The median wealth of young Black families is **\$600**
- Nearly **1 in 5** Black households has **zero or negative net worth**
- Native American households own **\$0.09** for every dollar of wealth held by white households (*as of 2000*)

(Federal Reserve, 2020) (Moss, 2020)
(Prosperity Now, 2020) (Chang, 2010)

Racial Disparities at Decision Points Across Child Welfare Continuum

Children in maltreatment investigations

- 28% of all white children by age 18
- 53% of all Black children by age 18

Children determined to be “victims” of maltreatment

- American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN) and Black children are determined to be “victims” of maltreatment at almost twice the rate of white children



Racial Disparities at Decision Points across Child Welfare Continuum

Children placed in foster care

- Black children: 14% of general child population but 23% of children in foster care
- AIAN children: 1% of general child population but 2% of children in foster care

Children who experience termination of parental rights

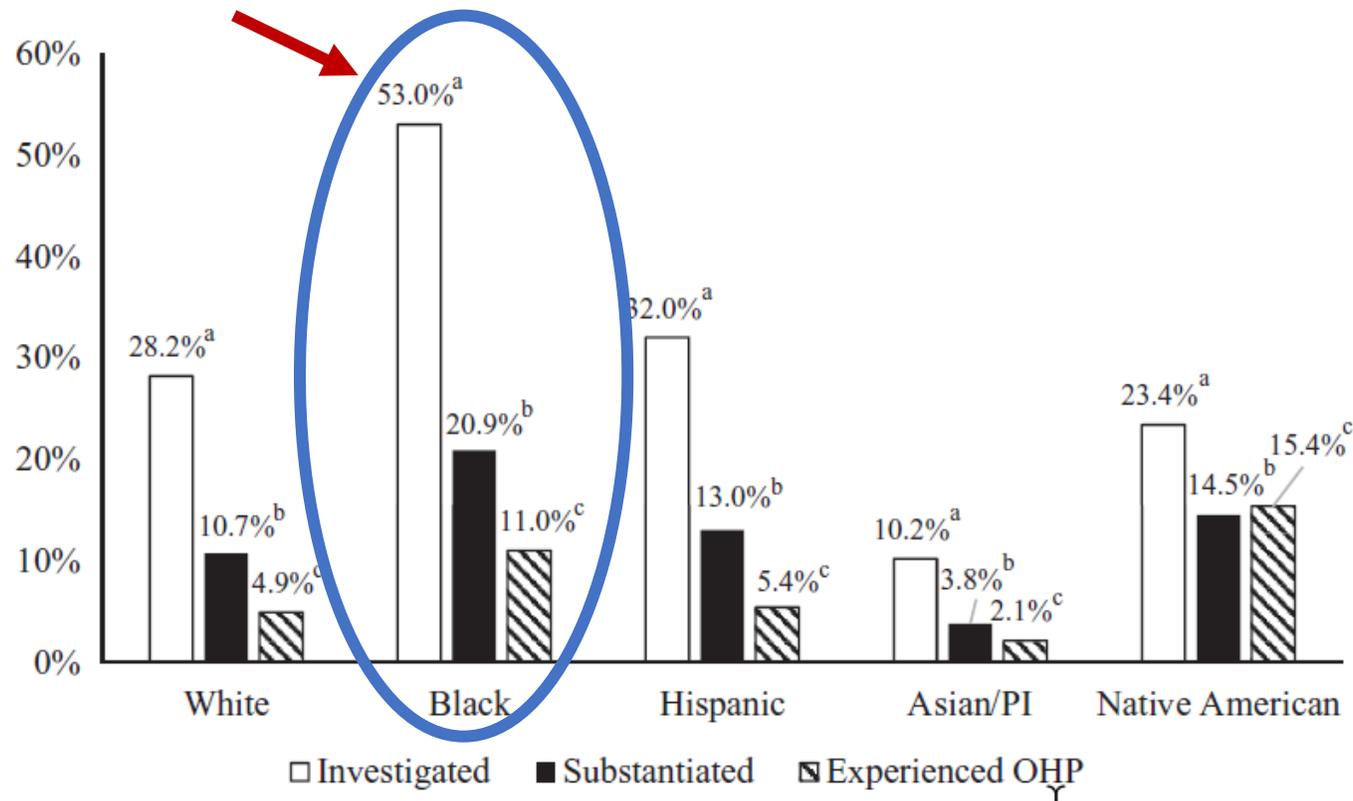
- Compared to white children, AIAN children are **2.7 times** more likely and Black children are **2.4 times** more likely to experience termination of both parents' rights

(Child Maltreatment 2019) (Wildeman, 2020)



CPS Interventions Are Pervasive: Over Half of All Black Children Experience an Investigation

Lifetime (Birth–18) Incidence of CPS Involvement in the United States by Race/Ethnicity



- **37% of all children** and 41% of children in the 20 most populous U.S. counties experience at least one CPS investigation by age 18
- **Almost 3.5 million children** subject to a CPS investigation each year (*FFY 2019*)
- **1 in every 100** children are estimated to experience a termination of parental rights

(Berger, 2020) (Kim, 2017)
(Edwards, 2021)
(Child Maltreatment 2019)
(Wildeman, 2020)

Economic & Concrete Supports as a Race Equity Strategy

Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2021):
[Moving Upstream: Confronting Racism to Open Up Children's Potential](#)

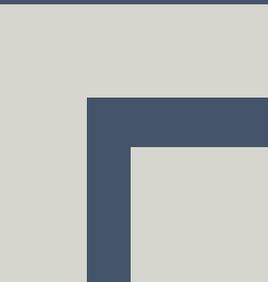
To reduce persistent **racial health disparities** at a **population level**, there must be:

- **An intentional, upstream focus on a broad range of socioeconomic conditions**
 - These include more equitable access to assets and opportunities in **education, employment, housing, health-promoting environments & wealth creation**
- **Strengthened policies that provide economic support to families**

"The scientific evidence is clear and growing. Structural, cultural, and interpersonal racism impose unique and substantial stressors on the daily lives of families raising young children of color."

Evidence:

The Relationship between Economic & Concrete Supports
and Maltreatment and Child Welfare Involvement



Sources of Evidence

How do the following studies show the impact of programs, policies, and strategies for reducing child welfare system involvement through economic & concrete supports?



Research designed to detect the impact of a specific strategy through randomized controlled trials (RCT)



Analysis of decades of administrative data aligned with policy or other shifts



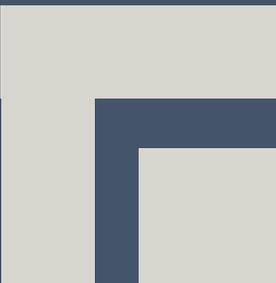
Natural experiments to assess public benefit programs



Theoretical models and studies that illustrate the processes by which material hardship leads to child maltreatment

Taken together, this vast body of science and growing preponderance of evidence informs our understanding of what has been effective and why and our hypotheses about the potential of policy shifts and new pathways.

What does the evidence suggest happens
when economic & concrete supports
are reduced?



What Are Economic & Concrete Supports?

This is not an exhaustive list, but examples include:

- ❖ Cash assistance
- ❖ Emergency funds
- ❖ Direct cash transfers
- ❖ Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)
- ❖ Child Tax Credit (CTC)
- ❖ TANF benefits
- ❖ Employment
- ❖ Income
- ❖ Flexible funds
- ❖ In-kind benefits
- ❖ Child care
- ❖ Housing supports
- ❖ SNAP
- ❖ WIC
- ❖ Medicaid
- ❖ Unemployment benefits
- ❖ Legal support
- ❖ Rental assistance
- ❖ Utility assistance
- ❖ Transportation
- ❖ Food
- ❖ Clothing
- ❖ Furniture & equipment

Decreased Access to Economic & Concrete Supports Is Associated with Increased Child Welfare Involvement



Reduced
TANF
benefits



Reduced
employment



Lack of
child care



Increased
gas prices



Lack of
stable
housing



Reduced income
& negative
earnings shocks

=

↑ Increased risk
for child welfare
involvement

(Ginther, 2017) (Paxson, 2003) (Yang, 2016) (Cash, 2003)
(Klevens, 2015) (Weiner, 2020) (McLaughlin, 2017) (Bullinger, 2021)
(Berger, 2015) (Frioux, 2014) (Wood, 2012) (Cai, 2021)

Lack of Access to Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)

States that implemented TANF sanctions of loss of all benefits for not working:

Reminder: First statutory goal of TANF is to support needy families so that children can remain safely at home or with relatives.

23.3%

Increase in substantiated neglect reports

13.4%

Increase in foster care entries due to neglect

12.7%

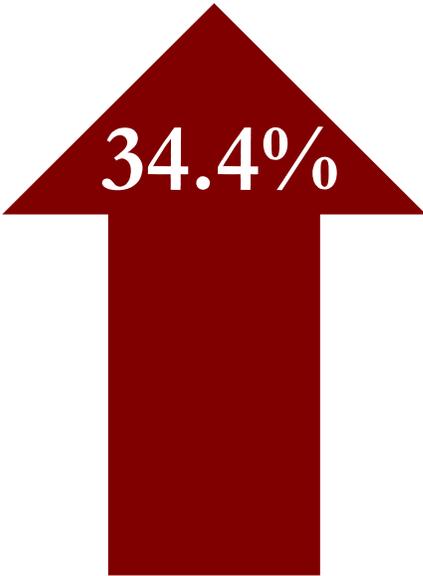
Increase in total foster care entries

(Ginther, 2017)

(Increases observed from 2004 to 2015)

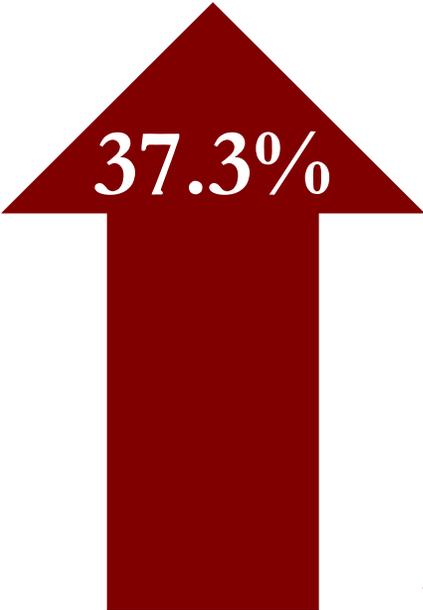
Lack of Access to TANF

States that implemented TANF time limits of less than 5 years:



34.4%

Increase
in substantiated
maltreatment
reports



37.3%

Increase in
substantiated
child neglect
reports

(Ginther, 2017)

(Increases observed from 2004 to 2015)

Reduced State Public Benefits

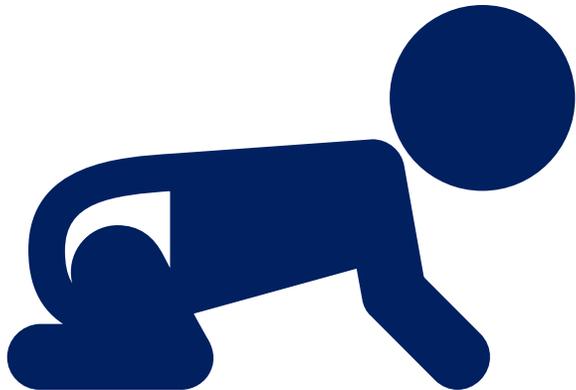


- Reductions in state public benefit levels (*AFDC/TANF plus the value of food stamps*) are associated with **higher numbers of children in foster care**
- Lifetime limits on receipt of TANF benefits & sanctions for noncompliance are associated with **higher levels of substantiated maltreatment**

(Paxson, 2002)

