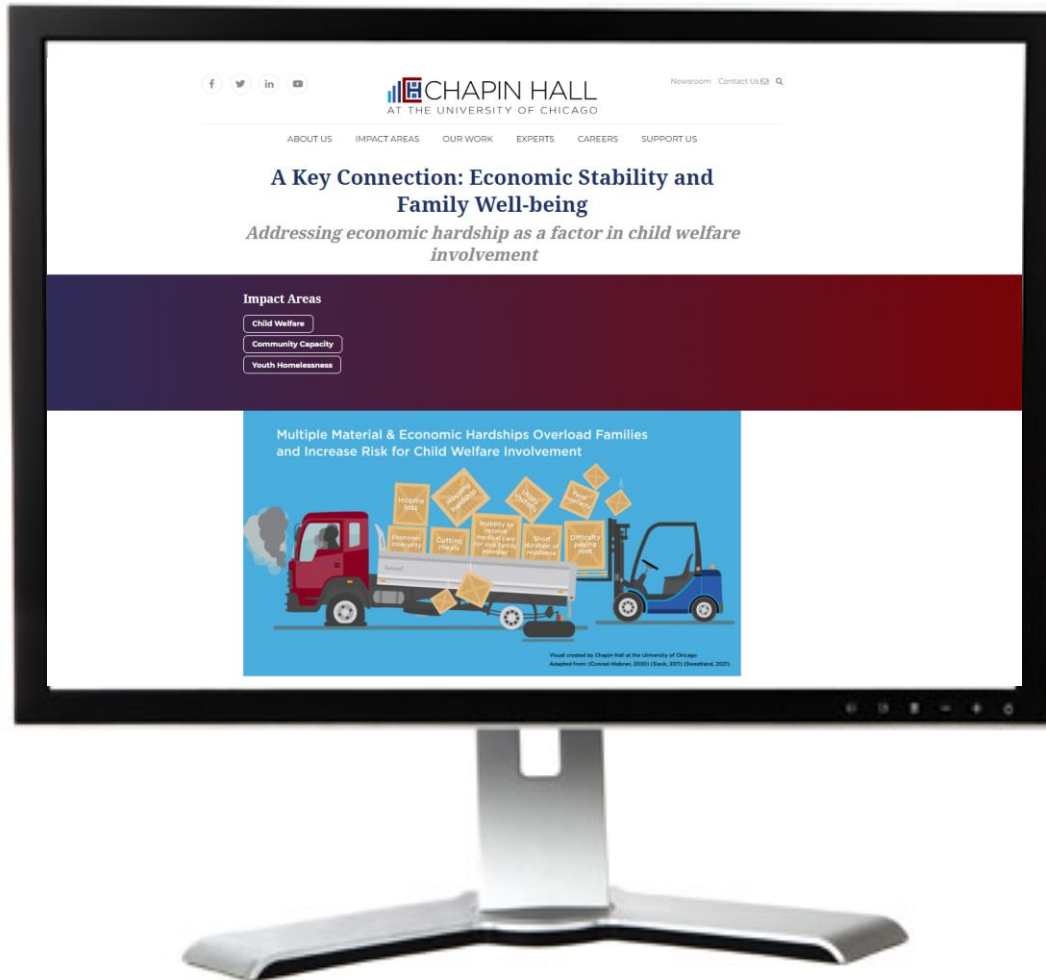


Child and Family Well-being System: Economic & Concrete Supports as a Core Component

Chapin Hall Resources



Chapinhall.org/ecspjroject

(Weiner, Anderson & Thomas, 2021)

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

Table of Contents



Historical & Contemporary Context



Overview of Family Economic Insecurity, Income & Child Welfare Involvement



Exploring the Context and Drivers of Family Economic Insecurity & Child Welfare Involvement



Economic & Concrete Supports:
A Race Equity Strategy to Address Disparity & Disproportionality in Child Welfare



Evidence: Relationship Between Economic & Concrete Supports 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?

Table of Contents



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



Economic and Concrete Supports as the Evidence-Based Service:
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 Improved Child & Family Well-being During the COVID Pandemic



Resource Considerations for Building a Child & Family Well-being System



Additional Resources

Historical & Contemporary Context



Child Welfare's Historic Structure

- 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
- Economic & concrete support policies and programs are administered as if **unrelated to child welfare**
- **Root causes** of maltreatment have not been consistently addressed, perpetuating family separation, structural racism & intergenerational trauma



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.

Early
1900s

1935

1960

1961

1974

2018

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.

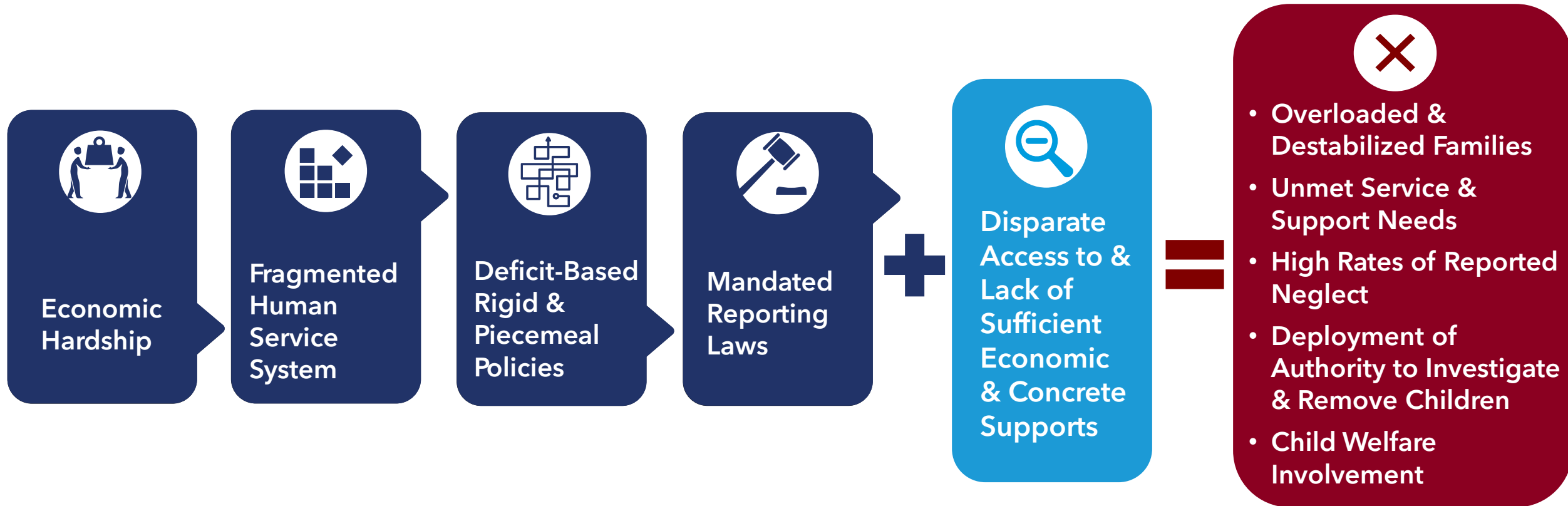
Social Security Act Amendments

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).

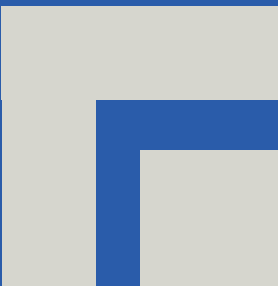
Family First Prevention Services Act

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

Impact of Historical Policy Choices



Overview 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
Social and Emotional Well-Being Domains						

Family Protective Factors

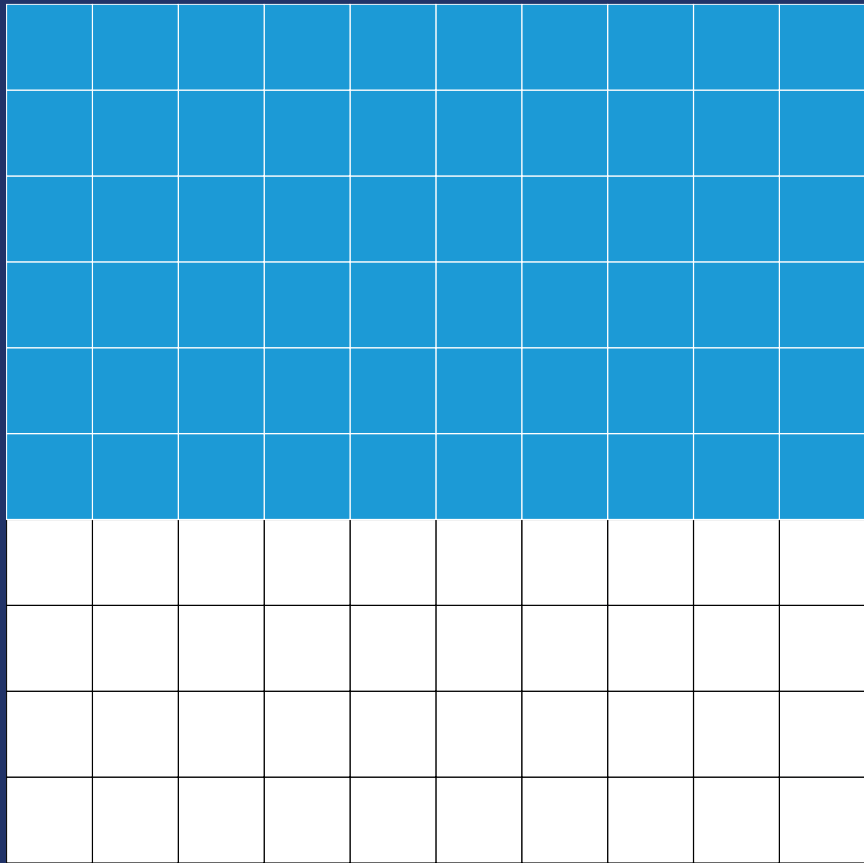
Parental resilience

Social connections

Knowledge of
parenting and child
development

Concrete support in
times of need

Social and
emotional
competence of
children



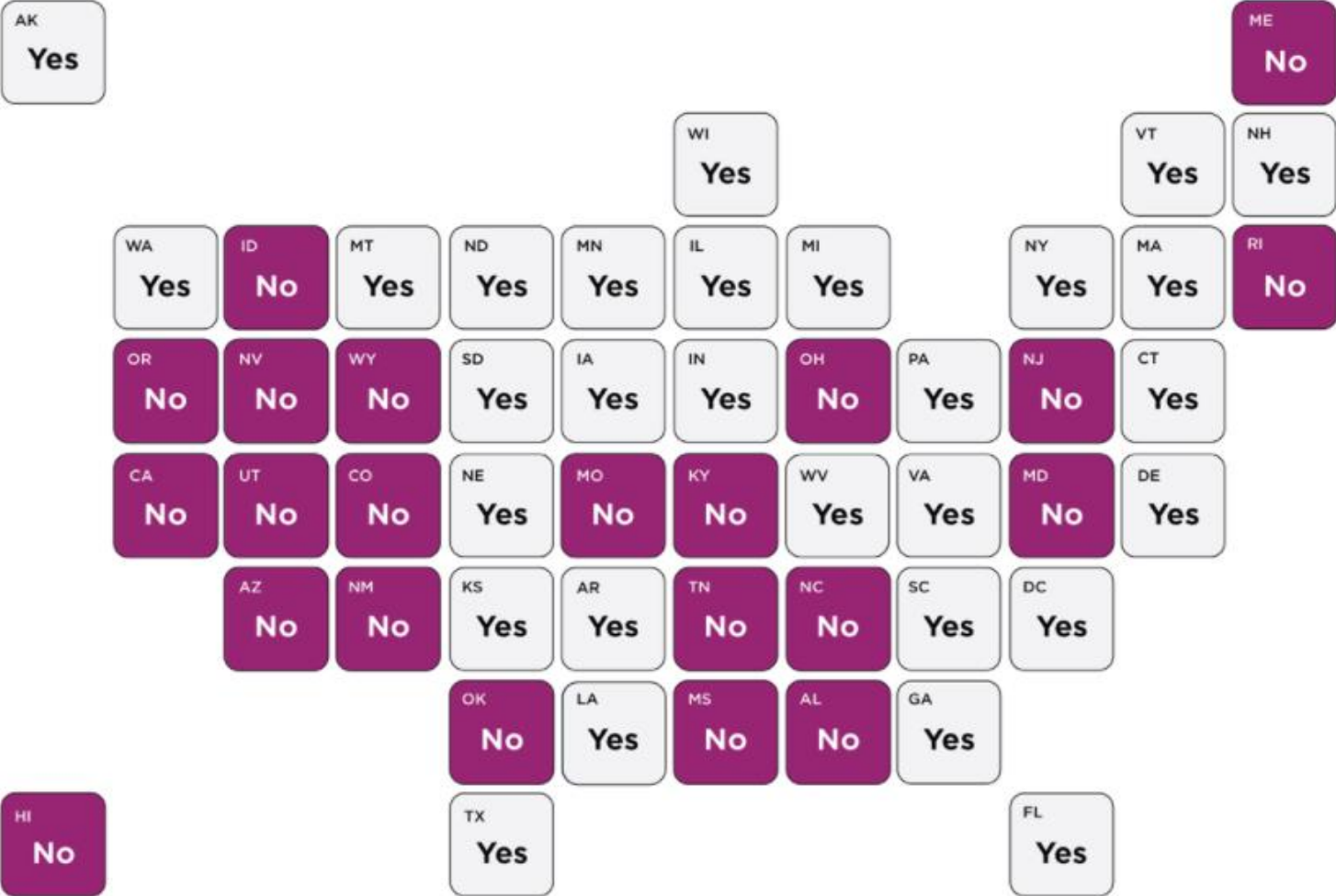
60%+

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

...and provision of economic & concrete supports is associated with decreased risk for *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, preponderance of evidence standard** for substantiation & assessing neglect through a **harm specification lens**

([Child Trends](#), 2022 – graphic)
(DeGuerre, 2021)

State Policy Option: Tighten Legal Standards for Removal



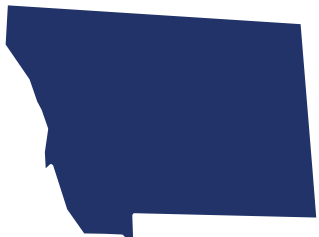
Washington State – [Keeping Families Together](#) (2021)

- Prevents removal solely due to **community or family poverty, inadequate housing, mental illness or substance use**



Kentucky – [Senate Bill 8](#) (2022)

- Narrows definition of neglect to situations where child’s welfare is harmed or threatened with harm by parent due to inadequate care, supervision, food, clothing, shelter, 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**



Montana – [House Bill 37](#) (proposed 2022)

- Prohibits removal solely due to **parental substance use, disorderly living conditions or economic status** and **expands “reasonable efforts required to prevent removal” to include identifying community resources** (*housing, financial, transportation, mental health & substance abuse services*) and actively assisting families to access these resources

State Policy Option: Economic Diversion System to Address Poverty-Related Neglect

Vermont



- Vermont has *highest* rate of child maltreatment referrals in the nation, but *lowest* rate of screened-in neglect cases (1.5%)

Vermont has created an “**economic firewall**” through:

- **Interagency collaboration & service coordination:** Co-location of CPS with economic services & early child development divisions
- Providing all CPS district directors with direct access to **family preservation flexible funds** to prevent removal
- **Multidimensional diversion system** that refers families to:
 - ✓ Economic support services (TANF)
 - ✓ Family resource centers
 - ✓ Differential response systems

(DeGuerre, 2021)

(Feely, 2020)

([Child Maltreatment 2019](#))

nearly **85%**

of families investigated by
child protective services
have incomes below 200%
of the federal poverty line

(\$49,720 for a family of 3 in 2023)

almost 70%

of families with incomes below 200% of the federal poverty line report experiencing a **material hardship** in the past year
(difficulty paying for housing, utilities, food or medical care)

Of these families:

61% experienced a **financial shock** in the past year

Material Hardship Increases Risk for Child Welfare Involvement: **Both Neglect & Abuse**

If low-income families experience at least one material hardship

- ~3x higher likelihood of neglect investigation
- ~4x higher likelihood physical abuse investigation

If low-income families experience multiple types of material hardship
(after experiencing no hardships)

- ~4x higher likelihood of CPS investigation
- ~7x higher likelihood physical abuse investigation

(Yang, 2015)

**Dimensions of material hardship in this study included: food, housing, utilities & medical hardship*

The Intersection of Family Economic Insecurity & Child Welfare Involvement

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



Strongest predictors of investigated neglect reports



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

(slide 1 of 2)

For low-income families with recently closed CPS investigations:



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

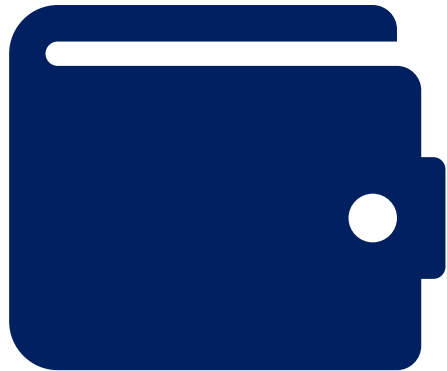
- Experiencing a **negative earnings shock** (*quarterly reduction in earnings of 30% or more*):
 - Increases risk of subsequent CPS investigation by 18%
 - Increases risk of physical abuse investigation by 26%
- Each additional negative earnings shock is associated with a **15% greater likelihood**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

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

(slide 2 of 2)

For low-income families with recently closed CPS investigations:

- **Accessing sufficient public benefits** when negative earnings shocks occur effectively buffers against the risk of **child welfare involvement**
 - 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



Evidence of Causal Effect of Income on Risk for Child Welfare Involvement



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

State Policy Option: Allow Full Pass-Through of Child Support for TANF Participants



Michigan – [FY 2022-23 budget](#)

Includes a **full pass-through** of monthly child support payments for current TANF participants, which will allow participants to keep 100% of their child support payments

Lower Family Income Is Associated with Longer Time to Reunify

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

❑ **Their families 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 families 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 families must pay the state for the costs of foster care**

\$100 increase in monthly child support order amount predicted to delay reunification by 6.6 months

State Policy Option: Continue Cash Assistance for Families Working to Reunify

Oklahoma – [OKDHS policy on reunification services for TANF recipients](#)



Parents receiving TANF benefits when their children are placed into foster care **continue to be eligible for monthly cash assistance** for up to 4 months if they are actively working to reunify

New Federal Guidance: Recommends Limiting Billing Parents for the Cost of Foster Care

In June 2022, ACF issued revised policy guidance allowing child welfare agencies **to stop billing parents for the cost of foster care**

- Recommends **collecting child support only in very rare instances** where there is no adverse effect on the child & it will not impede reunification
- Acknowledges that collecting child support is **not cost effective**

CHILDREN'S BUREAU

An Office of the Administration for Children & Families

(Federal Child Welfare Policy Manual,
[8.4C Question 5](#))

“

It's likely that reducing the income of the child's parent(s) **could impede their ability to engage in reunification efforts,** potentially extending the time the child spends in foster care.

”

State Policy Option: Limit the Practice of Billing Parents for the Cost of Foster Care



Washington State – [DCYF policy change](#) (2022)

DCYF will no longer refer parents to child support collection after a child is placed into foster care

California – [AB 1686](#) (effective 2023)

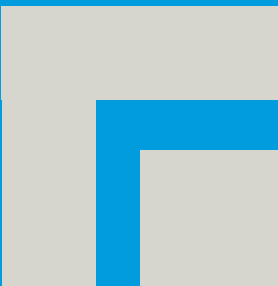
Requires child welfare agencies to presume that child support collection is likely to pose a barrier to family reunification

A 2021 [NPR investigation](#) reported:

- **57% of parents** billed for foster care in California are people of color & the extra debt often follows families for years ([OC CSS, 2020](#))
- When parents get billed, their children are **likely to spend additional time in foster care** (*Cancian, 2017*)
- Government raises little money, or even **loses money**, when it tries to collect




Exploring Context and Drivers of Family Economic Insecurity & Child Welfare Involvement



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

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


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)*

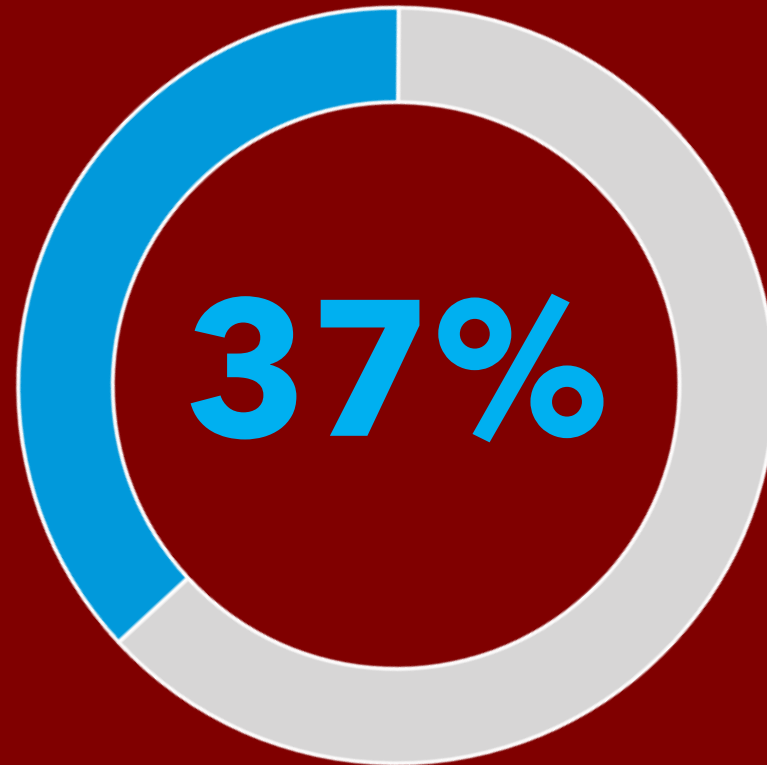
Families move in and out of poverty over time

 **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**

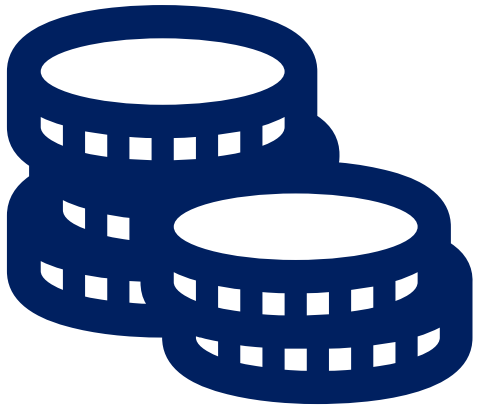
**THE VOLATILITY AND TURBULENCE CREATED BY ENTERING & LEAVING POVERTY
MAY CREATE SERIOUS STRESS FOR PARENTS AND IMPACT PARENTING**

The Buffer is Thin



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

Family Income Instability Increases Risk for Child Welfare Involvement



Low-income families at risk for child welfare involvement who have experienced **income instability** in the past year (*including changes in both earnings and public benefits*) are at **increased risk for CPS investigations**, even after controlling for household income level

- These findings suggest a unique relationship between **income instability** & child welfare involvement

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

Family Stress Model

Economic & material hardship

Psychological distress

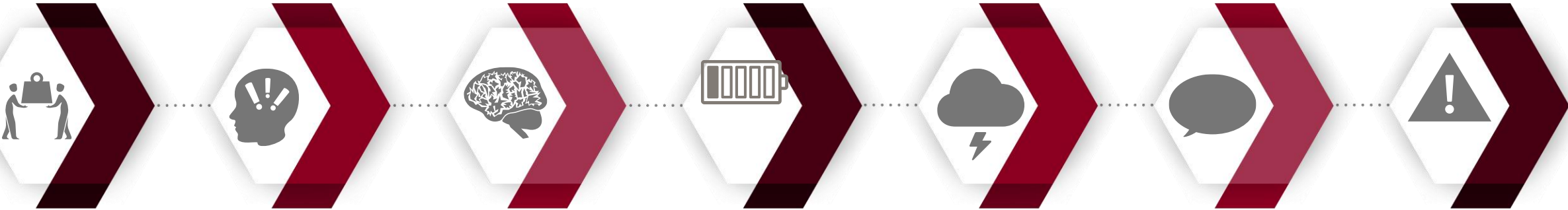
High cognitive loads

Drained mental resources

Increased conflict & hostility

Less nurturing, responsive, & supportive parenting

Higher risk for child welfare involvement



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

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

Watch the **Overloaded Parents** Video by NSPCC

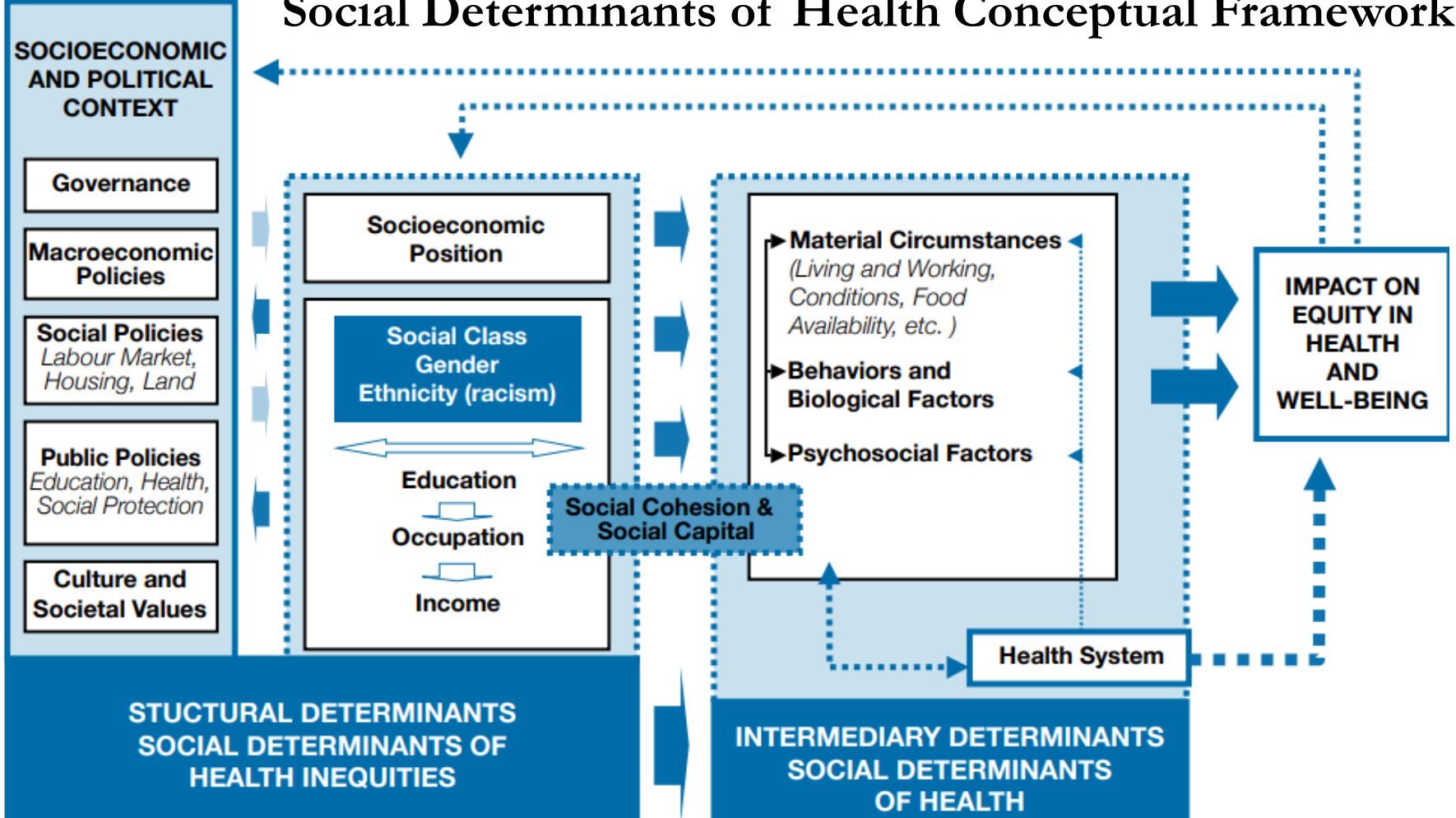


Visual created by Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago

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

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)

Economic & Concrete Support Packages (NAS) to Improve Context and Prevent Child Welfare Involvement

Analysis simulating the effects of increased household income under 3 anti-poverty policy packages found they could **reduce CPS investigations by 11 to 20% annually** (*386,000 to 669,000 fewer children investigated per year*)

- Reductions were **particularly large** for Black and Latinx children & those living with single parents
- Analysis suggests implementation would **substantially reduce racial disproportionality** in CPS involvement:
 - 19 to 29% reduction in investigations for Black children
 - 13 to 24% reduction in investigations for Latinx children
 - 7 to 13% reduction in investigations for white children

National Academy of Sciences Consensus Report (2019)

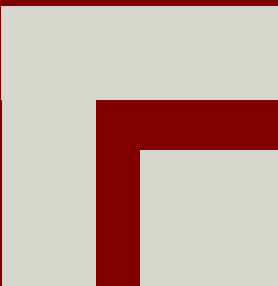
A Roadmap to Reducing Child Poverty

- **Anti-poverty package 2:** expansion of EITC & Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit (CDCTC) + universal monthly child allowance
- **Anti-poverty package 3:** expansion of EITC, CDCTC, Housing Choice Voucher Program & SNAP
- **Anti-poverty package 4:** expansion of EITC & CDCTC, increase in federal minimum wage (to \$10.25/hr) + monthly child allowance

(Pac, 2023)

([*A Roadmap to Reducing Child Poverty*](#), 2019)

Economic & Concrete Supports:
A Race Equity Strategy to
Address Disparity & Disproportionality
in Child Welfare



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)

What Current & Historic Systemic Inequities Put Families of Color at Disproportionate Risk of Economic Hardship?