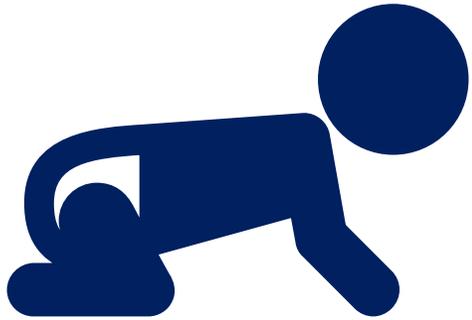
(Paxson, 2003)

Lack of Access to Child Care



- For every additional child care concern reported by families receiving TANF, the **risk of supervisory child neglect increases by 20%**
- Mothers entering substance abuse treatment who have difficulty securing child care are **82% more likely to self-report child neglect** (*compared to mothers entering treatment who don't have difficulty securing child care*)
 - Difficulty finding child care was a stronger predictor of maternal neglect than almost any other factor measured in this study, including mental health, severity of drug use, history of abuse as a child & use of public assistance

Lack of Access to Child Care Subsidies



Waitlists to access subsidized child care are significantly associated with an **increase in child abuse & neglect investigations**

- Only **1 in 6 children** eligible for childcare assistance receives it
- Low-income families who pay for child care spend an average of **30%** of their household income on child care

Reduced Disposable Income Due to Increased Gas Prices



A \$1.00 increase in the price of gas for a state with 100,000 children would be associated with an **additional 642 child maltreatment referrals**

(controlling for demographic and other economic variables)

Housing Insecurity



- Inadequate housing contributes to the risk of entering foster care for **1 out of every 6 children** involved in CPS investigations
- Self-reported housing instability in urban areas is significantly associated with **increased risk for neglect** (*above and beyond poverty*)

*“The Children’s Bureau affirms that working with families and young adults to secure housing and prevent eviction and homelessness is paramount to **prevention.**”*

1 in 3 children who are homeless have experienced a **major mental disorder** by age 8

Housing Insecurity - Evictions



Each additional eviction filing (*per 100 occupied units in a block group*) is associated with a **2% increase in child maltreatment reports** (primarily neglect)

1 in 4 children born in large U.S. cities who are living in deep poverty will experience at least one eviction for nonpayment of rent by age 16

Housing Insecurity - Foreclosures



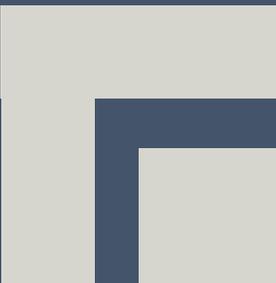
- Households experiencing a foreclosure filing in next 6–12 months are at **70% greater risk of a CPS investigation** than households that will not
- Increases in current and prior-year mortgage foreclosure rates are associated with **increases in investigated & substantiated child maltreatment**
 - *1% increase in the prior-year foreclosure rate is associated with a **7.3% increase** in substantiations*
- Increases in mortgage delinquency & foreclosure rates are associated with increases in hospital admissions for:
 - **Physical abuse of children** < 6 years old
 - **Traumatic brain injury for infants** <1 year old (*non-birth & non-motor vehicle crash related*)

(Berger, 2015, Wisconsin data 2008–2011)

(Frioux, 2014, Pennsylvania county-level data 2000–2010)

(Wood, 2012, data from 38 hospitals 2000–2009)

What does the evidence suggest happens when economic & concrete supports are increased?



How Might Economic & Concrete Supports Positively Impact Child and Family Well-being?

Family Investment Model

Families receive sufficient economic & concrete supports

Families have resources to meet their basic needs

Families can invest in services & opportunities for their children

Families have access to housing, child care, & educational opportunities

Families can provide increased nurturing, responsive & supportive parenting

Families experience improved child and family well-being

Families have lower risk for child welfare involvement



Increased Access to Economic & Concrete Supports Is Associated with Decreased Child Welfare Involvement



Child Welfare Interventions Augmented with Economic & Concrete Supports

- Differential response
- Family preservation

Concrete Supports

- Medicaid
- Supportive housing
- Paid family leave
- Child care
- SNAP & WIC

Economic Supports

- Minimum wage increase
- Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)
- Public benefits (TANF)
- Child support payments
- Unemployment benefits

Differential Response with Concrete Supports

(slide 1 of 2)



Low-income families who receive Differential Response (DR) with concrete supports, as compared to low-income families who receive DR with no concrete supports, are **less likely to experience a subsequent maltreatment report** (43.2% v. 52.7%)

Concrete supports may include housing, rent, utilities, food or clothing, appliances, furniture or home repair, and other financial help

Differential Response with Concrete Supports

(slide 2 of 2)



Families with screened-in reports who are assigned to a Differential Response (DR) track and tend to receive more concrete supports, as compared to families assigned to the traditional track who receive fewer concrete supports, experience a lower risk of:

- **Subsequent accepted maltreatment reports**
- **Subsequent child removals & placements**

Family Preservation with Concrete Supports

(slide 1 of 2)



Families with open child welfare cases (mostly neglect) who receive a home-based services program with concrete supports (averaging \$314 per family) are **less likely to experience a child maltreatment report**

(compared to families who receive the program without any concrete supports)

Family Preservation with Concrete Supports

(slide 2 of 2)



Study estimated that, on average, in the first year a family with an open child welfare case receives a home-based services program:

- Providing concrete supports costing \$3,361 would **avert one maltreatment report**
- Providing any concrete support (vs. no support) **reduces the risk of a subsequent maltreatment report by almost 17%**

Medicaid Expansion



- Medicaid expansion is associated with **improved economic stability & mental health** for low-income parents
- Between 2013 and 2016, the **rate of screened-in neglect referrals decreased** in states that **expanded Medicaid**, but *increased* in states that did not expand Medicaid
 - Medicaid expansion was associated with 422 fewer cases per 100,000 children < age 6 for each study year (*2013 baseline rate of 3,944 cases per 100,000 children < age 6*)
 - If non-expansion states had expanded Medicaid, there would have been an estimated **124,981 fewer screened-in neglect referrals** in the U.S. from 2014 through 2016

Medicaid - Continuity of Benefits



Continuity of eligibility for Medicaid/child health insurance (SCHIP) is significantly associated with a **decrease in child abuse & neglect investigations**

Supportive Housing



Children of child welfare-involved families who face housing instability and receive a supportive housing program (housing voucher + case management) experience:

- **Fewer removals** (9% vs. 40% in business-as-usual control group after 2 years)
- **Lower prevalence of substantiated maltreatment** (8% v. 26% in control group after 18 months)
- **Increased reunification** (30% vs. 9% in control group after 2 years)

Permanent Housing Subsidies



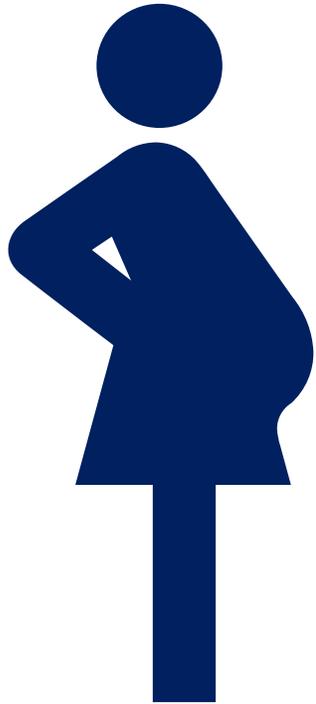
HUD's **Family Options Study** found that homeless families referred for permanent housing subsidies self-reported:

- **50% reduction in foster care placements** (after 20 months)
- Lower rates of psychological distress
- Less intimate partner violence
- Fewer child behavior problems
- Greater housing stability & food security

(Gubits, 2015) (RCT)

(compared to a business-as-usual control group of homeless families)

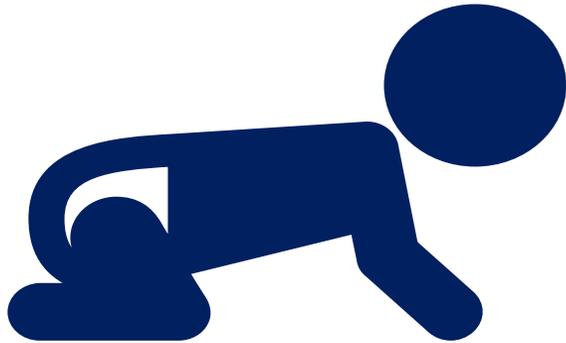
Paid Family Leave



Compared to states with no PFL policy, the implementation of California's 2004 PFL policy (*up to 12 weeks of partially paid leave*) was associated with a **significant decrease in hospital admissions for abusive head trauma** among children <1 year old and among children < 2 years old

Child Care Subsidies

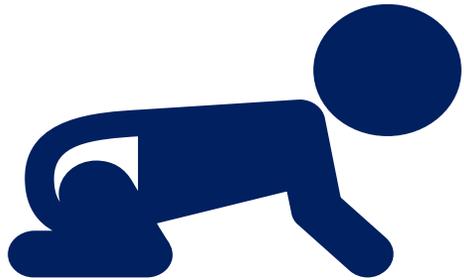
Child Care Subsidies have a Protective Effect



- States with more flexible Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) program policies regarding subsidies for child welfare-supervised children have, on average, **significantly fewer child removals** than other states
- Each additional month that low-income mothers receive a child care subsidy is associated with a **16% decrease in the odds of a neglect report** (*in the following 12 months*)

Child Care Subsidies

An additional \$1,000 spent by states on child care assistance per person living in poverty is associated with a:

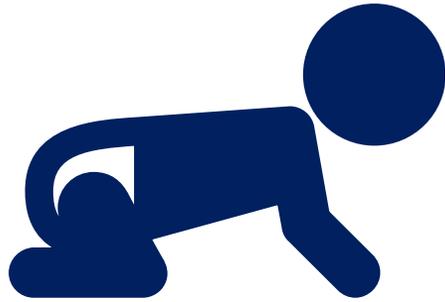


- **40% reduction** in child maltreatment reports
- **35% reduction** in substantiated child maltreatment
- **63% reduction** in foster care placements
- **50% reduction** in child fatalities due to maltreatment

(independent of federal spending)

(data are best understood qualitatively)

High-Quality Child Care



- **Helps prevent child maltreatment**

- ✓ Children who participated in Chicago Child-Parent Center preschool were **52% less likely to be victims of confirmed maltreatment** by age 17 & experienced **significantly lower rates of reported neglect** than nonparticipating peers

- **Reduces likelihood of child welfare involvement**

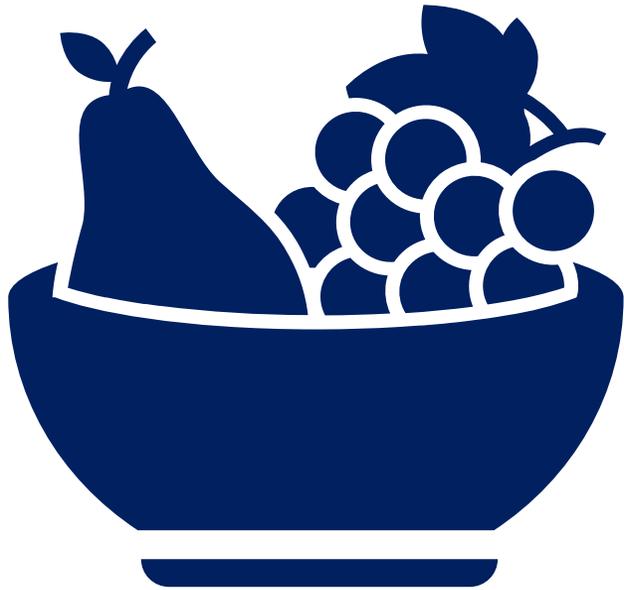
- ✓ Children who attended Early Head Start had **significantly fewer child welfare encounters** between ages 5 and 9 than those who didn't attend

- **Reduces likelihood of foster care entry**

- ✓ Children (ages 0–5) who participated in Head Start and were referred to child welfare for suspected maltreatment were **93% less likely to enter foster care** than children who did not receive any ECE