Some examples include:

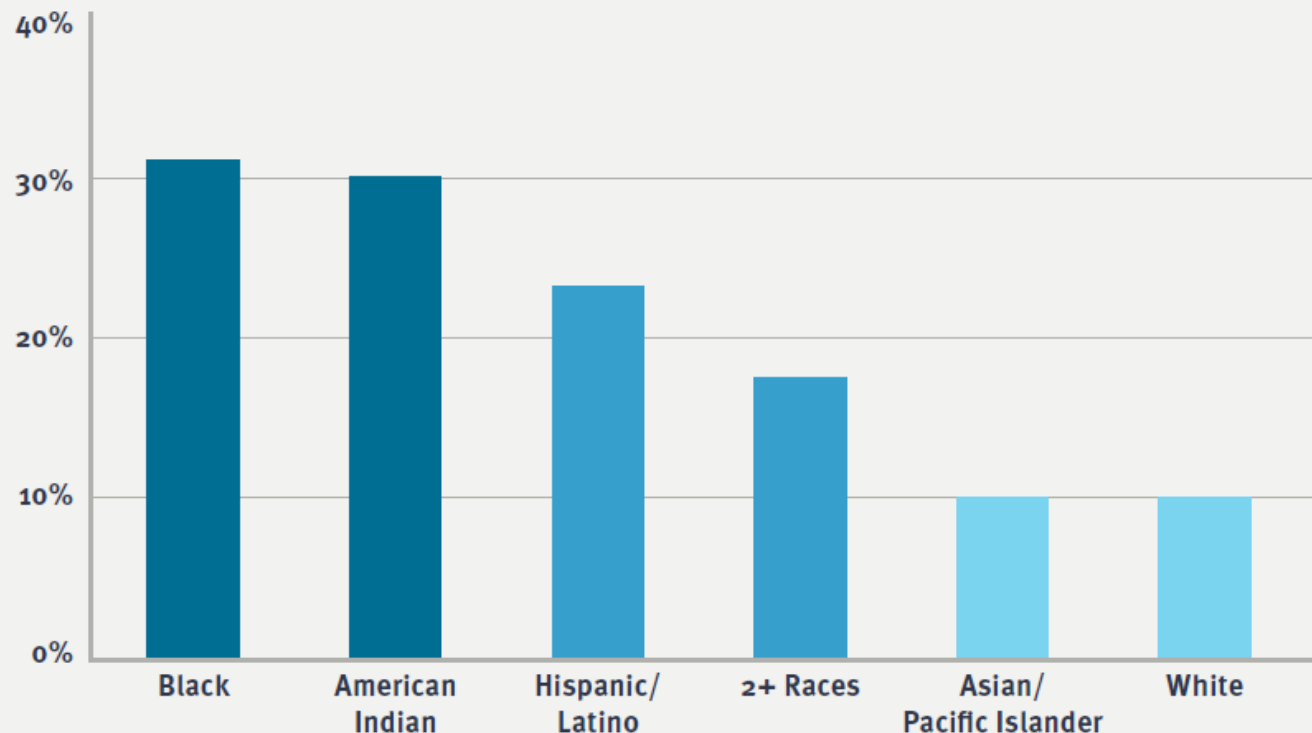
- Exclusion from homeownership via red-lining
- Denial of access to mortgages, banking & financial services
- Lending discrimination
- Exclusionary zoning policies
- Discriminatory federal housing policy
- Residential segregation
- Racially restrictive covenants & laws

- Denial of access to quality housing
- Discrimination in labor markets & commerce
- Inequitable hiring practices
- Denial of access to quality education
- Lack of access to health care
- Discriminatory law enforcement & criminal legal system policies
- Political disenfranchisement

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.

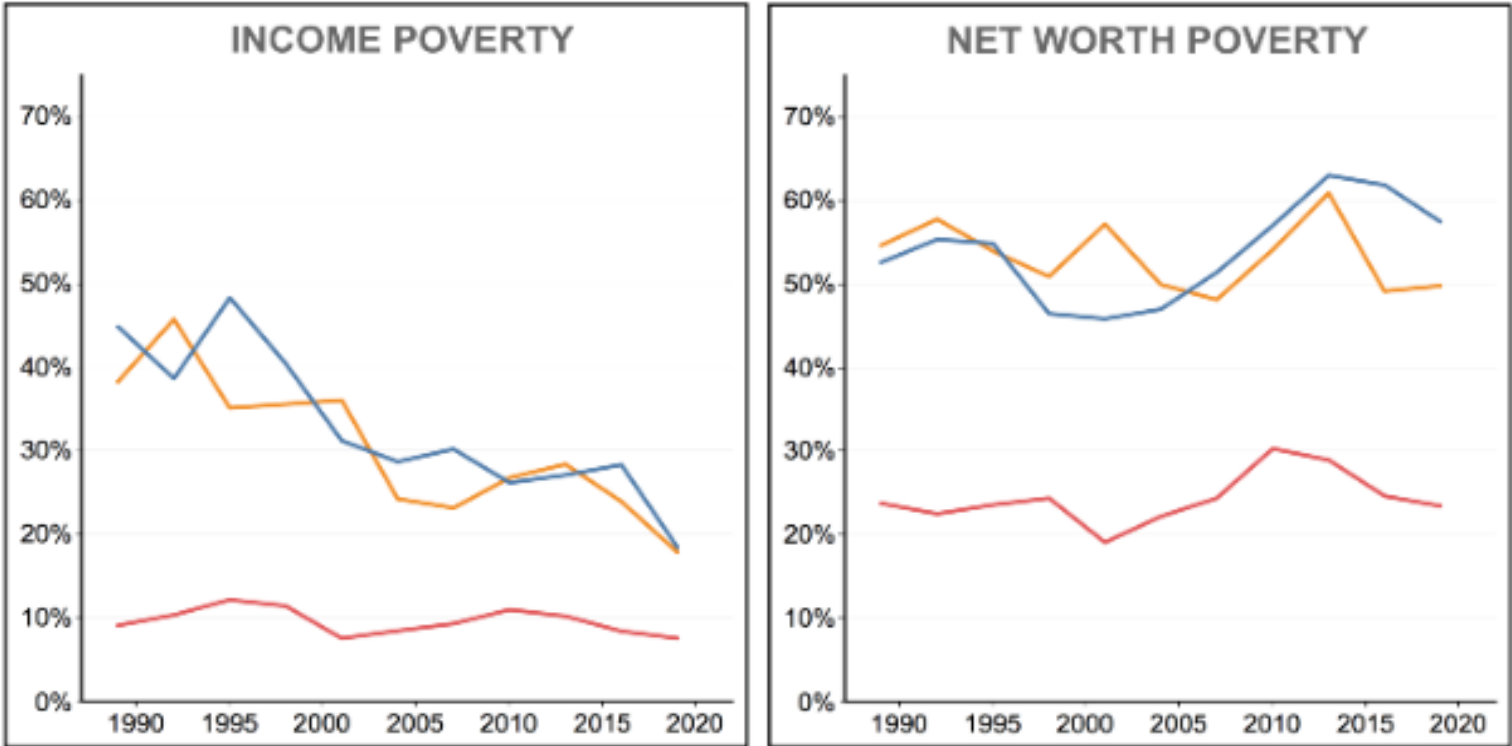
([Kids Count](#), 2020)

([US Census Bureau](#), 2020)

([Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University](#), 2021 - graphic)

Policies that Focus Exclusively on Income Poverty Overlook Families Experiencing Net Worth Poverty, Who Are Disproportionately Families of Color

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

Net worth of households with children has **declined** in recent years

- **One-third** are net worth poor, **3x** as many as are income poor

Racial gaps in net worth poverty exceed those for income poverty

- **57% of Black & 50% of Latinx** households with children are net worth poor, compared to 22% of white households with children
(as of 2019)

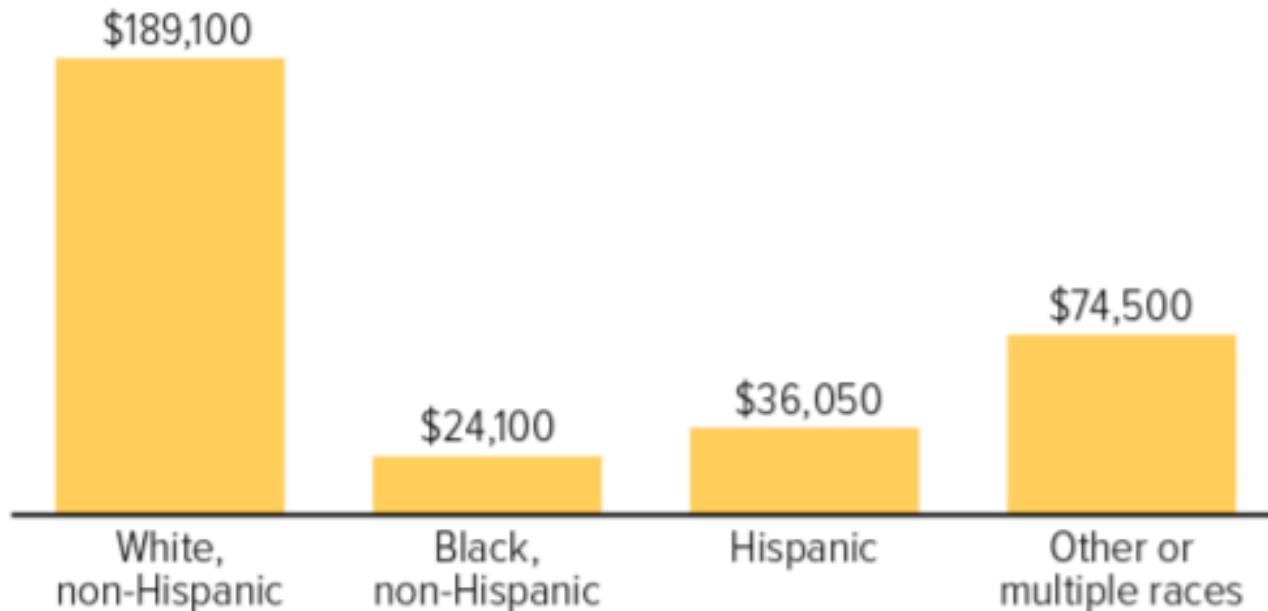
Net worth poverty = wealth (total assets minus total debts) is less than 1/4 of the federal poverty line
(i.e., wealth < \$6,500 for a family of four in 2019)

(Gibson-Davis, 2021)

Macroeconomic Policy Context: Racial Wealth Gap Exacerbates 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



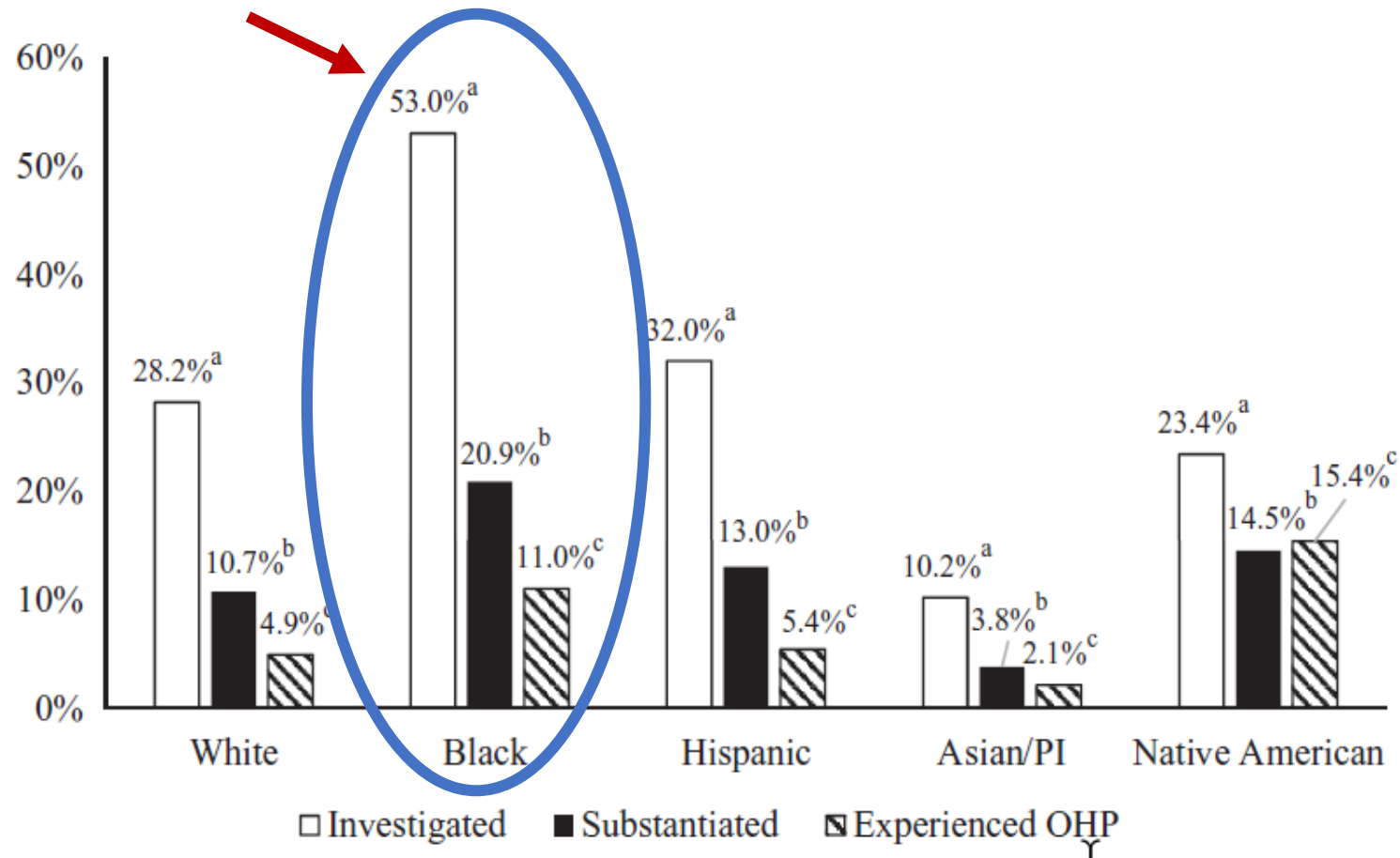
Note: "Other or multiple races" includes all respondents who identified as Asian, American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, Pacifica Islander, other race, and those who reported more than one racial identification. Roughly 69 percent and 23 percent of respondents in this grouping reported more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