Less than 1/3 of young children under child welfare supervision who live at home receive ECE services

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) & Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, & Children (WIC)



Children who participate in SNAP or WIC (jointly or alone) have a **lower risk of substantiated abuse and neglect reports** than children who don't participate in either program

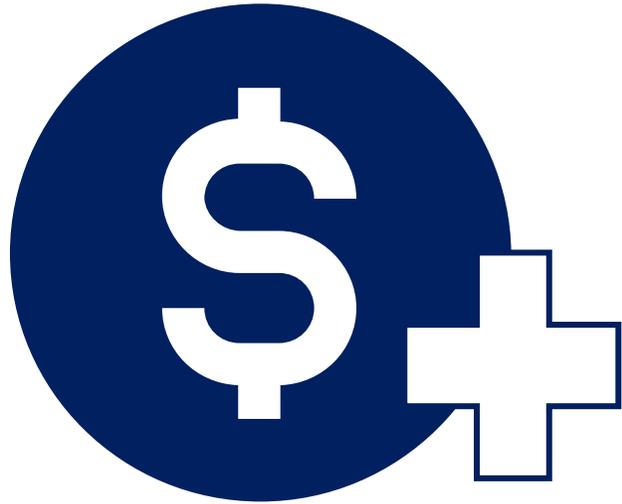
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)



Presence of each additional store accepting SNAP benefits in the least densely populated areas of a northeastern state is associated with:

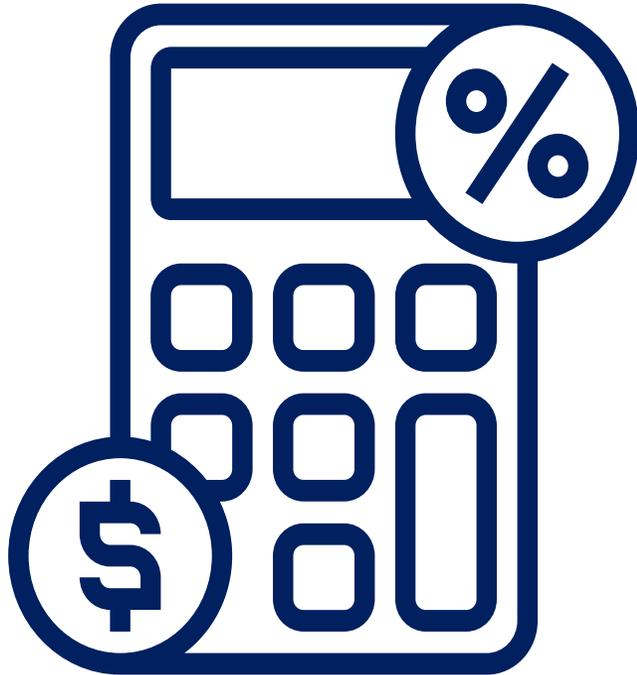
- **11.3% decrease** in substantiated child maltreatment cases
- **4.4% reduction** in child maltreatment reports
- **6% reduction** in neglect reports

Minimum Wage



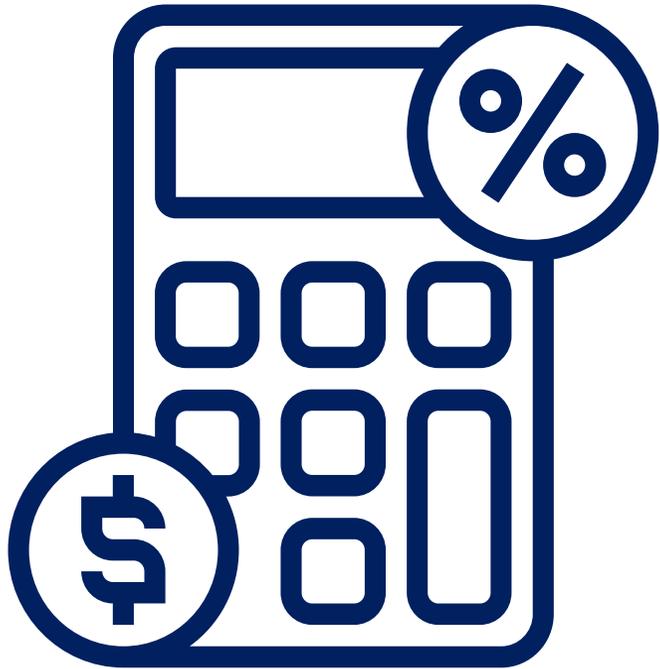
- States that increased the minimum wage beyond \$7.25 per hour experienced a **reduction in child maltreatment reports**
- For every \$1 increase in the minimum wage, there was a **9.6% reduction in neglect reports** (*primarily for children < 12 years*)

Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)



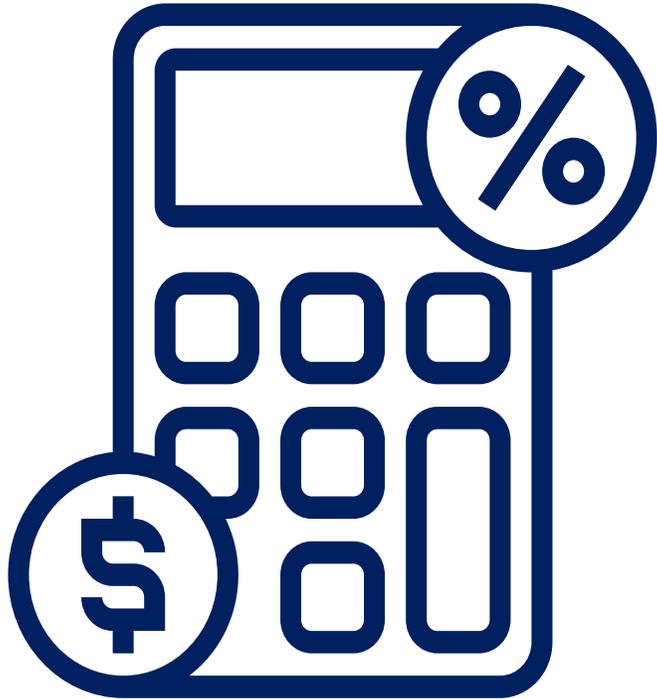
- EITC is associated with significant reductions in self-reported CPS involvement, particularly for single-parent households & larger families
- A \$1,000 increase in income via EITC is associated with **8–10% reduction in self-reported CPS involvement** for low-income single-mother households

Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)



- Expansion of EITC is associated with a **7.4% decrease in foster care entry rates** per year in states with a state-level EITC (*relative to those without*)
- States with state-level refundable EITC, compared to those without, had **11% fewer entries into foster care** (*even after controlling for poverty, race, education, and unemployment*)
- If states without any EITC implemented a refundable EITC, an average of **668 fewer children would enter foster care** annually in each state

Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)



- 10% increase in refundable state EITC benefits is associated with a:
 - **5% decline in rates of reported maltreatment**
 - **9% decline in rates of reported neglect**
- Refundable EITC (averaging \$400 per year) is associated with a **decrease in hospital admissions for abusive head trauma** for children < 2 years (*decrease of 3.1 per 100,000*), even after controlling for child poverty

Public Benefits (TANF)



A 10% increase in state public benefit levels (*AFDC/TANF + the value of food stamps*) for a family of four is predicted to **reduce foster care placements by 8%**

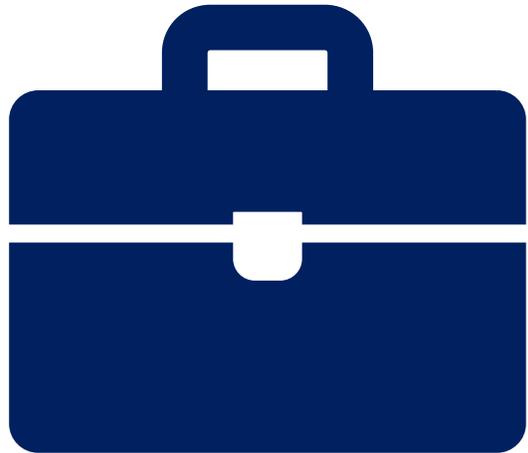
Child Support Payments



Mothers who participate in TANF and are eligible to receive full child support for their children (and child support is disregarded in determining welfare benefits) are **10% less likely to have a child subject to a screened-in maltreatment report** (*compared to mothers who are eligible to receive only partial child support payments*)

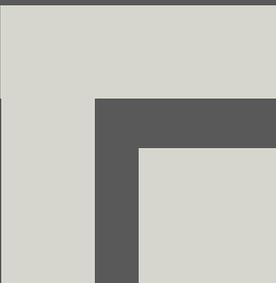
- Even a modest increase in child support payments—averaging \$100 per year—results in a decrease in screened-in maltreatment reports

Unemployment Benefits

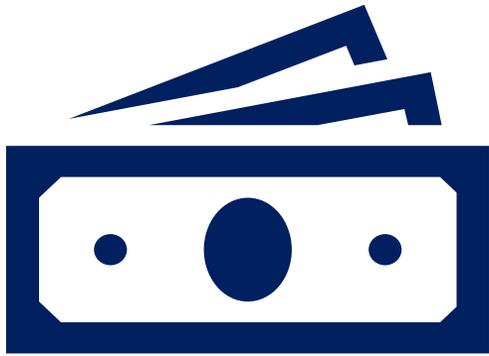


States that **extended the duration of unemployment benefits** at the onset of the Great Recession saw **significantly smaller increases in substantiated reports of child neglect** (*as compared to states that didn't extend unemployment benefits*)

Economic Supports Provide Stability and
Are Associated with Improved
Mental Health and Well-Being



Stockton Guaranteed Income Program (2019–2021)

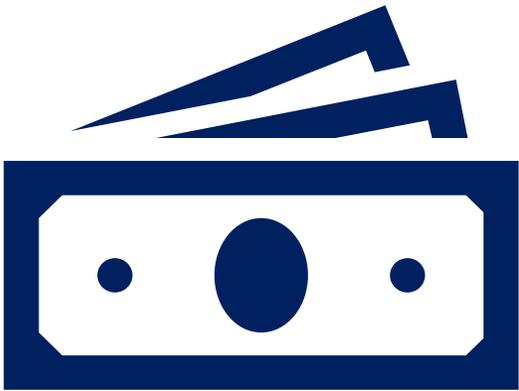


With their monthly cash payment, recipients spent on average:

- 37% on food
- <1% on tobacco & alcohol

- 125 low-income residents of Stockton, CA were randomly selected to receive \$500 per month for 24 months
 - After 1 year, compared to the control group that didn't receive the payment, recipients experienced:
 - ✓ **Improved financial stability**
 - ✓ **Improved adult mental health**
- Recipients also experienced:
- ✓ **Improved employment**
 - 28% of recipients had full-time jobs at start of program → one year later, 40% had full-time jobs

Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Casino Dividend (1997 – present)



Every adult tribal member receives a yearly income supplement from casino profits (averaging \$4,000–\$6,000).

Longitudinal studies show children of recipients have experienced:

✓ Improved child well-being & mental health

- Tribal children whose families' income rose above the poverty rate showed a **40% decrease in behavioral problems**
- Before the program, poor tribal children scored twice as high as other tribal children for symptoms of psychiatric disorders → after 4 years of the program, poor tribal children were **behaviorally no different** than tribal children who had never been poor at all
- By age 21, tribal members were **less likely to have substance abuse issues & psychiatric disorders** than nontribal adults in the same community

✓ Improved educational attainment

- For poor tribal children, an extra \$4,000 in annual household income **increased educational attainment by 1 year**

(Akee, 2010)

(Costello, 2003)

(Costello, 2010)

Baby's First Years (2019–present)



First **large-scale U.S. randomized controlled trial (RCT)** designed to identify **causal impact** of poverty reduction on children's early development

- 1,000 low-income mothers of newborns (in NYC, New Orleans, Twin Cities, & Omaha) were randomly assigned to receive *either* a \$333 monthly unconditional cash payment *or* a nominal monthly payment (control group) for the first 4+ years of their child's life

Initial Findings: 1-year-olds whose mothers received \$333 monthly cash payment **had brain activity associated with higher cognitive functioning** compared to infants in the control group

➤ *Monthly unconditional cash payments given to families experiencing poverty may have a causal impact on early childhood brain activity*

(Troller-Renfree, 2022)

(Noble, 2021) (RCT)

The Magnolia Mother's Trust

(2018 – present)



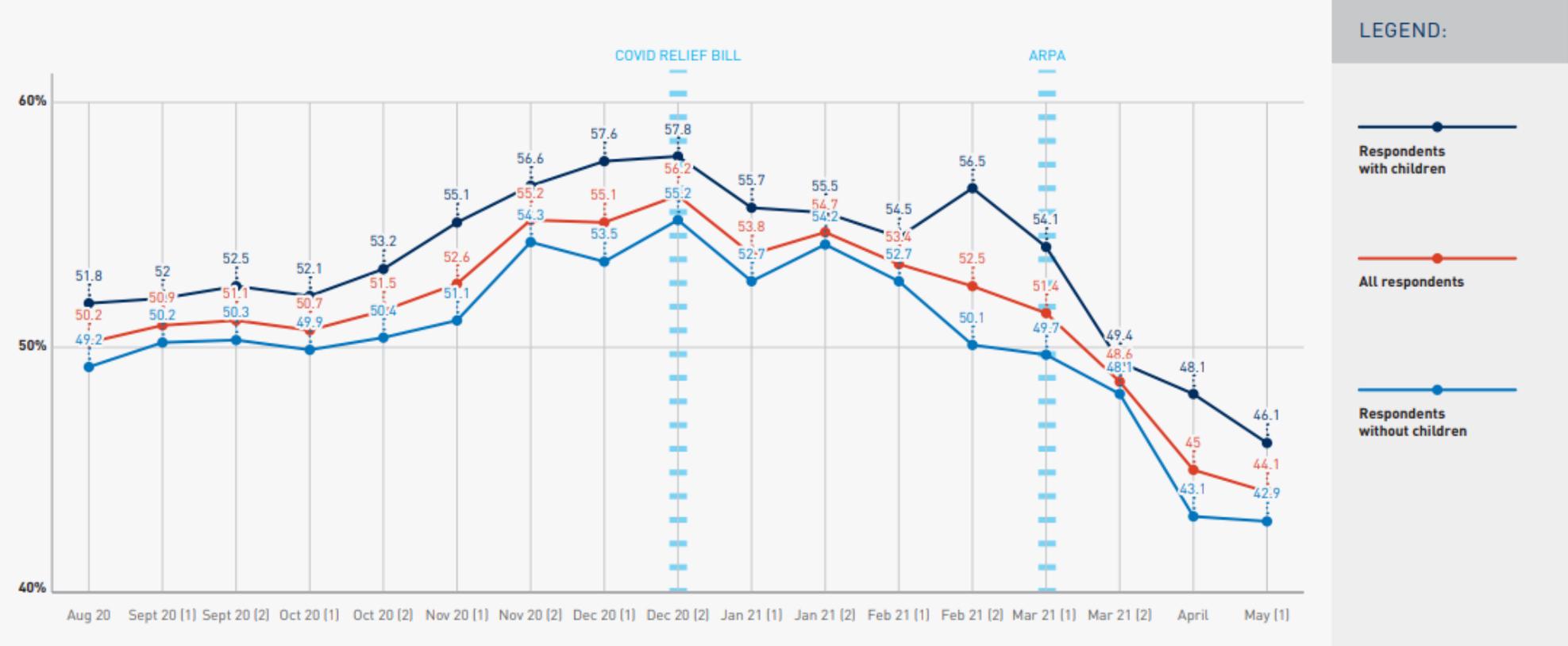
- Very low-income Black mothers in Jackson, MS received a \$1,000 unconditional monthly cash payment for 12 months
- **Key Findings**
 - Participating mothers who had **enough money for food**: 64% → 81%
 - Participating mothers who were able to **pay all bills on time** without support: 27% → 83%
 - Participating mothers who **always had gas in their car** when they needed it: 55% → 82%
 - Participating mothers who were able to **save money for emergencies**: 40% → 88%

Mississippi enrolled
<2% of TANF
applicants in 2017

Economic Supports are Associated with Improved Mental Health

Impact of federal government cash-based supports during the pandemic

FIGURE 9: SEVERAL OR MORE DAYS FEELING DOWN, DEPRESSED, OR HOPELESS (DEPRESSION) IN LAST SEVEN DAYS



Large decrease in share of adults who reported adverse mental health symptoms following passage of the Dec. 2020 COVID relief bill & American Rescue Plan Act

From Dec. 2020–May 2021 respondents who reported frequent symptoms of depression or anxiety fell by over 20%

Note: Authors' analysis of U.S. Census Bureau Household Pulse data

(Cooney, 2021)

Economic Supports Are Associated With Improved Maternal Mental Health



- After the 1993 EITC expansion substantially increased the benefit level for families with 2 or more children:
 - Mothers (with a high school degree or lower) who were eligible for the EITC and had 2 or more children reported **larger improvements in mental health and reductions in stress-related biomarkers** (*compared to similar mothers with only 1 child*)
- Expansion of the Canadian child tax benefit was associated with **significantly reduced depression** for low-income mothers

How Do People Spend Unconditional Cash Payments?



Meeting Basic Needs

- Food
- Rent
- Utilities
- Auto care/transportation



Education

- School supplies
- Tuition
- Child care



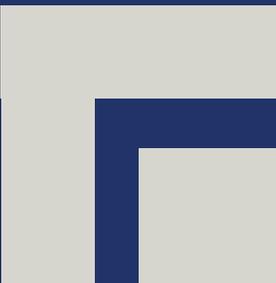
Paying Down Debt



Alcohol & Tobacco

- Families who received **monthly Canadian child benefit payments** significantly decreased their alcohol & tobacco spending
 - *Supports theory that substance use is sometimes a response to financial stress*
 - *Consider economic & concrete supports as a substance abuse prevention intervention*
- **Stockton** cash transfer recipients spent less than 1% of their payments on tobacco & alcohol

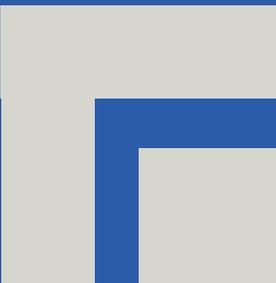
Is Attending to Economic & Concrete Supports
in Evidence-Based Programs More of an
Active Ingredient Than Currently Understood?



Services on Prevention Clearinghouse that Include Augmentation of Economic & Concrete Supports or Care Coordination

- ✓ **Homebuilders** (well-supported): Parenting intervention augmented with \$200 in flex funds per family
- ✓ **Multisystemic Therapy** (well-supported): Mental health & substance use intervention augmented with \$100 in flex funds per family
- ✓ **Intercept** (well-supported): Parenting intervention augmented with \$200 in flex funds per family
- ✓ **Healthy Families America** (well-supported): Parenting intervention that provides referral and coordination of services for families, including financial, food, housing assistance and child care
- ✓ **Child First** (supported): Parenting & mental health intervention with teaming structure that requires a care coordinator to assist families in accessing services such as SNAP, WIC, housing, etc.
- ✓ **Incredible Years** (promising): Mental health intervention that recommends a line item for child care so families can engage in services

Relationship Between
Macroeconomic Factors & Child Welfare
Involvement Suggests the Need for a
Population-Level Public Health Approach to
Prevention



Family Context & Economic Factors Matter



- Material hardship is associated with CPS involvement beyond caregiver psychological distress & parenting factors
- The association of individual factors, such as caregiver substance abuse or mental health, with child maltreatment is reduced after accounting for poverty experienced by families
 - *“Contextual factors like poverty are essential to understanding a family’s needs when addressing child maltreatment.”*
- Economic factors are associated with neglect outcomes above individual-level parenting behaviors & capacities

Higher Income Inequality Is Associated with Higher Child Maltreatment Rates



At the county level, higher income inequality—*independent of child poverty rates*—is significantly associated with **higher rates of substantiated child maltreatment**

- The impact of income inequality on child maltreatment rates is greatest in counties with the highest levels of child poverty

Who lives in high poverty neighborhoods?

- 44% of poor Black children
- 33% of poor Latinx children
- 15% of poor white children

- 24% of *all* Native American children

Higher Intergenerational Income Mobility Is Associated with Lower Child Maltreatment Reports



Counties where children have a greater chance of moving up the income ladder have **lower child maltreatment report rates** (*even after accounting for income inequality and poverty rates*)

- 1% increase in the likelihood of moving from the bottom of the income ladder in childhood to the top in adulthood is associated with **2.3% fewer maltreatment reports**

Blacks & Native Americans have **substantially lower rates of upward mobility** than whites, leading to persistent disparities across generations

Potential of Universal Home Visiting Programs to Achieve Population-Level Impact on Reducing Child Maltreatment



The Family Connects (FC) is a community-wide nurse home visiting program for families with newborns

Short-term: 1–3 home visits to assess family needs (with a focus on material needs), address family needs with collaborative connections to community resources, and provide education & intervention as needed

Randomized clinical trial of all families with births in two county hospitals in Durham, NC between 2009 and 2010

- Compared to those who didn't receive FC, families assigned to FC experienced:
 - **39% fewer CPS investigations** (through age 5)
- Findings suggest that, when implemented with high quality and broad reach, a brief postpartum nurse home visiting program can **reduce population rates of child maltreatment**

Economic & Concrete Supports As a Population-Level Strategy for Prevention of Child Maltreatment

Each additional \$1,000 that states spend annually on public benefit programs per person living in poverty is associated with:

- 4.3% reduction in child maltreatment reports
- 4% reduction in substantiated child maltreatment
- 2.1% reduction in foster care placements
- 7.7% reduction in child fatalities due to maltreatment

Public benefit programs included in this analysis:

- ✓ Cash, housing, & in-kind assistance
- ✓ Low-income housing infrastructure development
- ✓ Child care assistance
- ✓ Refundable EITC
- ✓ Medical assistance programs (including Medicaid + CHIP)

Economic & Concrete Supports As a Population-Level Strategy for Prevention of Child Maltreatment

In 2017, if all states had increased their investment in public benefit programs by 13.3%, there would have been an estimated:

- 181,850 fewer child maltreatment reports
- 28,575 fewer substantiations
- 4,168 fewer foster care placements
- 130 fewer child fatalities due to maltreatment

- 12 states have not expanded Medicaid
 - Only 23 states have a refundable EITC
 - Only 11 states have a refundable Child & Dependent Care Tax Credit
 - Only 2 states have a refundable CTC
- (from FFY 2010–2017)*

Each additional **13.3%** that states invest annually in public benefit programs (which would total \$46.5 billion nationally) would save up to **\$153 billion** in the long term *(due to reduced maltreatment-related costs)*

Cross-Systems Recommendations to Strengthen Economic & Concrete Supports to Families

American Academy of Pediatrics

[Reimagining Child Welfare: Recommendations for Public Policy Change](#) (2021)

Build upon the goals of Family First by expanding the scope of services eligible for federal reimbursement to include:

- **Time-limited cash assistance** to help low-income families meet concrete needs and minimize poverty-related neglect cases
- Services that address behavioral health, housing instability, and domestic violence

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

[Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect: A Technical Package for Policy, Norm, and Programmatic Activities](#) (2016)

- Evidence-based strategies to help prevent child abuse and neglect must include **strengthening economic supports to families**
- Policies that improve the socioeconomic conditions of families have the largest impacts on health

Cross-Systems Recommendations to Strengthen Economic & Concrete Supports to Families