([CBPP](#), 2021 – graphic) (Federal Reserve, 2020)
([Brookings](#), 2020) ([Prosperity Now](#), 2020)
([Insight Center](#), 2010)

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
- **3 million children** experience a CPS investigation or alternative response each year (FFY 2021)
- From 2006-2019, there were almost **30 million** CPS-investigated reports in the US
- An estimated **1 in every 100 children** experience a termination of parental rights

(Berger, 2020 - graphic)
(Kim, 2017) (Edwards, 2021)
([Child Maltreatment 2021](#))
(Wildeman, 2020) (Austin, 2023)

Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity & Support for Underserved Communities



Each federal agency is ordered to conduct an equity assessment to:

- Assess whether, and to what extent, its programs & policies **perpetuate systemic barriers to opportunities and benefits**
- Identify potential **barriers** that underserved communities and individuals may face to **enrollment in and access to benefits & services** in Federal programs
- Determine whether **new policies** may be necessary to advance equity in agency actions & programs

(Executive Orders, [January 2021](#) & [February 2023](#))

“

The Federal Government should, consistent with applicable law, **allocate resources to address the historic failure to invest sufficiently, justly, and equally in underserved communities**, as well as individuals from those communities.

”

State Policy Option: Right to Counsel May Address Racial Disparities & Reduce Family Separation



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

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

- This law **goes beyond other state right to counsel laws** because court may appoint counsel when a family is being investigated by CPS

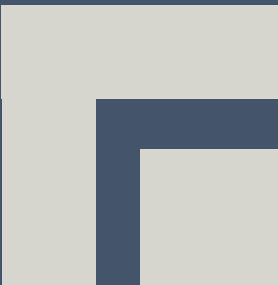


New Mexico – [House Bill 46](#) (effective 2022)

Leverages title IV-E federal funding to establish Office of Family Representation & Advocacy to provide high-quality legal representation to parents whose children are **at risk of being placed into**, or are in, foster care

Evidence:

Relationship between Economic & Concrete Supports
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

This vast body of science and growing preponderance of evidence informs our understanding of **what has been effective and why** and hypotheses about **potential policy shifts** & new pathways.

**Unless otherwise noted, all findings presented are statistically significant*

Overview of Economic & Concrete Supports

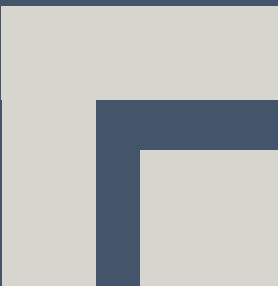
Some examples include:

- ❖ Cash assistance
- ❖ Emergency funds
- ❖ Direct cash transfers
- ❖ Earned Income Tax Credit
- ❖ Child Tax Credit
- ❖ TANF benefits
- ❖ Employment
- ❖ Income


- ❖ Flexible funds
- ❖ In-kind benefits
- ❖ Child care
- ❖ Housing supports
- ❖ SNAP
- ❖ WIC
- ❖ Medicaid
- ❖ Unemployment benefits

- ❖ Legal support
- ❖ Rental assistance
- ❖ Utility assistance
- ❖ Furniture & equipment
- ❖ Transportation
- ❖ Food
- ❖ Clothing

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



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



Reduced
TANF
benefits



Reduced income
& negative
earnings shocks



Lack of
child care



Reduced
employment



Lack of
stable
housing



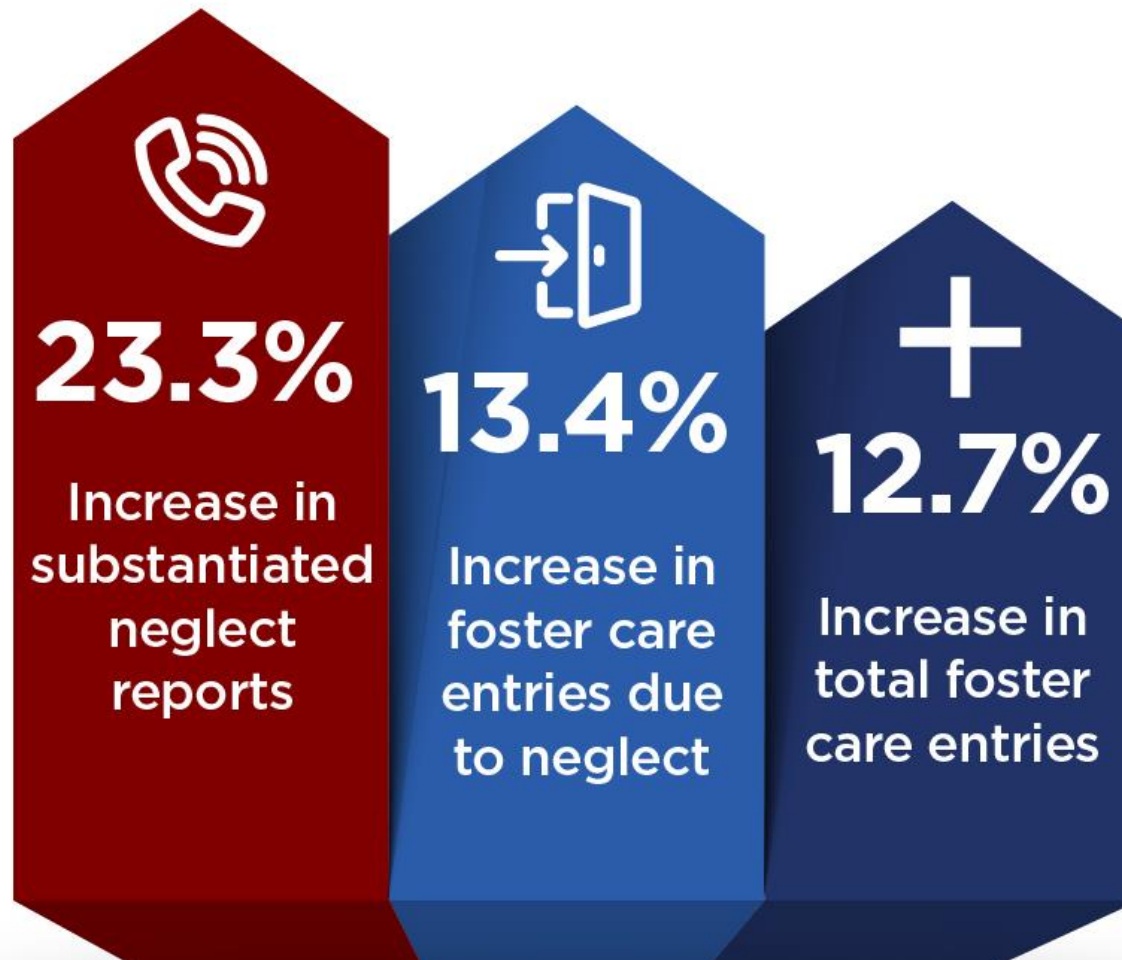
Increased
gas prices

= ↑ **Increased risk
for child welfare
involvement**

(Ginther, 2017) (Ginther, 2022) (Paxson, 2003) (Yang, 2016) (Cash, 2003)
(Klevens, 2015) (Brown, 2020) (Berger, 2011) (Warren, 2015) (Cai, 2021)
(Weiner, 2020) (McLaughlin, 2017) (Bullinger, 2021) (Berger, 2015)
(Frioux, 2014) (Wood, 2012)

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

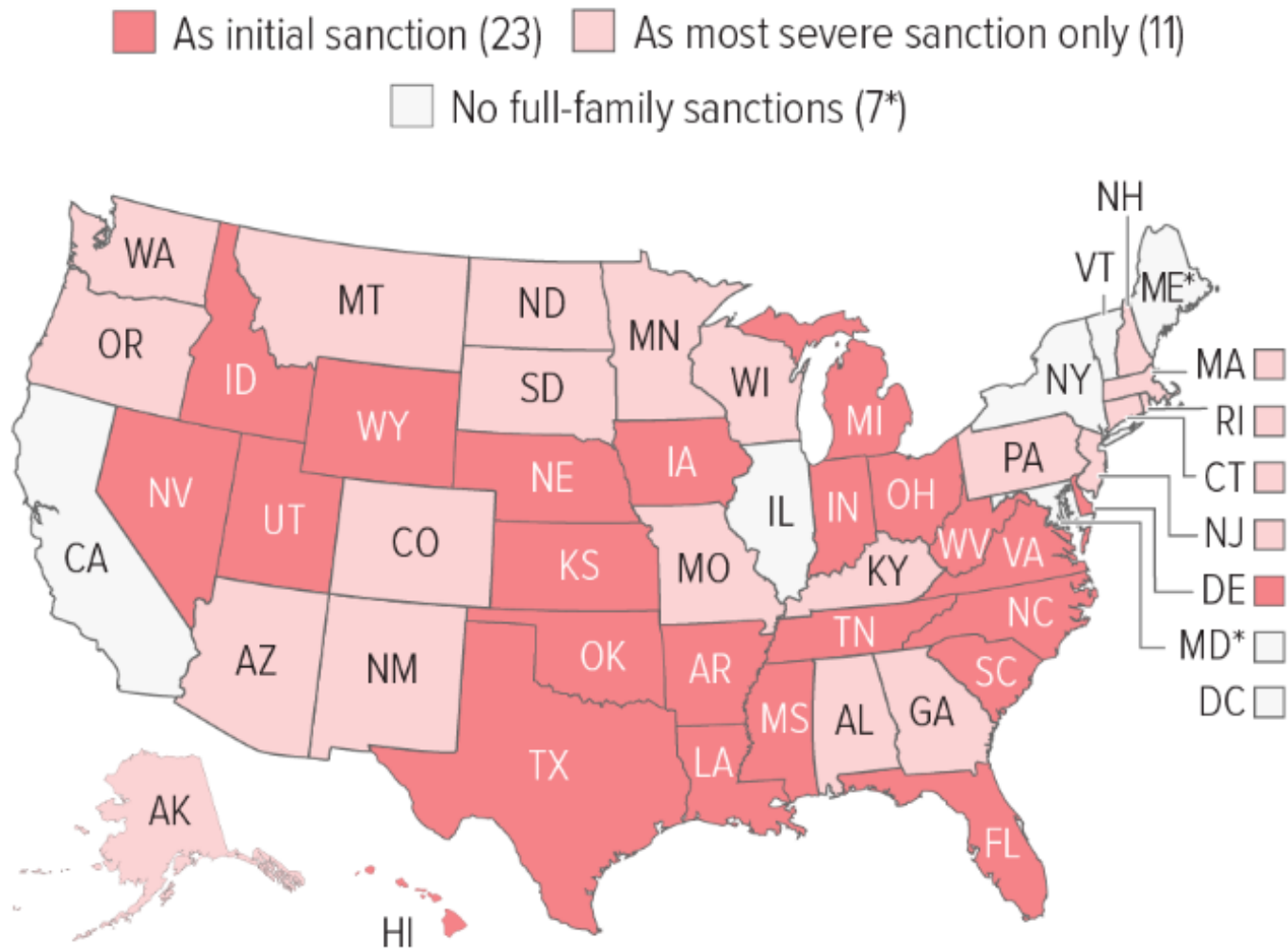
States that imposed total benefit loss as the most severe sanction for not meeting TANF work requirements:



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

In FY 2021, up to **\$6.2 billion** in federal TANF funds were being held in reserve by states (*ranging from \$0 to \$1.2 billion per state*)

State Policy Option: No Full-Family Sanctions for Non-Compliance with TANF Work Requirements



- **Nearly half of states** take away TANF benefits from the entire family (“full-family sanctions”) as the initial punishment if a parent does not meet work requirements
- States with higher concentrations of Black residents have a **higher likelihood** of imposing full-family sanctions
(as of 2021)

*Policymakers in Maine and Maryland have repealed sanctions; implementation is pending.