U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory - [Protecting Youth Mental Health](#) (2021)

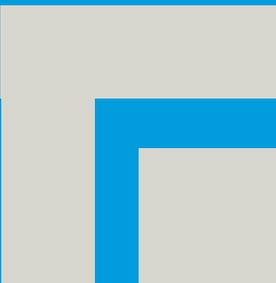
- **Address economic & social barriers** that contribute to poor mental health for young people, families and caregivers. Priorities should include:



- **Additional investments & improved coordination are needed across all levels of government** to address youth mental health needs & ensure households eligible for social services and supports are receiving them



Elevating Federal Policies that Promote a Child & Family Well-being System



Addressing Poverty-Related Neglect at the Federal Level

Stronger CAPTA – [HR 485](#) passed in House 2021

Allowed topics for HHS research & technical assistance to include:

- Evidence-based approaches to support child & family well-being and ways to identify, relieve, and **mitigate stressors affecting families**
- Methods to **promote racial equity** in the child welfare system, including a **focus on how neglect is defined**

Purposes of grants to include:

- Expanding primary prevention services
- Strategies that reduce findings of child neglect due to **family economic insecurity**
- Programs that help families build protective factors linked to the prevention of child abuse and neglect, such as time-limited, **need-based concrete support**

Addressing Poverty-Related Neglect at the Federal Level

Family Poverty is Not Child Neglect – [HR 573](#) introduced 2021

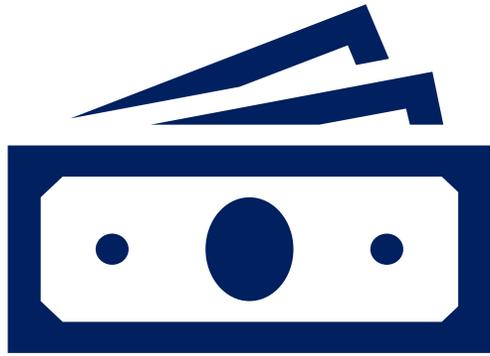
Amends CAPTA to ensure that states receiving grants for CPS:

- Address reports concerning a child's living arrangements or subsistence needs through services & benefits
- Do not permit the separation of children from parents on the basis of poverty

Alternative Pathways to Child Abuse Prevention Act – [S 1741](#) introduced 2021

- Amends CAPTA to provide for alternative pathways that connect families experiencing difficulty meeting basic needs or other risk factors—such as parental stress, family violence, and isolation—to voluntary community-based prevention services in order to safely reduce the number of families unnecessarily referred to CPS

Impact of 2021 Federal Stimulus Checks



Who experienced the greatest declines in material hardship?

- ✓ Poorest households
- ✓ Families with children

(Cooney, 2021)

Material hardship **fell sharply** following federal stimulus cash payments, which most Americans received in January & April 2021 (*totaling up to \$2,000 per person*)

From December 2020 to April 2021, Americans reported:

- **Adverse mental health symptoms fell by 20%** (*among all households*)
- **Food insufficiency fell by 41%** (*among households with children*)

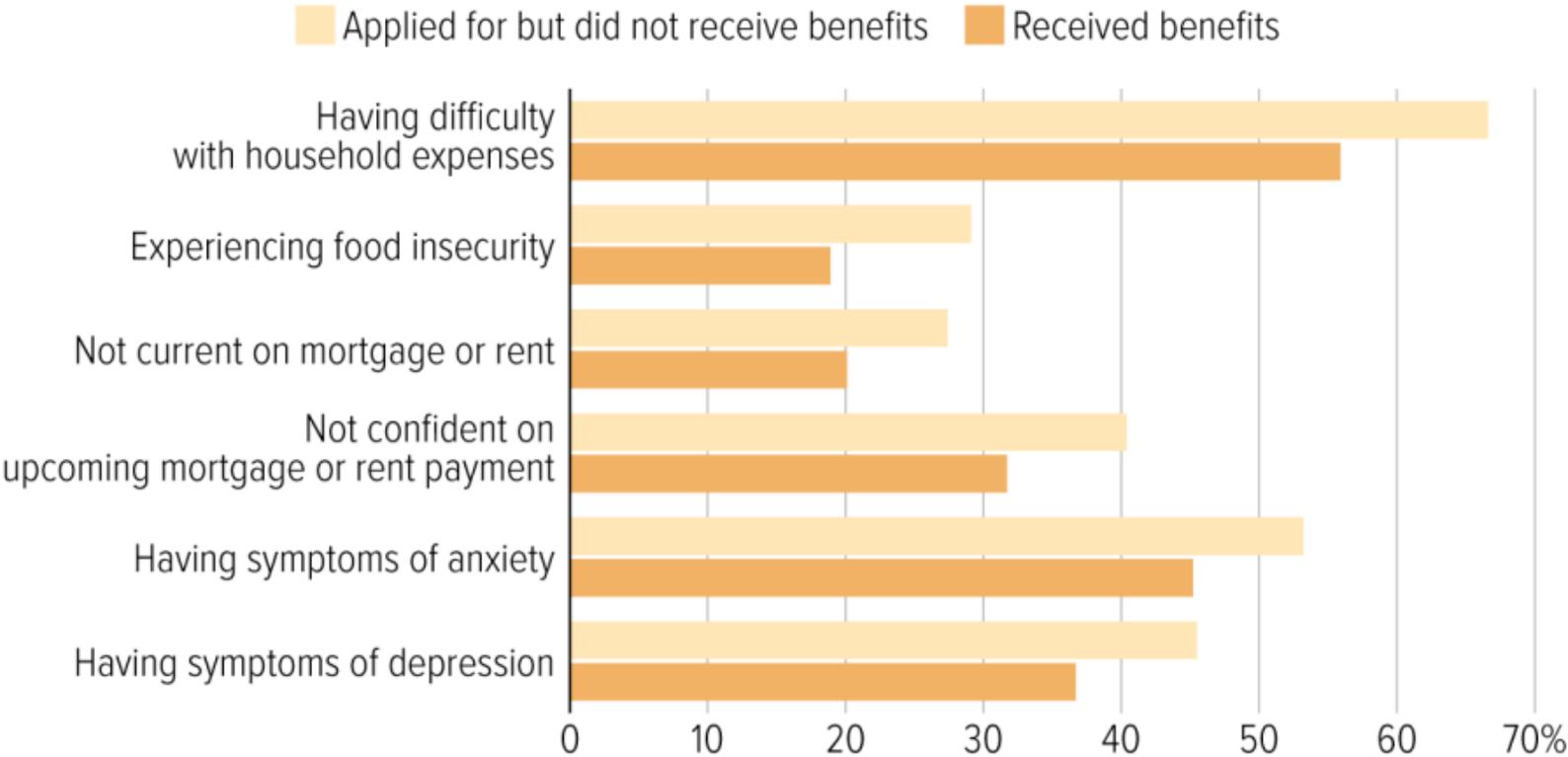
While the economic recovery, tax credits, & other forms of aid may have also contributed to these improvements, **largest declines in measures of hardship coincided with arrival of stimulus checks.**

➤ “We believe the success of the federal government’s relief measures may be due to the speed, breadth, & flexibility of its broad-based approach, primarily relying on cash transfers.”

Impact of Enhanced Unemployment Benefits During the COVID Pandemic

Applicants Who Receive Unemployment Benefits Have Less Hardship

Percent of applicants with distress

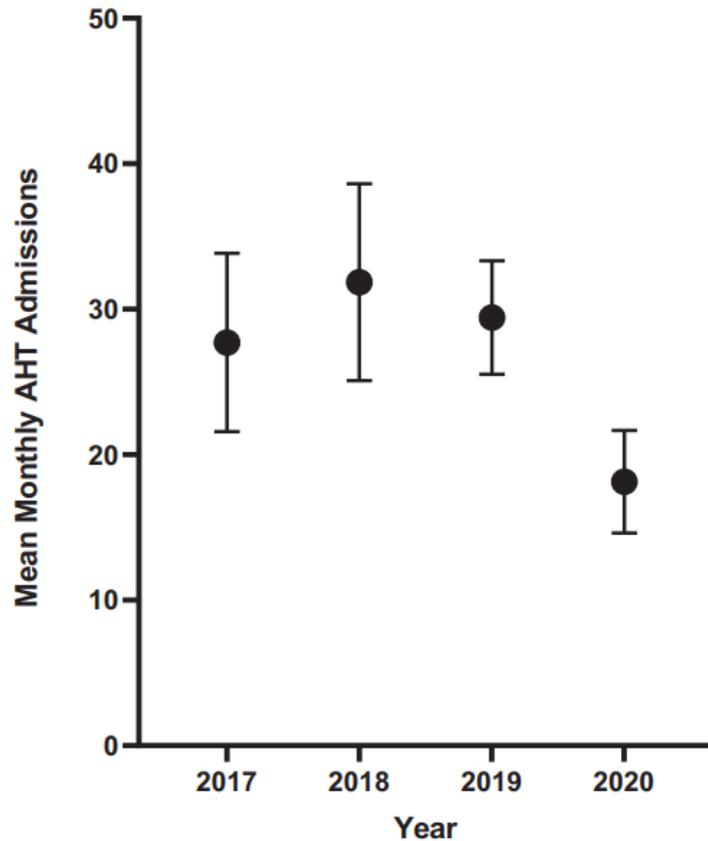
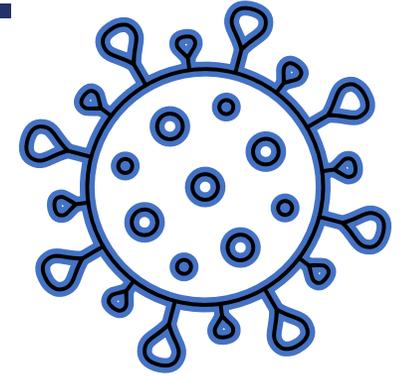


Applicants who received enhanced unemployment benefits from August to December 2020 reported **fewer adverse mental health symptoms** than those who applied for, but did not receive, these benefits



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics calculations based on Household Pulse Survey data, August 19 - December 21, 2020