State Policy Option: Eliminate Full-Family Sanctions for Non-Compliance with TANF Work Requirements

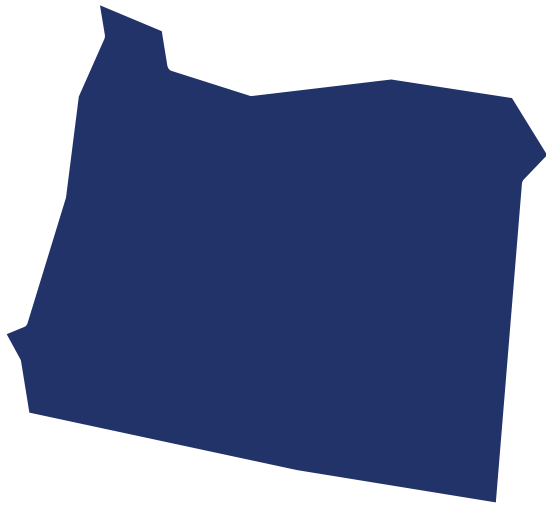
Oregon – [ODHS policy](#) (effective 2023)

Eliminates full-family sanctions for non-compliance with TANF work requirements

- Assigns 75% of monthly cash grant to dependent children & prevents sanctions from being applied to that amount

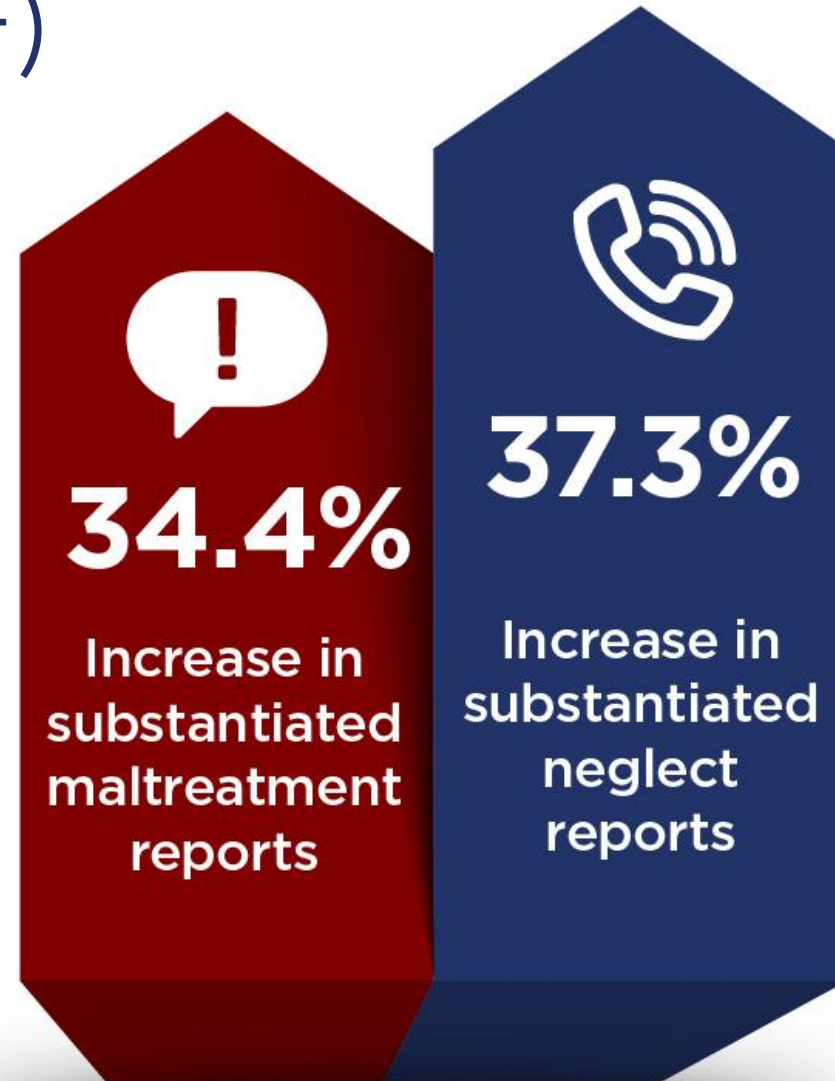
Stated reasons for policy change:

- “Full-family disqualifications risk financial instability for families. . . [ODHS] is committed to **helping children thrive & keeping them with their families and in their own home whenever possible. Moving away from full-family disqualifications can help with these commitments.**”



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

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



State Policy Option:

Extend TANF Time Limits to 60 Months



Rhode Island – [FY 2023 budget bill](#)

Extends the total amount of time that TANF participants can receive cash assistance from 48 to **60 months** (federal maximum lifetime time limit)

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

Each additional state policy that restricts access to TANF is associated with:

50

Additional children with **substantiated neglect** reports

22

Additional children **entering foster care due to abuse**

21

Additional children **entering foster care due to neglect**

(all columns are per 100,000 children)

TANF policy choices reviewed in this study included:

- Time limits of less than 60 months
- Severe sanctions for not meeting work requirements
- Work requirements for mothers with children < 12 months
- Suspicion-based drug testing of applicants

(Ginther, 2022; update of 2017 study)

(Increases observed from 2004 to 2016)

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



State policies that limit access to TANF benefits:

- **Reducing the maximum allowable cash benefit amount**
- **Implementing stricter time limits on receipt of benefits**
- **Lower TANF-to-Poverty Ratio (TPR)*** (*indicating less access to TANF benefits*)

are associated with **increases in mothers' self-reports of physical child maltreatment**

(from 2001 to 2010)

***TPR** = number of families with children who receive TANF for every 100 families with children who are living in poverty

Reduced TANF Cash Benefits

From 1985 to 2000:



- Reductions in AFDC/TANF cash benefit levels were a **main predictor** of the dramatic growth in state-level foster care caseloads during this period
- 10% reduction in the average monthly AFDC/TANF cash benefit amount for a family of 3 was associated with a **2.3% increase in the foster care caseload rate**

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 use 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 this difficulty*)
 - 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



(Yang, 2016)

(Cash, 2003)

Lack of Access to Child Care



For working mothers who are low income:

- **Instability in child care** arrangements is associated with increased risk for self-reported physical & psychological aggression toward their children
- Not having access to **emergency child care** is associated with increased risk for self-reported neglectful behavior (*especially for single mothers*)

Lack of Access to Child Care Subsidies

Waitlists to access subsidized child care are associated with an **increase in child maltreatment investigations**



- Only **14% of children** eligible for child care assistance receive it due to funding shortfalls
- Low-income families who pay for child care spend an average of **30% of their household income on child care**

(Klevens, 2015)

([ASPE](#), 2020) ([CLASP](#), 2019)

Reduced Employment



- 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)

Reduced Employment



During the Great Recession (2007–2009), the rate of abusive head trauma (AHT) for children < 5 years old was **considerably 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

Reduced Disposable Income Due to Increased Gas Prices



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

(controlling for demographic and other economic variables)

Housing Stress



- Families with children make up almost **one-third** of the total homeless population in the U.S.
- **1 in 3 children** who are homeless have experienced a major mental disorder by age 8

Housing stress:

- Homelessness
- Eviction
- Foreclosure filing
- Housing instability/
Multiple moves
- Inadequate housing

is associated with increased likelihood of
child welfare involvement:

- Caregiver self-reported child maltreatment
- CPS investigations
- Substantiated CPS reports
- Foster care placement

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 associated with **increased risk for neglect** (*above and beyond poverty*)

(Fowler, 2013)
(Warren, 2015)

“

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

”

([ACF Dear Colleague Letter](#), 2021)

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 1 eviction for nonpayment of rent by age 16

Housing Insecurity - Foreclosures



- Households that will experience a foreclosure filing in next 6–12 months are at **70% greater risk of a CPS investigation** (*compared to 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

(Berger, 2015 - Wisconsin data 2008–2011)

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

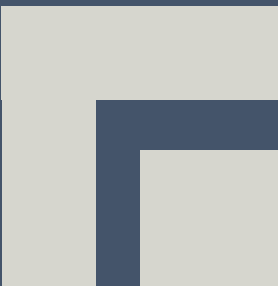
Housing Insecurity - Mortgage Delinquencies & Foreclosures



Increases in mortgage delinquency & foreclosure rates are associated with increases in hospital admissions for:

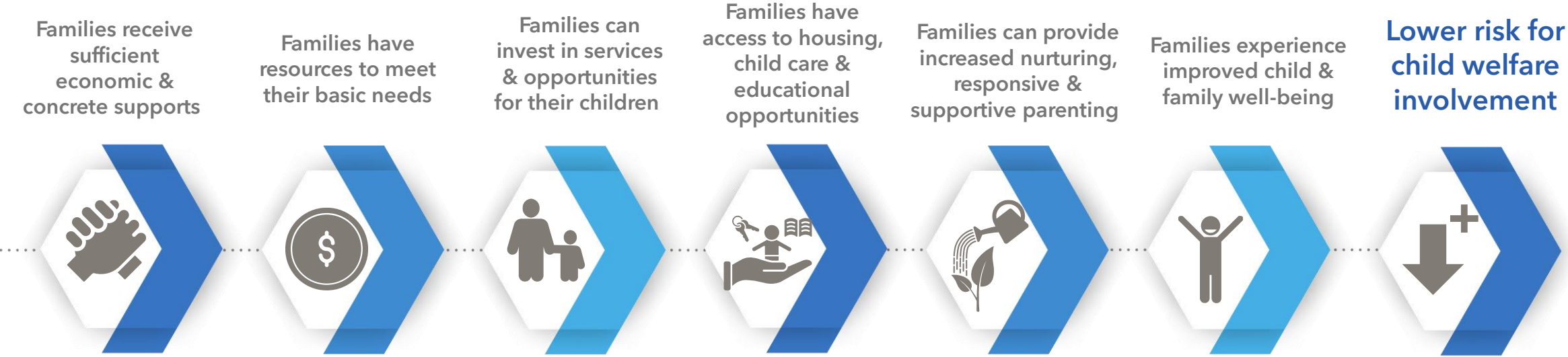
- **Physical abuse** of children < 6 years old
- **Traumatic brain injury** for infants <1 year old
(non-birth & non-motor vehicle crash related)

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



(Conrad, 2020) (Maguire-Jack, 2021)

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



Macroeconomic Supports

- Tax credits (EITC & CTC)
- Employment
 - Minimum wage
 - Paid family leave
 - Unemployment benefits



Concrete Supports

- Healthcare (Medicaid)
- Child care
- Housing



Child Welfare Interventions with ECS

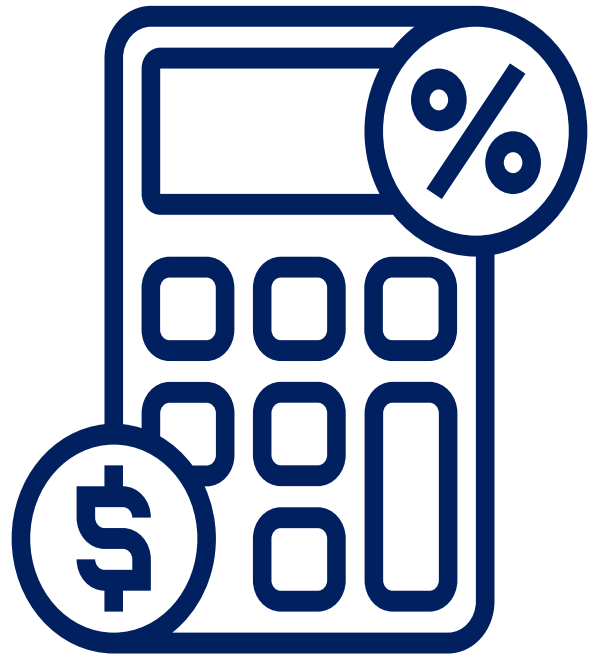
- Differential response
- Family preservation



Public Benefits

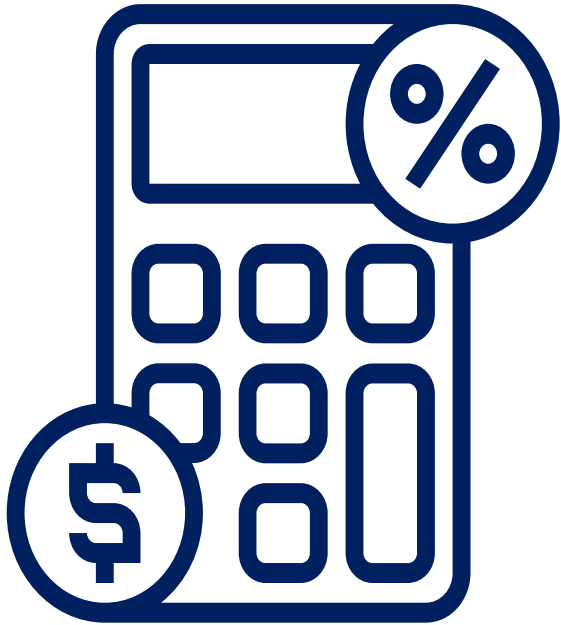
- Overall state spending on benefits
- TANF
- SNAP & WIC

Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) & Child Tax Credit (CTC)



- EITC and CTC payments are associated with **immediate reductions** in state-level child maltreatment reports
- Each additional \$1,000 in per-child EITC and CTC refunds is associated with a decline in state-level child maltreatment reports of:
 - 2.3% in the week of payment
 - 7.7% in the 4 weeks after payment

Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)



- \$1,000 increase in income via EITC is associated with **8–10% reduction in self-reported CPS involvement** for single-mother families that are low income
- Federal expansion of EITC (in 2009) is associated with a **7.3% decrease in foster care entry rates** per year in states with a state-level EITC *(compared to those without)*

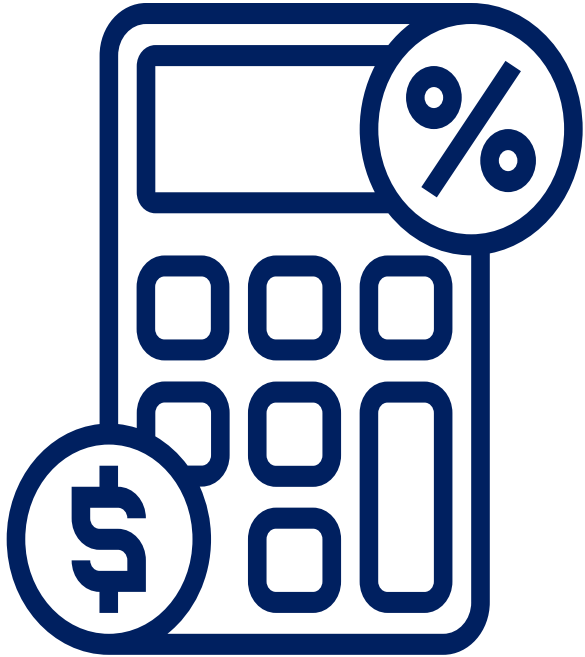
According to the IRS, **1 in 5 families** eligible for EITC does not receive it *(as of 2019)*

(Berger, 2017)

(Biehl, 2018)

([IRS](#), 2019)

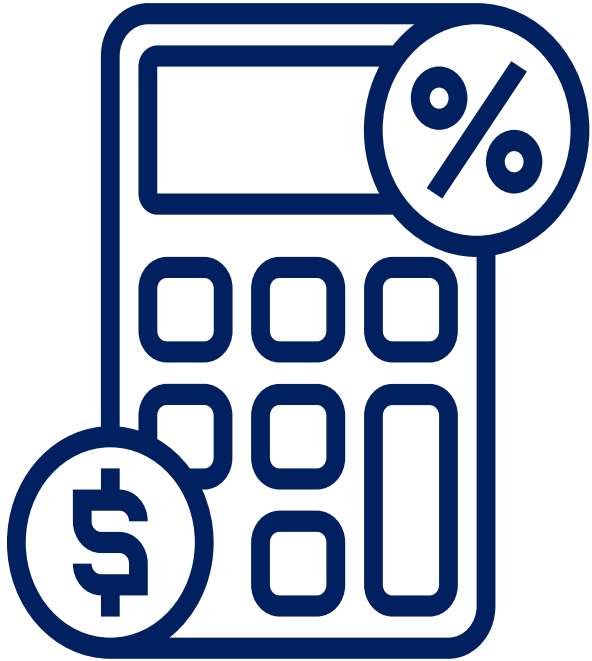
Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)



States with a state-level refundable EITC, compared to those without, are associated with an **11% decrease in foster care entries** (*even after controlling for poverty, race, education & unemployment*)

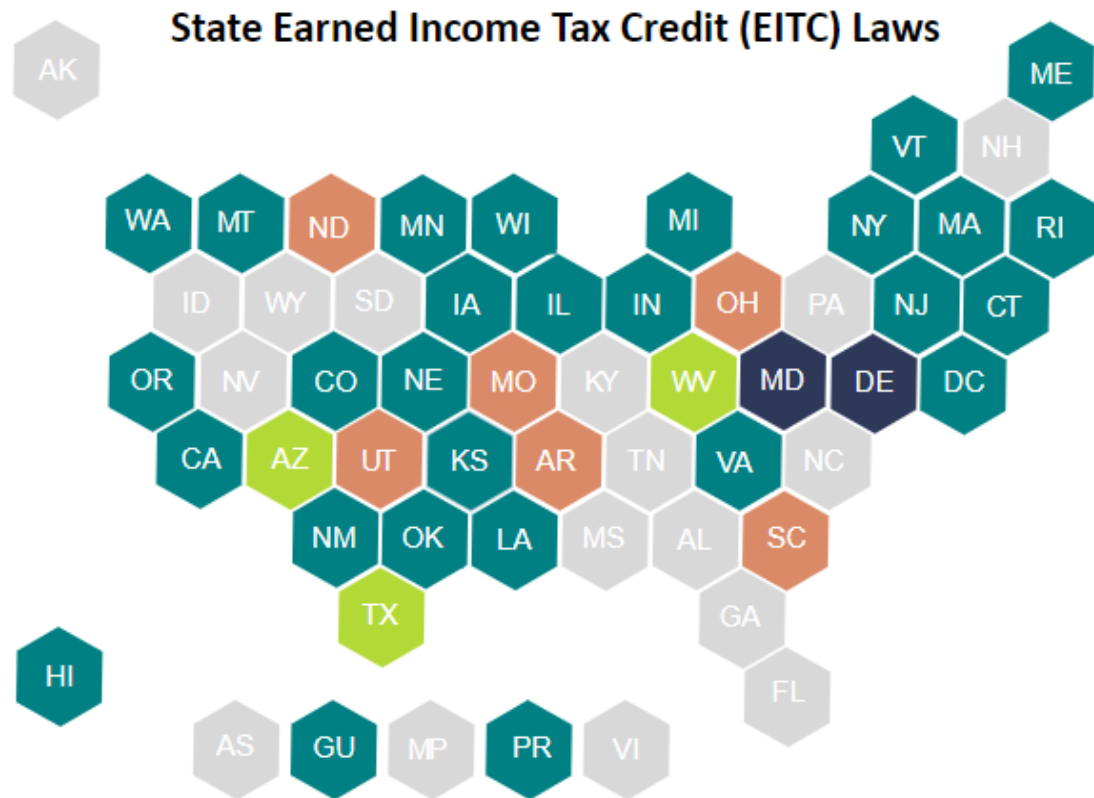
- If states without any EITC implemented a refundable EITC, an average of **668 fewer children would enter foster care** annually in each state

Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)



- 10% increase in the generosity of refundable state-level EITC benefits is associated with:
 - **5% decline in reported maltreatment rates**
 - **9% decline in reported neglect rates**
- Refundable state-level EITC (averaging \$400 per year) is associated with a **13% decrease in hospital admissions for abusive head trauma** for children < 2 years old* (*even after controlling for poverty, race, education & unemployment*)

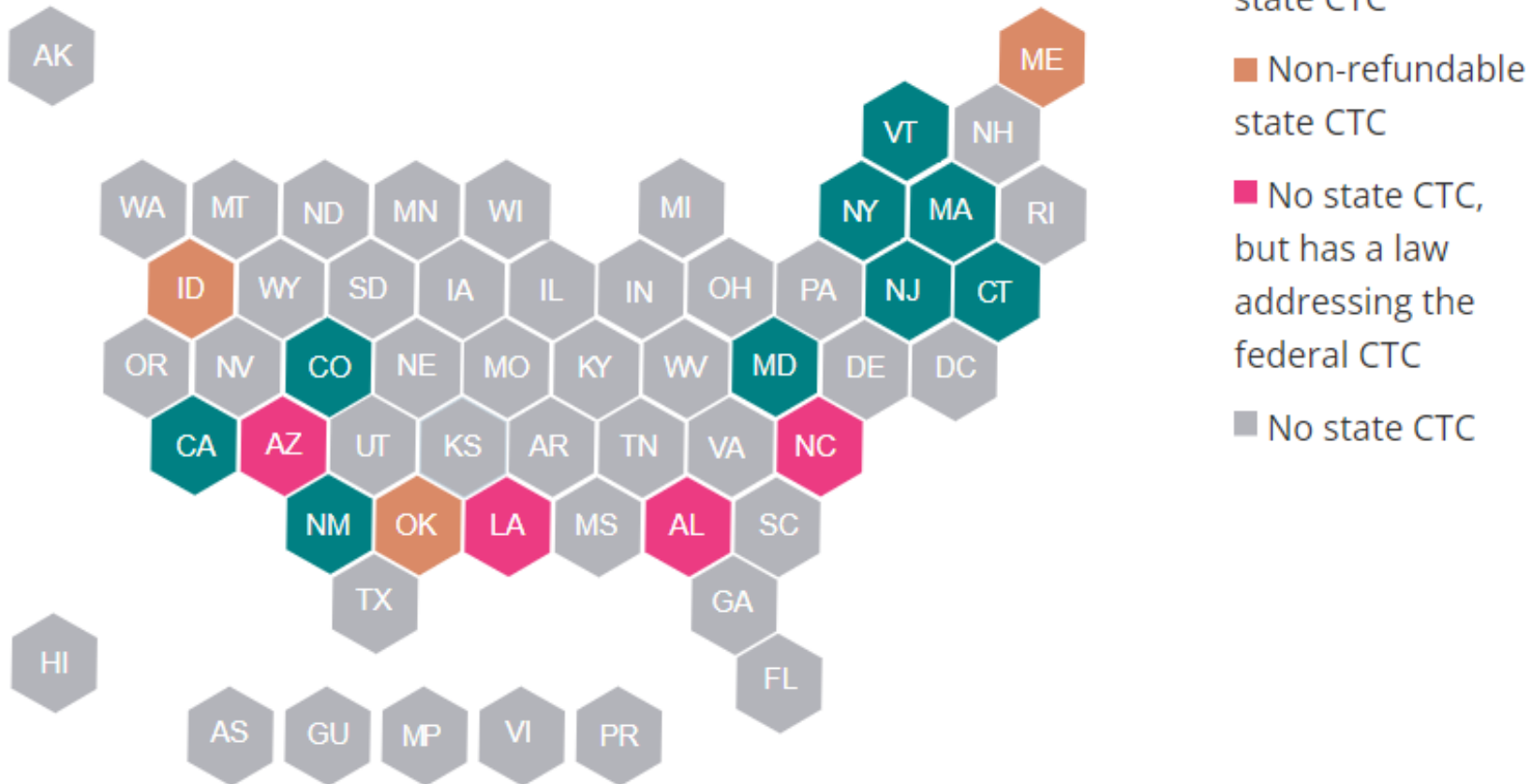
State Policy Option: Establish a State Earned Income Tax Credit



26 states, D.C., Guam & Puerto Rico
have a refundable EITC
(as of August 2022)

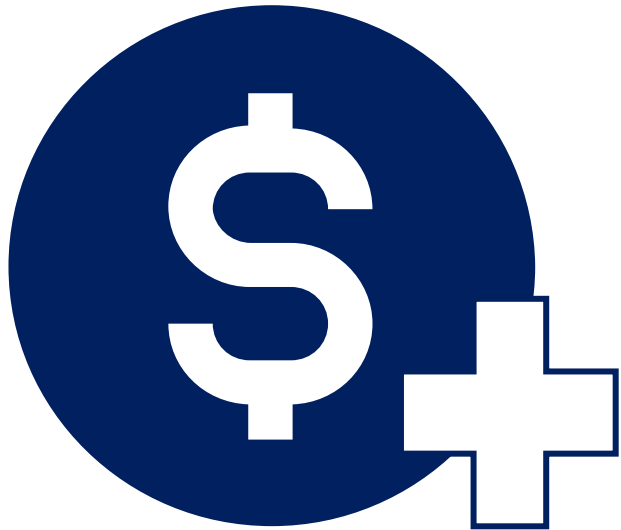
- Refundable state EITC
- Non-refundable state EITC
- Both refundable and non-refundable state EITC
- No state EITC, but has a law addressing the federal EITC
- No state EITC

State Policy Option: Establish a State Child Tax Credit



9 states have enacted a state-level refundable CTC
(as of November 2022)

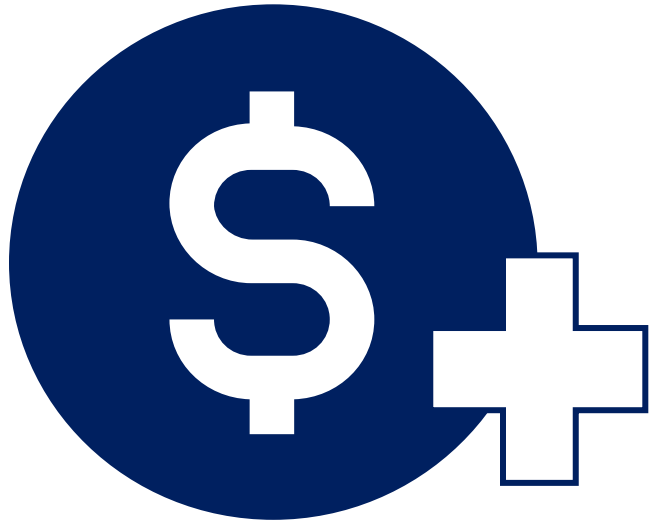
Minimum Wage



From 2004 to 2013:

- States that increased the minimum wage beyond \$7.25 per hour experienced a **decline in child maltreatment reports**
- Every \$1 increase in minimum wage was associated with a **9.6% decline in neglect reports** (*primarily for children < 12 years*)

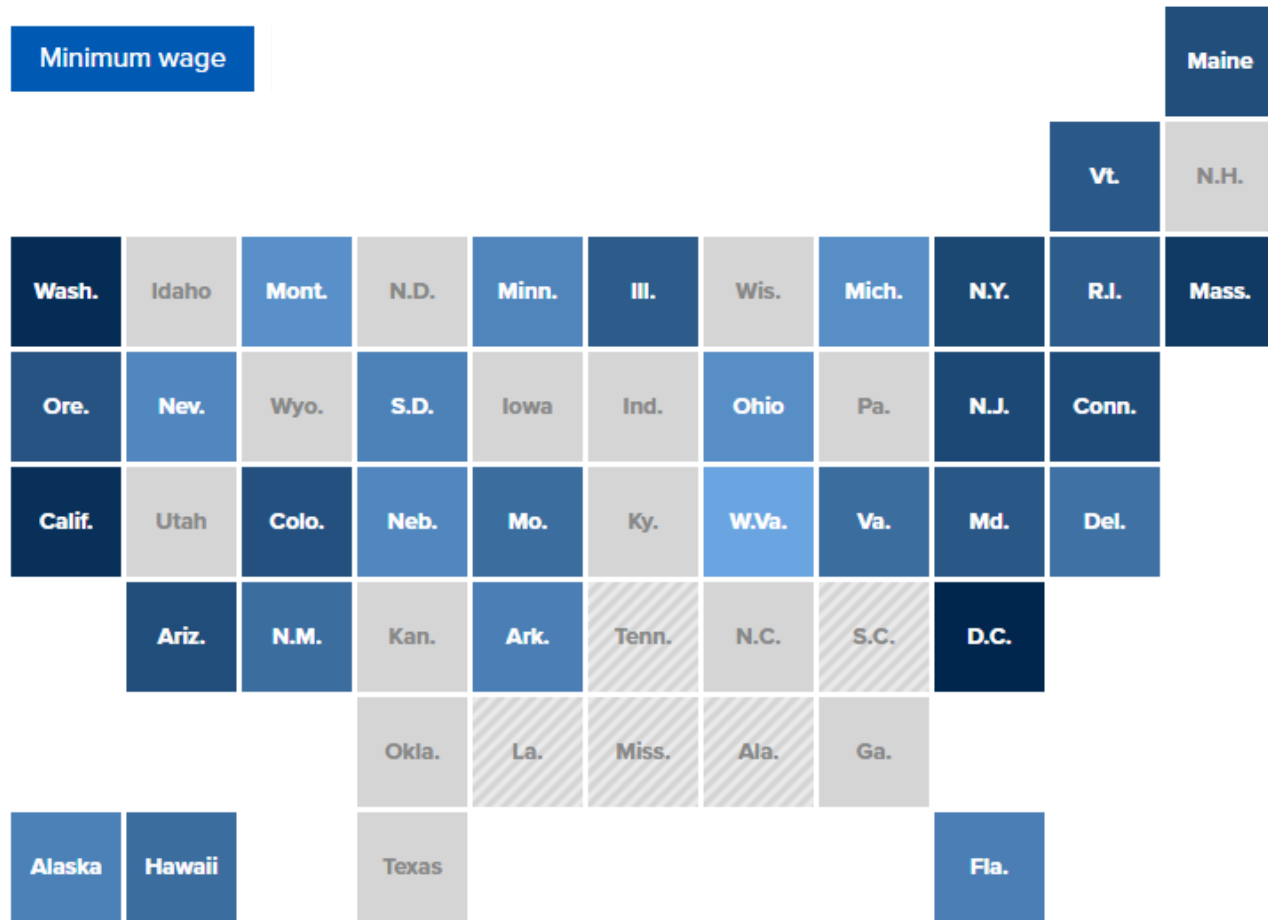
Minimum Wage



Increasing a city's minimum wage is associated with **reductions in self-reported physical & psychological aggression** by parents towards their children

(compared to cities that do not change minimum wage)

State Policy Option: Establish or Increase Minimum Wage



- **18 states + D.C.** have adopted minimum wages of \$12 or higher
- The current federal minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour is now **worth less than at any point since 1956**
- A worker paid the current federal minimum wage earns **40% less** than a minimum wage worker in 1968
(as of January 2023)

([EPI](#), 2022 - graphic)
([EPI](#), 2022)

Paid Family Leave (PFL)



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 **decrease in hospital admissions for abusive head trauma:**

- among children <1 year old and
- among children < 2 years old

State Policy Option: Establish Paid Family Leave Policies

7 states have adopted and fully implemented a paid family leave program of a minimum of 6 weeks following the birth, adoption, or the placement of a child into foster care.