Impact of Enhanced Government Assistance During the COVID Pandemic



Child maltreatment declined during the pandemic

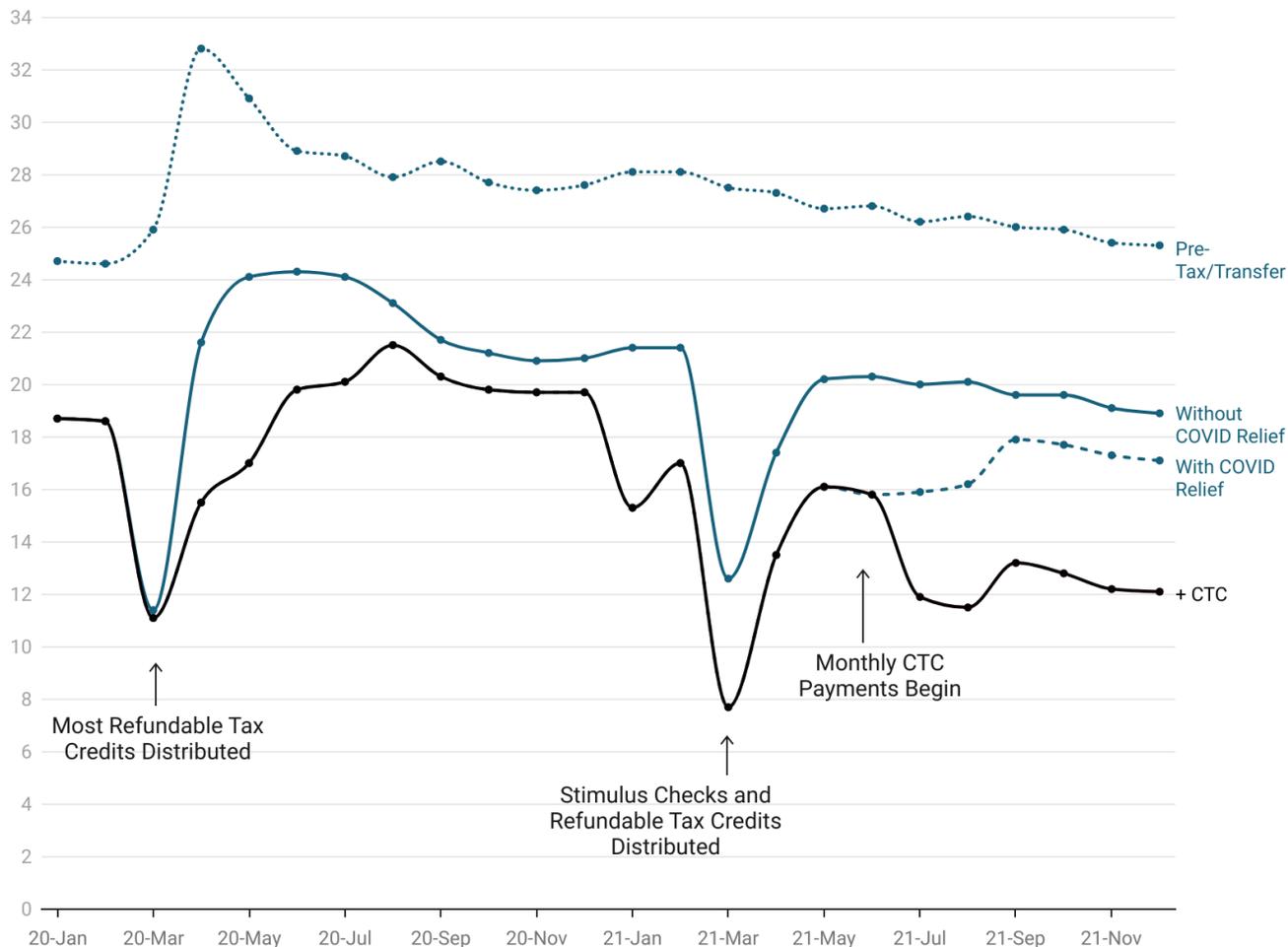
- **Emergency room visits** for suspected child maltreatment substantially declined
- **Hospitalizations** for abusive head trauma (AHT) decreased
- Child **fatalities** due to maltreatment decreased 4.4% (FY19 to FY20) (*though Black child fatalities **increased 17%***)

Government assistance to families in financial distress may be protective

- Although surveys show that household finances worsened for 40% of American families during the pandemic, increased government assistance **buffered financial distress**

Impact of Monthly Child Tax Credit (CTC) Payments

Monthly Child Poverty Rate (Jan. 2020–Dec. 2021)



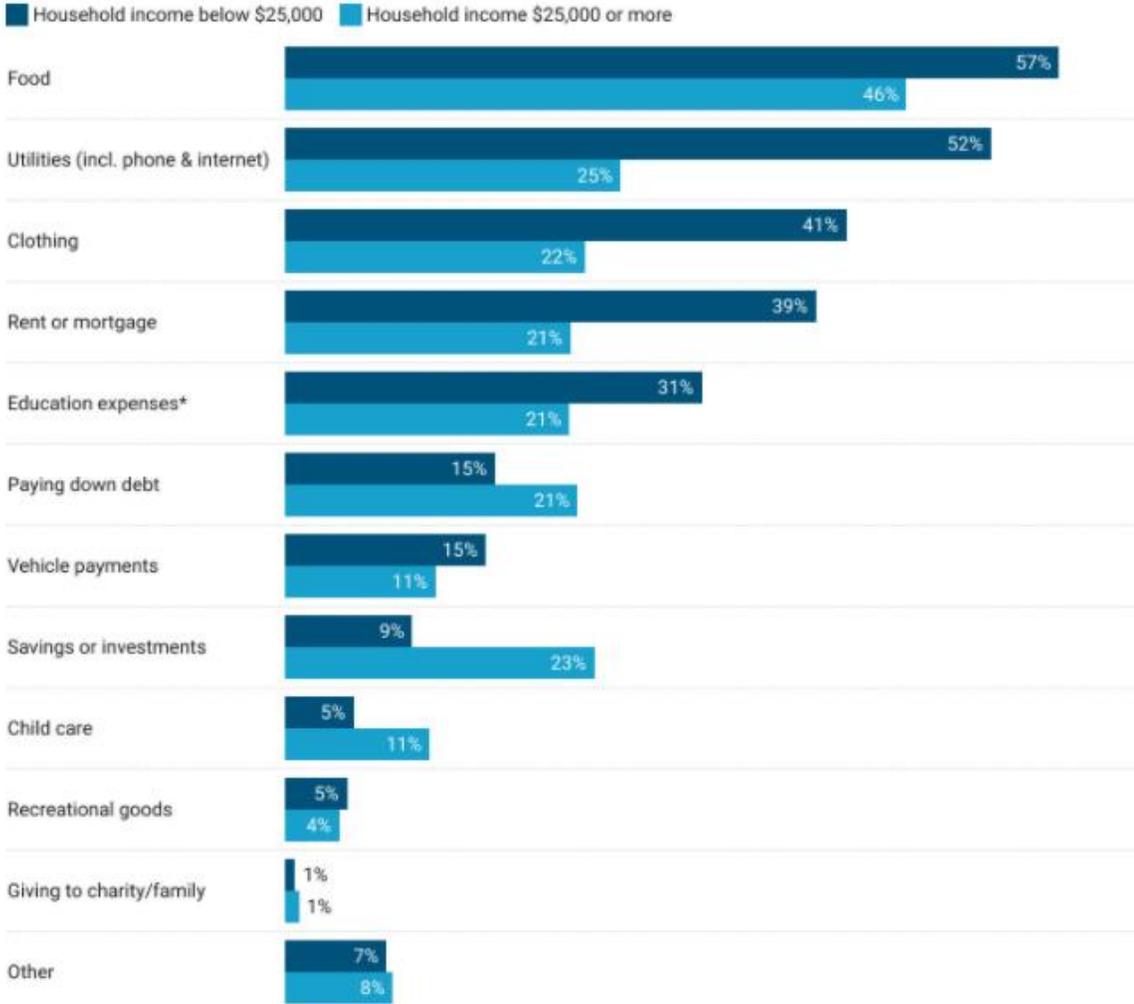
Monthly CTC payments:

- **Reduced monthly child poverty by almost 30%**
- Reduced month-to-month **volatility** in poverty
- Increased families' abilities to meet their **basic needs**
- Strongly **reduced food insufficiency**
- Had no discernable negative effects on **parental employment**

\$1,000 increase in the average CTC benefit (*as of 2013*) is associated with a 1.1% increase in single mother labor force participation

How Did Families Spend Their Expanded Child Tax Credit (CTC) Monthly Cash Payments?

Of adults in households that received a CTC payment in the last 7 days, percent that mostly used the payment for:



Families with incomes below \$25,000 were more likely than other families to spend the CTC on **basic needs: food, utilities, clothing, & housing**

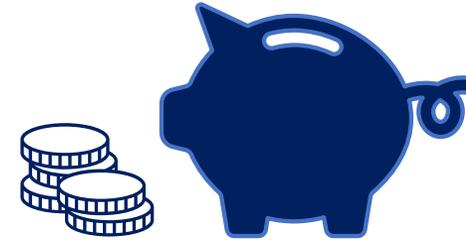
Data collected from July 21 – August 2, 2021

(CBPP, 2021 - analysis of U.S. Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey data)

CTC: Potential for Significant Long-Term Cost Savings & Benefits to Society

Social benefits of a more generous and widespread CTC* are estimated to be worth **nearly nine times** the annual program costs due to:

- ✓ Increased children's future **earnings** in adulthood
- ✓ Increased parent and child **health & longevity**
- ✓ Decreased infant **mortality**
- ✓ Reduced **health care costs**
- ✓ Reduced expenditures on **child protection**
 - **\$4 billion in avoided CPS expenditures**
- ✓ Reduced **criminal justice** costs



"The biggest single benefit to children and society as a whole comes from the substantial increases in children's health and longevity."

**Making it fully refundable, distributing it monthly, and increasing its annual value to \$3,600 per child aged 0–5 and \$3,000 per child aged 6–17*

High-Quality Child Care: Long-Term Return on Investment

Every \$1 invested in high-quality child care
= \$9 in benefits to society due to:

Reduced
participation in
special education

Reduced K-12
grade retention

Increased high
school
graduation rates

Increased labor
income

Reduced crime
& criminal
justice costs

Improved health
& healthy
behaviors

Direct investments in
health & education of
low-income children
yield the highest returns

- U.S. annual public spending on child care per child (*age 2 and under*) = **\$500**
- O.E.C.D. average = **\$14,436** (2019 data)

Economic & Concrete Support Funding Opportunities Available **NOW!**

Emergency Funding for MaryLee Allen Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program (PSSF)

Amount: \$72,450,000 to states/territories for FY 2021 (project period thru 9/30/22)

- ***Eligible grantees:*** All states, territories, and tribes approved to receive FY 2021 PSSF funding are eligible to receive supplemental PSSF grants
- ***Approved Activities (No State Match Required):*** Supplemental PSSF funds may be used to provide community-based family support, family preservation, family reunification, adoption promotion and support services
- There are no other specific programmatic requirements or limitations on use of supplemental funding
- The Children's Bureau encourages child welfare agencies to reach out to families and community-based agencies to identify the unmet needs for services or supports

Economic & Concrete Support Funding Opportunities Available **NOW!**

Community-based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) in American Rescue Plan

Amount: \$250 million supplement to states/territories available through 9/30/25 which augments CBCAP funding increases over the last several years

- ***Approved Activities:*** CBCAP is flexible and example activities include assistance to families, comprehensive support for parents, increasing family stability, improving access to formal and informal resources
- Program Instruction elevates the need to attend to the “*Intersection of Poverty and Child Welfare*” and to “*Advanc[e] Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities in Prevention and Child Welfare Prevention*”
- Children’s Bureau strongly encourages lead agencies to reach out to families and community-based agencies to plan for the use of funds to increase supports, especially for black, brown, indigenous, and LGBTQ+ children and families as well as communities that have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty.

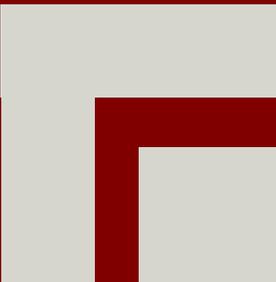
Pandemic Fiscal Recovery Funds Final Rule: Creates Opportunities to Strengthen Economic & Concrete Supports and Address Racial Inequities

Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF), part of the American Rescue Plan, provide **\$350 billion** to address the impacts of the pandemic & support equitable recovery

- Funds can be used for a **wide range of investments** focused on helping low-income households & communities
(presumed to be impacted by the pandemic)
- State, local, and Tribal governments have flexibility to use the funds to address long-standing **racial & economic inequities**

- ✓ **Services for child welfare-involved families & foster youth**
- ✓ **Cash assistance**
- ✓ **Assistance in accessing public benefits**
- ✓ **Affordable & permanent supportive housing**
- ✓ **Rental, mortgage & utility assistance**
- ✓ **Childcare, early learning, & home visiting services**
- ✓ **Family leave programs**
- ✓ **Health services**
- ✓ **Food aid**

Elevating State Policies & Other Organizations' Efforts that Promote a Child & Family Well-being System



Tightening Legal Standards for Removal at State Level May Address Poverty-Related Neglect

Washington State

[Keeping Families Together](#) (effective 2021)



- Tightens standards for removal by requiring child protective services to show a child faces “imminent physical harm” from abuse or neglect rather than “serious threat of substantial harm”
- Prevents the state from removing children solely because of certain conditions in the home, including **community or family poverty, inadequate housing, mental illness or substance use**

Tightening Legal Standards for Removal at State Level May Address Poverty-Related Neglect



New York

State Central Registry reform (2020)

- Raises the standard of evidence needed for child protective services to indicate a report of child abuse or neglect from “some credible evidence” to a “fair preponderance of the evidence”

Tightening Legal Standards for Removal at State Level May Address Poverty-Related Neglect



Texas – [House Bill 567](#) (effective 2021)

Before a child can be removed for neglect:

- Parent’s actions (or lack thereof) must create an “immediate danger” of harm—rather than a “substantial risk” to the child’s safety
- Parent must show “blatant disregard for the consequences” on the child of their action or inaction

Tightening Legal Standards for Removal at State Level May Address Poverty-Related Neglect

Kentucky – [Senate Bill 8](#) (passed 2022)

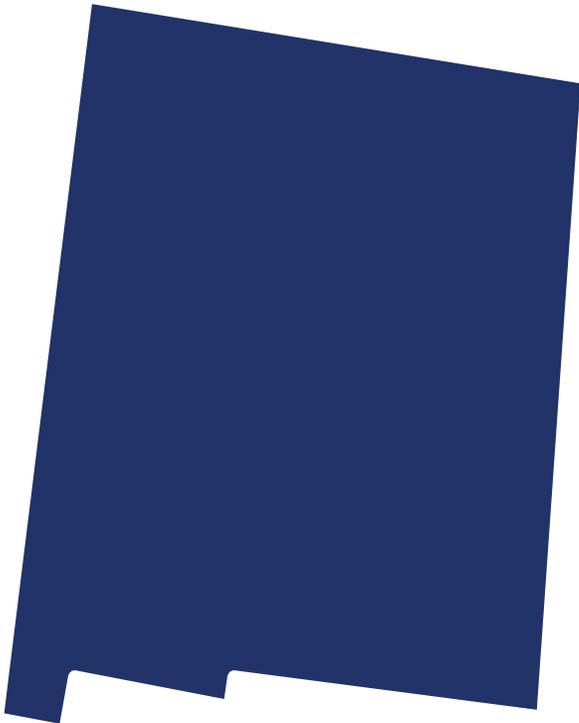
- Defines a neglected child as one whose health or welfare is harmed or threatened with harm when parent/guardian does not provide adequate care, supervision, food, clothing, shelter, and education or medical care necessary for the child's well-being **when financially able to do so or offered financial or other means to do so**
- Expands access to family preservation services to families with children at moderate risk of out-of-home placement



High-Quality Counsel for Child Welfare-Involved Parents May Address Racial Disparities

New Mexico – [House Bill 46](#) (effective 2022)

- Leverages title IV-E federal funding to establish an Office of Family Representation & Advocacy that will provide **high-quality legal representation to parents, custodians, or guardians** whose children *are at risk of being placed into*, or are in, foster care
- American Bar Association (ABA) [2019 resolution](#)
 - Recognizes children and parents have legal rights to family integrity and family unity
 - Supports use of prevention services, *including legal services*, to ensure children's safety without the need for removal from a parent or caregiver



Right to Counsel for Child Welfare-Involved Parents May Address Racial Disparities



Minnesota – [HF 312](#) (effective 2022)

All parents and guardians in child welfare cases shall have the right to court-appointed counsel beginning “**prior to the first hearing on the petition** and at all stages of the proceedings”

- New law **goes beyond many other state right to counsel laws** because courts may appoint counsel when a family is being investigated by CPS
- Right to counsel laws have the potential to reduce family separation, address racial inequities in the child welfare system, & reduce the foster care population

Economic & Concrete Assistance to Address Poverty-Related Neglect



Illinois – [Norman Services for Family Preservation](#)

For families whose children are at risk of entering foster care due to lack of food, clothing, housing or other basic human needs, this program provides:

➤ **Emergency cash assistance**

Security deposit and/or first month's rent • Housing repairs • Utilities • Food • Clothing • Furniture and/or equipment • Transportation

➤ Assistance finding **housing**

➤ A **waiver to allow families to apply for TANF** so that children in DCFS custody can be returned home within 90 days

Family Preservation Program Augmented with Flexible Funds

Kentucky – Family Preservation Program (FPP)

- FPP provides families who have children at risk of removal with short-term interventions, support services, and **flexible funds**
- Evaluation found FPP services are successful in reducing entry into foster care & promoting family well-being
 - ✓ Families who received FPP services were less likely to have their children enter foster care than comparison group of families who did not receive FPP services, although FPP group had higher risk factors overall
 - ✓ 87% of children whose families received FPP services remained in their home *1 year after* services ended
 - ✓ Every \$1 spent on FPP services saved \$2.85 in out-of-home care costs
 - ✓ Recommended *expansion* of FPP services & flexible funding to meet family needs

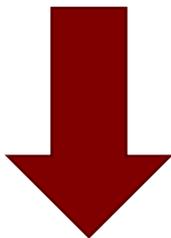
Flexible Funds to Meet Economic & Concrete Needs of Families with Children at Risk of Removal



From SFY 2019 to SFY 2021



Prevention expenditures increased by **\$9.6 million**



Out-of-home care expenditures decreased by **\$58.1 million**

Kentucky – SFY 2022 budget

State budget included **\$1,000 in flexible funds** for families with children at risk for removal to meet economic and concrete needs & support prevention

(decline in out-of-home expenditures includes decrease in number of children in foster care [900+ less] & reductions in congregate care placements)

[\(Kentucky Interim Joint Committee on Health, Welfare & Family Services, July 21, 2021\)](#)

Family First Prevention Plan Centered on Concrete Supports

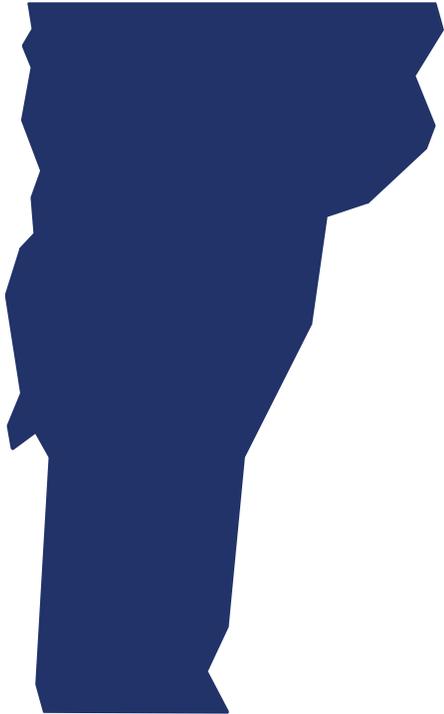
Indiana – [IV-E Prevention Plan](#) (submitted 2021)

Prevention Plan proposes:

- **Indiana Family Preservation Services** as a parenting program (*evaluation pending*) – includes concrete supports for families to prevent removal due to unmet basic needs
 - ✓ Provides direct payments for rent, utilities, food, clothing, and transportation assistance
 - ✓ Connects families to community supports
 - ✓ Assists families with applications for federal assistance
- **All children & families who receive Healthy Families America** as prevention candidates (*through child welfare or community providers*)



Economic Diversion System to Address Poverty-Related Neglect



Vermont – “Economic Firewall” for poverty-related cases

- Vermont has the *highest* rate of child maltreatment referrals in the nation, but *lowest* reported screened-in neglect rate
 - Only **1.5%** of all child maltreatment victims are substantiated for “neglect only” (*compared to 92% in Montana*)
 - Specificity of harm is required to substantiate neglect, rather than omissions
- Strong **interagency collaboration**—child welfare division is co-located with economic services division & child development division
- CPS district directors have direct access to **family preservation flexible funds** for families without open cases to prevent removal
- **Multidimensional diversion system** where families are referred to:
 - ✓ Economic support services (TANF)
 - ✓ Family resource centers
 - ✓ Differential response systems

Continuation of Cash Assistance for Families Working to Reunify



California – [AB 135](#) (effective 2021)

Requires that parents who are receiving CalWORKs/TANF benefits, and who are actively working to reunify when their children are placed into foster care, will **continue to be eligible to receive monthly cash assistance** for up to 6 months

Limits to Billing Parents for the Cost of Foster Care If They Are Working To Reunify



California – [AB 1686](#) (introduced 2022)

Limits the practice of **billing parents** for the cost of their child’s foster care placement if they are working to reunify

- Under California law, child welfare agencies must determine whether it is in the child’s best interests to pursue collection
- AB 1686 would require child welfare agencies to **presume that collection is likely to pose a barrier to family reunification**
- Introduced in response to a 2021 [NPR investigation](#) which found:
 - 57% of parents billed for foster care in California are people of color & the extra debt often follows families for years
 - When parents get billed, their children are likely to spend additional time in foster care
 - The government raises little money, or even loses money, when it tries to collect

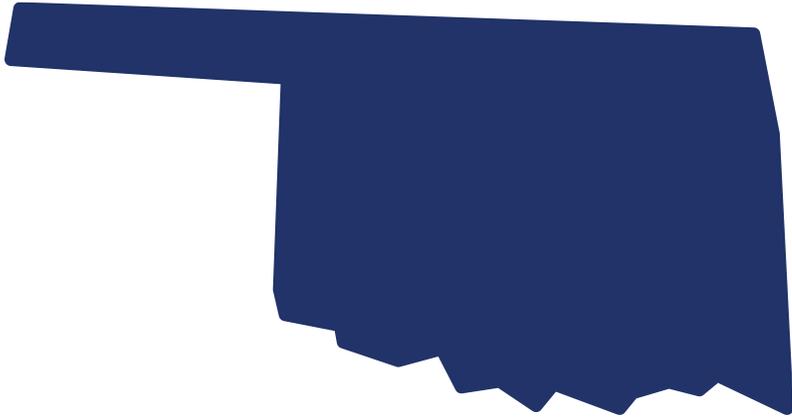
(Cancian, 2017)

(see also time to reunification slide)

Connecting Child Welfare-Involved Families with Community Partners to Provide Concrete Supports

Oklahoma - [CarePortal](#)

- Collaboration with Oklahoma DHS that connects child welfare-involved youth & families to community churches to provide needed resources and **concrete supports**
- Impact of CarePortal (*SFY 2020*)
 - Children served: 2,733
 - Estimated value of resources provided: \$276,328
 - Estimated economic impact of resources provided: **\$1,062,755**
- Total estimated economic impact of CarePortal since it began in 2015 = **\$3,539,037**



CarePortal®

available across the US

[CarePortal map](#)

Connecting Child Welfare-Involved Families with Community Partners to Provide Economic & Concrete Supports



Georgia – [Together for Families Program](#)

- Provides **emergency financial assistance & concrete supports** to families struggling with poverty who are referred by child welfare
- Collaborates with community partners to meet a family's immediate basic needs, such as adequate housing, food, & health care
- Once a family's immediate needs are met, families may connect with a **Family Navigator** who will meet with them, understand their needs, & help them navigate government systems

Family Resource Centers to Provide Economic & Concrete Supports to Child Welfare-Involved Families

Colorado – [Family Resource Centers](#) (FRCs)

FRC in Teller County, CO connects families who have been screened out of child welfare to community resources & family support services and provides **one-time financial assistance**

- After a formal partnership between child welfare & FRC was established, Teller County saw a **63% reduction in its child maltreatment rate** and saved an estimated **\$2.5 million**