2021: 6 states

State has newly adopted and implemented the policy since October 1, 2021

- **Less than 1 in 4** workers have access to paid family leave
- **11 states + D.C.** have adopted a statewide paid family leave program (but not all are fully implemented)
(as of 2022)

([Prenatal-to-3 Policy Impact Center \(PN3\)](#), 2022 - graphic) ([KFF](#), 2021)

Unemployment Benefits



States that extended the duration of unemployment benefits at the onset of the Great Recession saw **smaller increases in substantiated neglect reports**

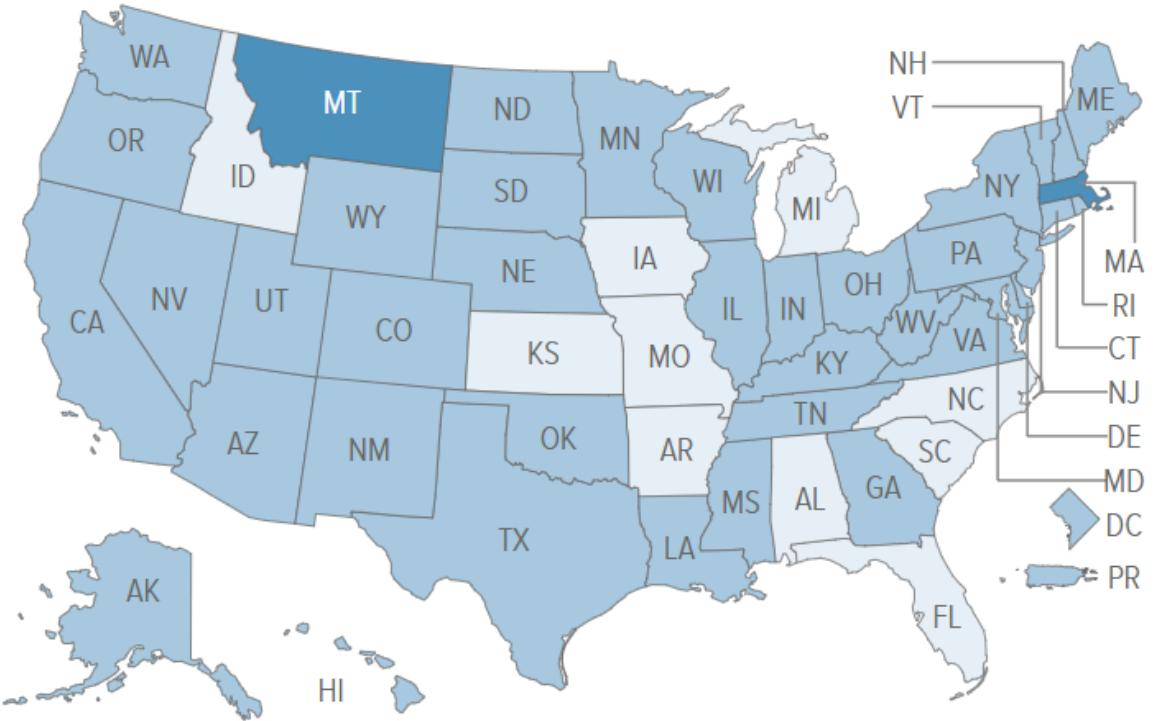
(compared to states that didn't extend unemployment benefits)

State Policy Option: Expand Unemployment Benefits

Weeks of Unemployment Insurance Available and Unemployment Rates

Maximum number of weeks of benefits available ▾

fewer than 26 weeks 26 weeks more than 26 weeks



Only **two states** provide more than 26 weeks of unemployment benefits
(as of November 2022)

Source: Congressional Research Service, Department of Labor

([CBPP](#), 2022- graphic)

Medicaid Expansion



The rate of **screened-in neglect reports for children < age 6 decreased** in states that expanded Medicaid, but increased in states that did not expand Medicaid
(from 2013 to 2016)

- If non-expansion states had expanded Medicaid, there would have been almost **125,000 fewer screened-in neglect referrals for children < age 6** in the U.S.
(from 2014 through 2016)

Medicaid expansion is associated **with improved economic stability & mental health** for parents who are low income

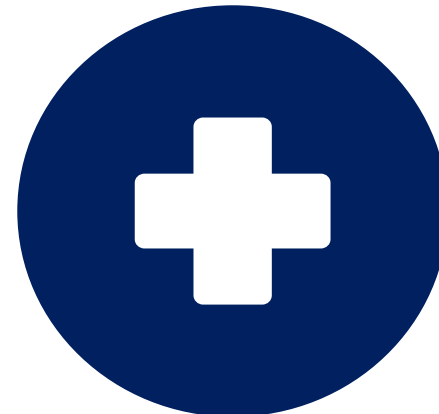
Medicaid Expansion

States that newly **expanded Medicaid** in 2014 were associated with **reductions in the average rate of child neglect reports** per state-year:

- **13% reduction** for children ages 0-5
- **15% reduction** for children ages 6-12
- **16% reduction** for children ages 13–17

(compared to states that did not expand Medicaid from 2008 to 2018)

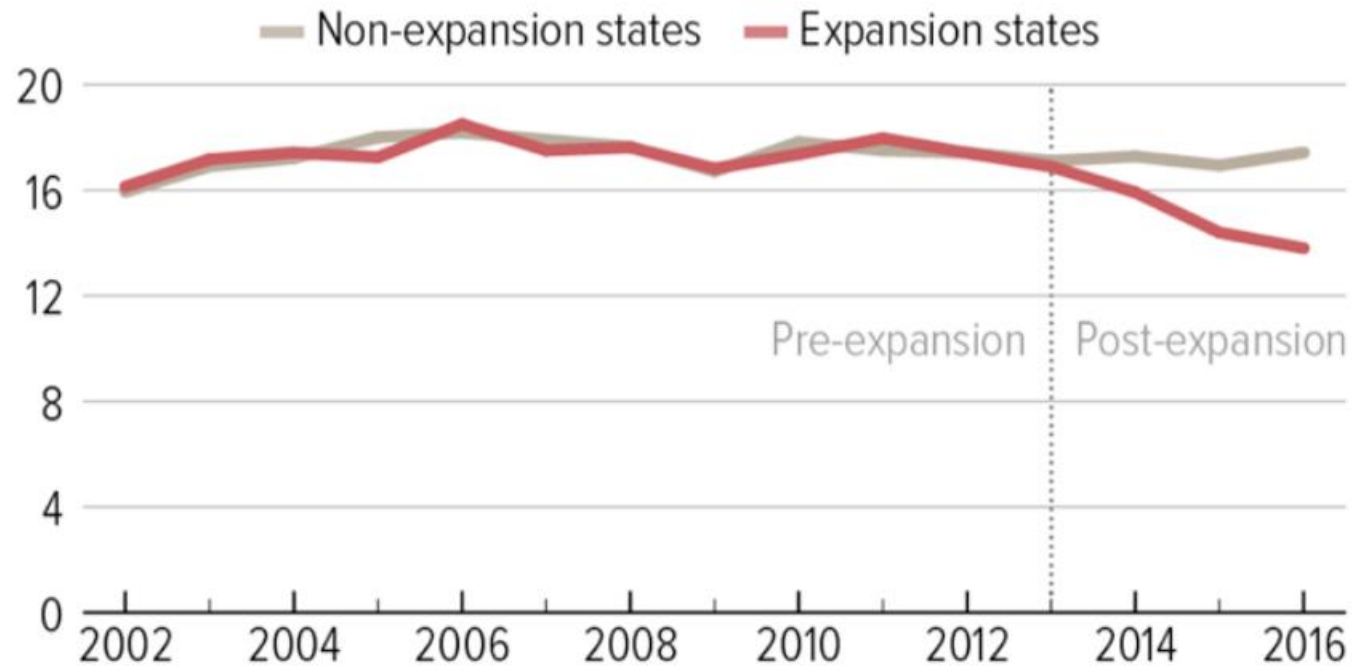
- Almost **60% of uninsured children** are eligible for Medicaid/Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)
- **7.6% of children** in non-expansion states, compared to 3.8% of children in expansion states, are uninsured
(as of 2019)



Medicaid Expansion & Housing Stability

Evictions Fell Sharply in Medicaid Expansion States

Evictions per 1,000 renter-occupied households



Source: Zewde et al, "The Effect of the ACA Medicaid Expansion on Nationwide Home Evictions and Eviction-Court Initiations," 2019

- Medicaid expansion is a **key strategy** for addressing housing instability for people with low incomes
- **Evictions fell by 20%** in Medicaid expansion states compared to non-expansion states
- By providing enrollees with **financial protection from high medical bills**, Medicaid can free up income to pay rent or to avoid eviction

State Policy Option: Expand Medicaid

39

states have adopted and fully implemented the Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act that includes coverage for most adults with incomes up to 138% of the federal poverty level.



2021: 39 states

**South Dakota newly voted to expand Medicaid*

About **4.3 million uninsured adults** would become newly eligible for Medicaid if all non-expansion states expanded income eligibility for Medicaid to 138% of the federal poverty line

(as of 2019)

([Prenatal-to-3 Policy Impact Center \(PN3\)](#), 2022 - graphic) ([KFF](#), 2021)

State Policy Option: Leverage Opportunities to Use Medicaid Funding to Address Social Determinants of Health



North Carolina – [Healthy Opportunities](#) (2022)

California – [CalAIM](#) (2022)

Oregon – [Oregon Health Plan](#) (2022)

Medicaid waivers shifting to a population health approach prioritize prevention & social determinants of health

- Provide non-medical supports related to **housing, food & transportation** for those with complex needs
- Improve individual & community health

Social Determinants of Health



Medicaid - Continuity of Benefits

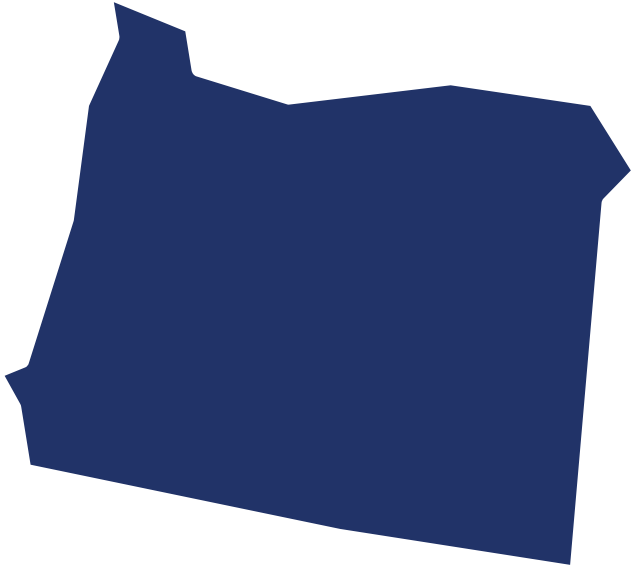


States with policies that facilitate **continuity of eligibility** for Medicaid/Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) are associated with **lower child maltreatment investigation rates**

(compared to states without continuous eligibility)

- About **11% of children** enrolled in Medicaid/CHIP experience a gap in coverage of less than a year *(as of 2018)*
- Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 requires states to provide children with **12 months of continuous coverage** when they enroll in Medicaid/CHIP regardless of changes in circumstances *(effective early 2024)*

State Policy Option: Leverage Opportunities to Use Medicaid Funding For Continuity of Care



Oregon – [Medicaid Waiver](#) (approved 2022)