For each **\$1**  invested,

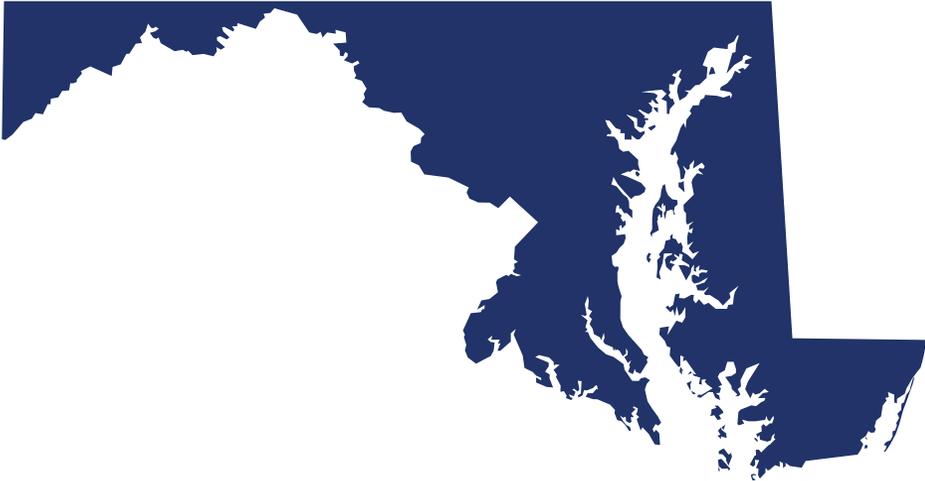
the savings to child welfare in terms of  **Fewer cases of maltreatment**

was **\$2.92** in Teller County, CO



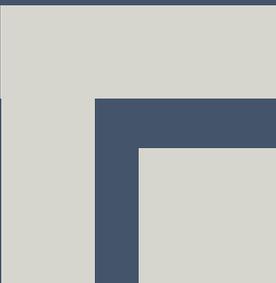
Providing Housing Supports to Families Receiving Healthy Families America (HFA)

Maryland



- Housing instability was identified as a consistent barrier for families seeking to engage in HFA
- In 2021, began pairing housing supports with HFA to **address the housing needs** of participating families
 - HFA home visitors assess for housing-related needs & provide housing support resources to all participating families

Building a Child & Family Well-being System



Annual Costs of Child Maltreatment in the U.S.

- **\$80 billion** = direct & indirect costs of child maltreatment (2012)
- **\$428 billion** = economic burden due to *substantiated* child maltreatment (lifetime costs incurred annually) (2015)
- **\$2 trillion** = economic burden due to *investigated* child maltreatment (lifetime costs incurred annually) (2015)

Total Annual Public Expenditures on Child Welfare Systems in the U.S.

- **\$33 billion** = total direct public expenditures by state & local child welfare agencies (SFY 2018)

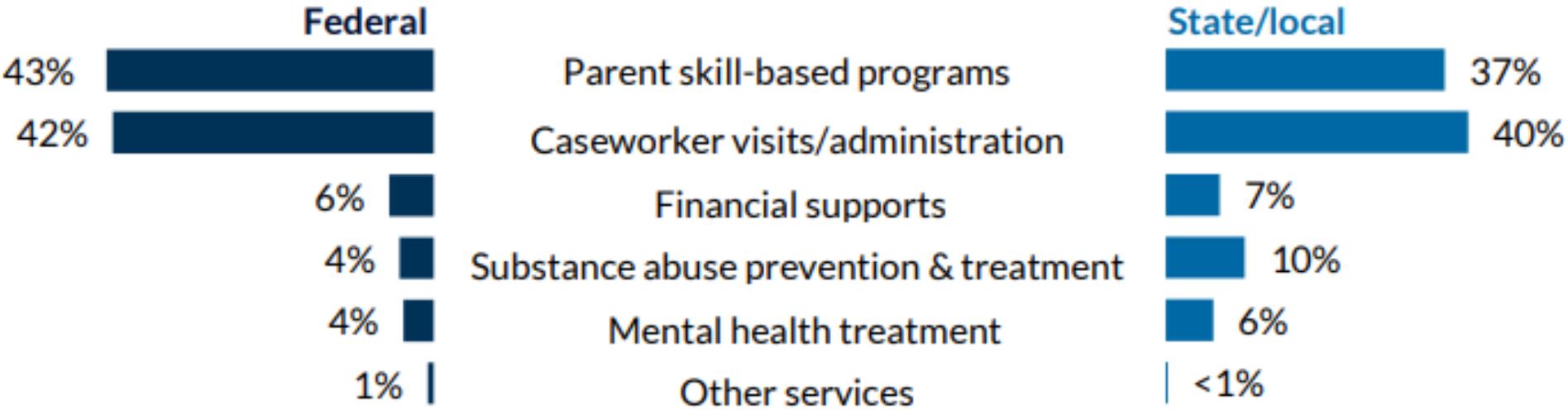
Proportion of federal and state/local expenditures on categories of services



- *Find your state's prevention percentage in the Child Trends Financing Study*
- *What would it take to flip this percentage?*

Child Welfare Agency Expenditures on Prevention Services

Figure 35. Percentage of federal and state/local child welfare agency prevention expenditures on various prevention service categories, SFY 2018



Financial supports = funds for transportation; utility or rent payments; purchase of needed furniture & appliances; child care; food & cash for incidentals

(Notes: Federal analysis includes data from 31 states; state/local analysis includes data from 33 states; analysis does not yet include title IV-E prevention expenditures authorized by the Family First Prevention Services Act; substance abuse and mental health spending excludes costs associated with health care coverage)

County Spending on Prevention Services is Associated with Individual Maltreatment Investigations



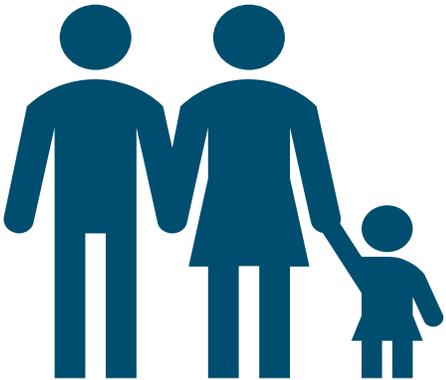
- Mothers receiving WIC benefits who live in counties with **greater amounts of per child spending on prevention services** have **lower odds** of **individual child maltreatment investigations**, compared to those who live in counties that spend less *(controlling for individual and county-level risks for maltreatment)*
- The effect of county spending on individual maltreatment investigations is **irrespective of actual receipt** of prevention services

Prevention services included:

- Domestic violence, parenting, substance abuse & mental health services
- Home visiting programs
- In-home counseling programs
- Flexible funding
- Resource & referral to community resources
- Family team meetings, wraparound programs & coordinated service teams
- Support groups
- Respite care
- Youth services

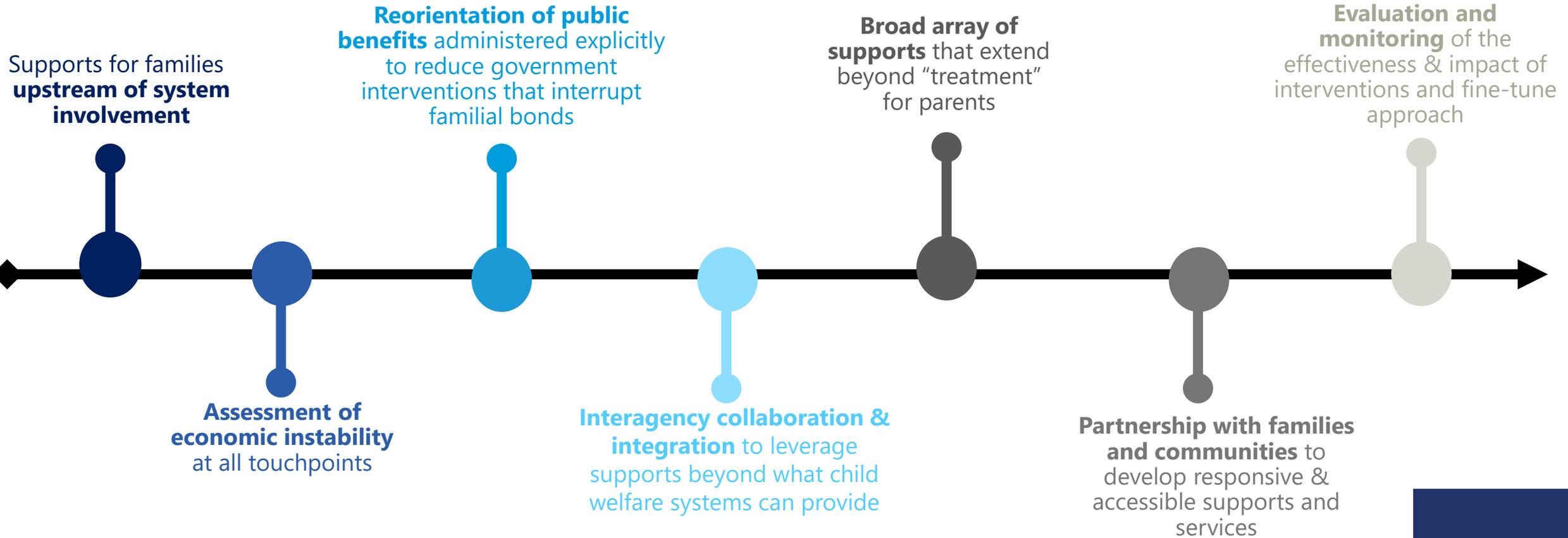
The Negative Social Return of Foster Care

Every \$1 spent on foster care for a child =
Negative social return of **-\$3.64 to -\$9.55**



- Investment in foster care **multiplies future long-term negative outcomes** far beyond those occurring in the general population
- While foster care remains a necessity for some children, there is no consistent evidence that as an intervention it is beneficial broadly to children, and there is substantial evidence that it is associated with **poor outcomes**

Child and Family Well-being System: Use of Economic & Concrete Supports as a Prevention *and* Intervention Strategy



THEORY OF CHANGE: ECONOMIC & CONCRETE SUPPORTS

INPUTS



Policies: Systemic approach to supporting families, promoting well-being, & preventing maltreatment



Data: Analytic framework & information to understand and address economic risk



People: Engagement with communities, providers, & individuals with lived experience



Programs: Services, supports, & collaboration among human service agencies

INTERVENTIONS

- Community pathways to support families without CPS hotline
- Data-driven strategies to identify economic risk & measure impact
- Improved availability & accessibility of economic supports
- Raise awareness among families of available economic supports

OUTPUTS

Responsive delivery of economic & concrete supports to families in need

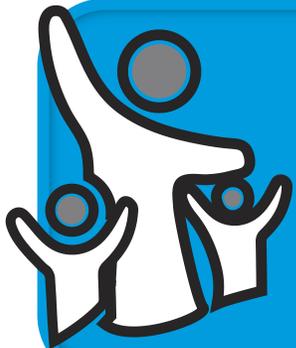
OUTCOMES

Proximal:

- ↑ Improve protective capacity of parents
- ↓ Reduce familial stress

Distal:

- ↓ Reduce unnecessary hotline calls
- ↓ Reduce child maltreatment
- ↑ Enhance child & family well-being



Additional Resources

**BUILDING
BETTER
CHILDHOODS**



Website and Toolkit Now Live

Social Currents

*Prevent Child Abuse America &
FrameWorks Institute*

New communications toolkit reframing childhood adversity as a public issue and emphasizing:

- **Collective responsibility** for child and family well-being
- **Social conditions** that contribute to child abuse & neglect

<https://buildingbetterchildhoods.org/>

Additional Resources (con't)

[Investing in Families through Economic Supports: An Anti-Racist Approach to Supporting Families and Reducing Child Welfare Involvement](#) (2022)

Alexandra Citrin, Center for the Study of Social Policy

Megan Martin, Center for the Study of Social Policy

Clare Anderson, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago

Additional Resources (con't)

Universal Childcare as a Policy to Prevent Child Maltreatment (forthcoming in *Pediatrics*)

Henry T. Puls MD, Department of Pediatrics, Children's Mercy Kansas City

Paul J. Chung MD, Department of Pediatrics, UCLA

Clare Anderson, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago

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Main slide deck available at:

[Chapinhall.org/economicssupports](https://chapinhall.org/economicssupports)

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