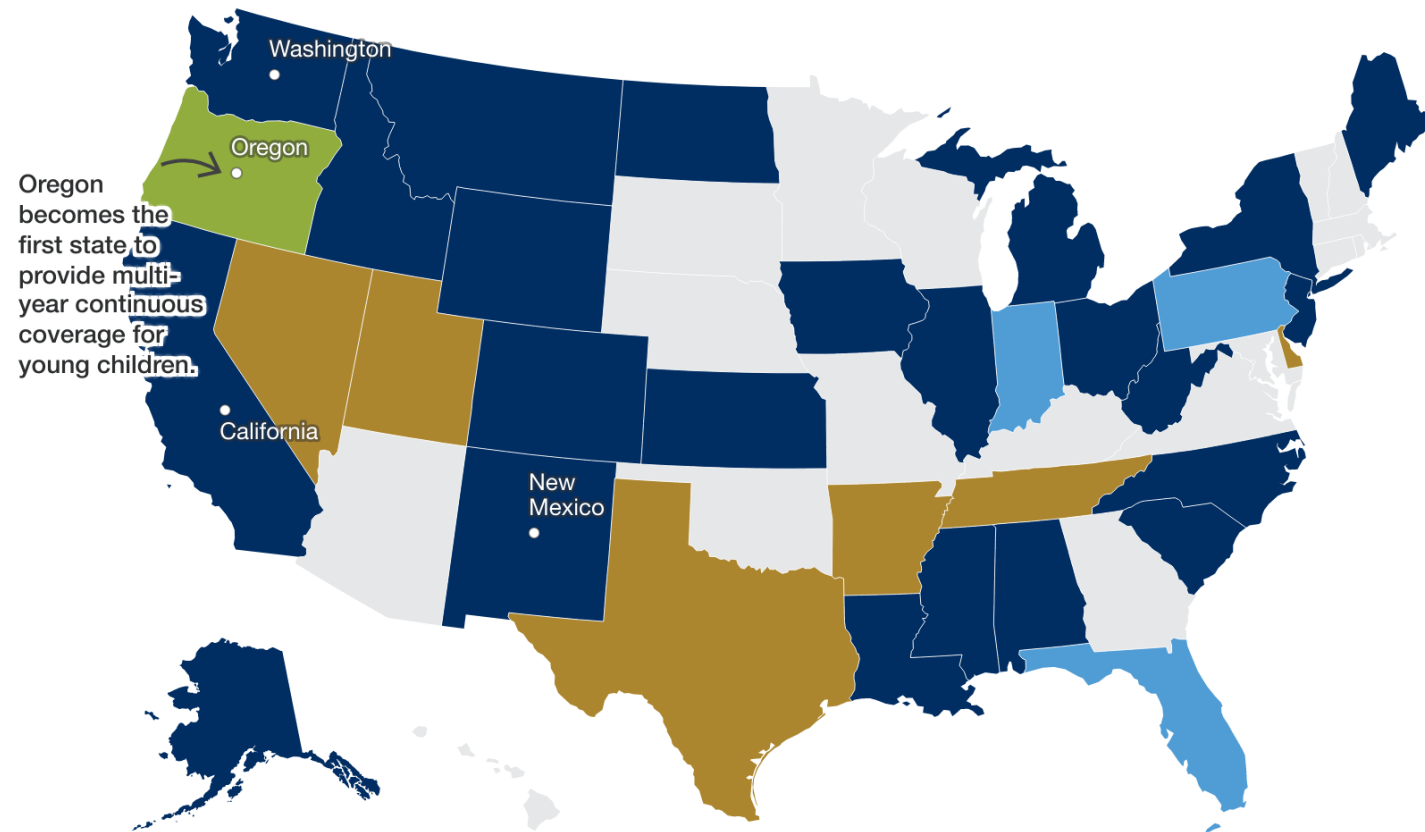
- First state in the nation to receive federal approval for **continuous Medicaid coverage for children until age 6**
- Individuals ages 6+ will have **two years of continuous Medicaid enrollment**, even if their household income fluctuates

State Policy Option: Expand Continuous Coverage for Children in Medicaid & CHIP

12-Month Continuous Eligibility for Children in Medicaid and CHIP

12-Month Continuous Eligibility for Children under 19

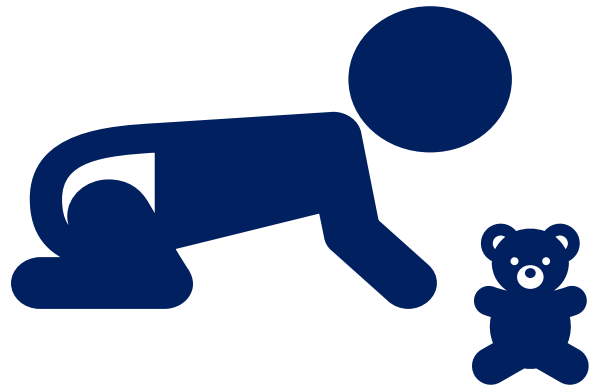
- Multi-year continuous eligibility for young children
- 12-month continuous child eligibility
- 12-month continuous child eligibility (CHIP only)
- 12-month continuous child eligibility for some
- No 12-month continuous child eligibility



Washington, New Mexico & California are seeking to join Oregon in offering children multi-year continuous Medicaid and CHIP coverage through Medicaid waivers

(CCF, 2022 - graphic)

Child Care Subsidies



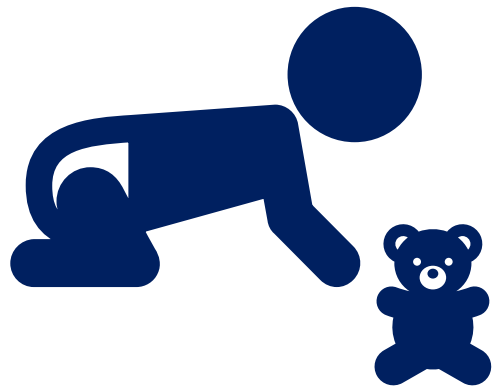
States with Child Care & Development Fund (CCDF) program policies that make child care subsidies more accessible to child welfare-supervised families are associated with **lower child removal rates** *(compared to other states)*

Child Care Subsidies

Each additional month that mothers who are low income receive a child care subsidy is associated with:

- **16% decrease** in the odds of a neglect report
- **14% decrease** in the odds of a physical abuse report

(in the following 12 months)

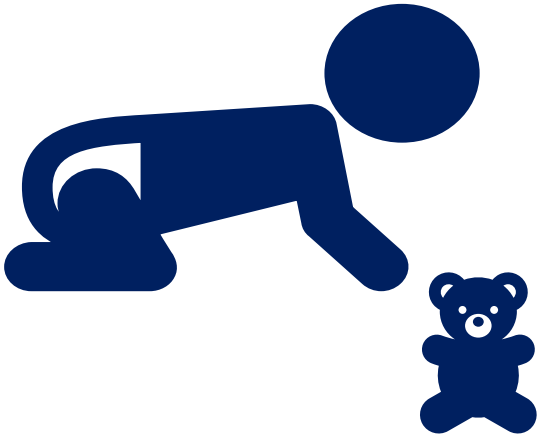


Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 included a **30% increase** in funding for the Child Care & Development Block Grant (CCDBG)

Child Care

Child care investments* included in [Build Back Better](#) (proposed 2020-2021) would be associated with a:

- **6.4% reduction** in CPS investigations
- **6% reduction** in substantiated child maltreatment
- **3.1% reduction** in foster care placements
- **11.6% reduction** in child fatalities due to maltreatment

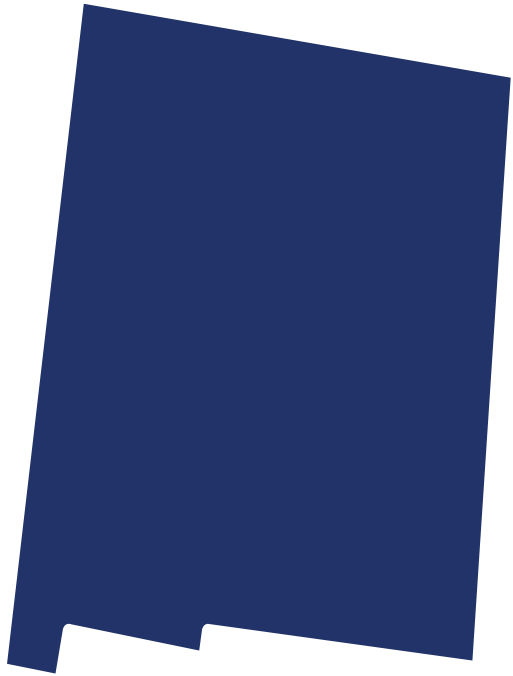


State Policy Option:

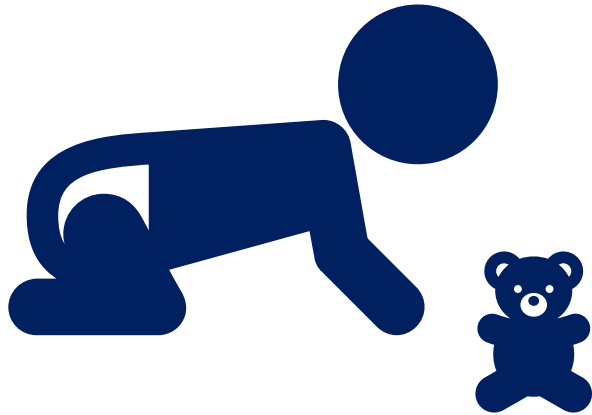
Increasing Access to Child Care for Families

New Mexico

- From 2022 to 2023, **child care will be free for most families** (*family of four earning up to about \$111,000*)
- Goal is to develop a **free, universal child care system**
 - In November 2022, New Mexico overwhelmingly approved a ballot measure guaranteeing a **constitutional right to early childhood education**
 - It will create a **dedicated funding stream** (*from the state's Land Grant Permanent Fund*) for universal preschool and child care & bolster home-visiting programs for new parents



High-Quality Child Care



Helps prevent child maltreatment

- ✓ Children who participated in Chicago Child-Parent Center preschool:
 - **52% less likely** to be victims of confirmed maltreatment by age 17
 - **Lower rates of reported neglect** (*compared to non-participating peers*)

Reduces likelihood of child welfare involvement

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

Reduces likelihood of foster care entry

- ✓ Children (ages 0–5) who participated in Head Start & were referred to child welfare for suspected maltreatment were **93% less likely to enter foster care** (*compared to children who did not receive any early childhood education service*)

Less than one-third of young children under child welfare supervision who live at home receive any early childhood education services

State Policy Option: Level of Investment in High-Quality Child Care

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 legal costs

Improved health & healthy behaviors

Direct investments in the **health & education of children who are low-income** 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*)

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% vs. 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% fewer foster care placements**

(1.9% vs. 5% in the control group experienced at least 1 placement in the last 6 months)

- Lower rates of psychological distress
- Less intimate partner violence
- Fewer child behavior problems
- Greater housing stability & food security

(compared to a business-as-usual control group of homeless families at the 20-month follow-up)



State Policy Option: Connect Head Start Families to Housing Supports

Connecticut

Head Start on Housing Program (2022)

Cross-agency collaboration that provides **federal housing vouchers** to families with young children participating in Head Start programs



State Policy Option: Provide Short-Term Housing Support to Families Involved with Child Welfare

Wisconsin – [Family Keys Pilot Program](#) (2022)

Provides **short-term housing funds** to families with children at risk of removal due to housing insecurity & to families unable to reunify due to inadequate housing

- Short-term housing funds will be used for **hotel costs, short-term rentals & expenses related to finding and maintaining housing** (*security deposits, housing application fees, utility costs*)



Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)

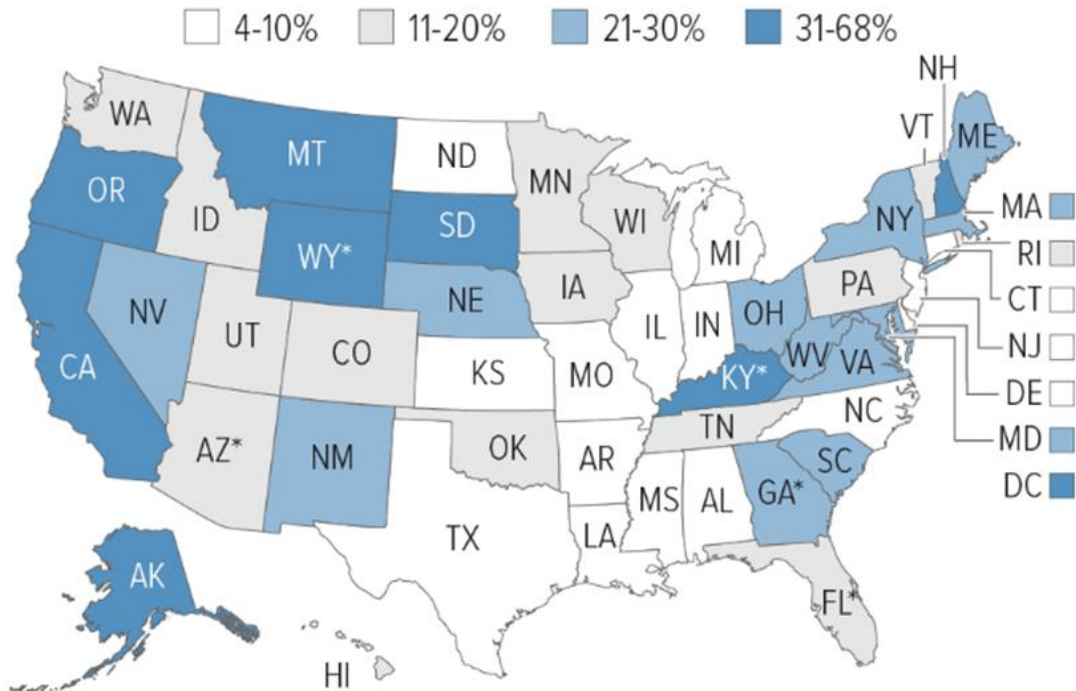


A 10% increase in state public benefit levels (*AFDC/TANF + the value of food stamps*) for a family of four is predicted to **reduce foster care placements by 8%**

State Policy Option: Increase TANF Spending on Cash Assistance

Most States Spend Small Share of TANF Funds on Basic Assistance to Help Families

Share of TANF funds spent on basic assistance, 2020



*Relative foster care payments and adoption/guardianship subsidies make up more than half of basic assistance spending by these states.

Note: TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

Source: CBPP analysis of 2020 Department of Health and Human Services TANF financial data

- **15 states** spend **<10%** of TANF funds on basic assistance
- **41% of Black children** live in states that spend **<10%** of TANF funds on basic assistance

Find out how your state spends its TANF funds:

<https://www.cbpp.org/research/family-income-support/state-factsheets-how-states-spend-funds-under-the-tanf-block-grant>

(CBPP, 2022)

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)

Easing TANF restrictions is associated with:

- Fewer children with substantiated neglect
- Fewer children placed into foster care



- An estimated **29,112 fewer** children would have entered foster care nationally from 2004 to 2016 if states had eased TANF restrictions to increase access for families

TANF policy choices reviewed in this study included:

- Time limits of less than 60 months
- Severe sanctions for not meeting work requirements
- Work requirements for mothers with children < 12 months
- Suspicion-based drug testing of applicants

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)

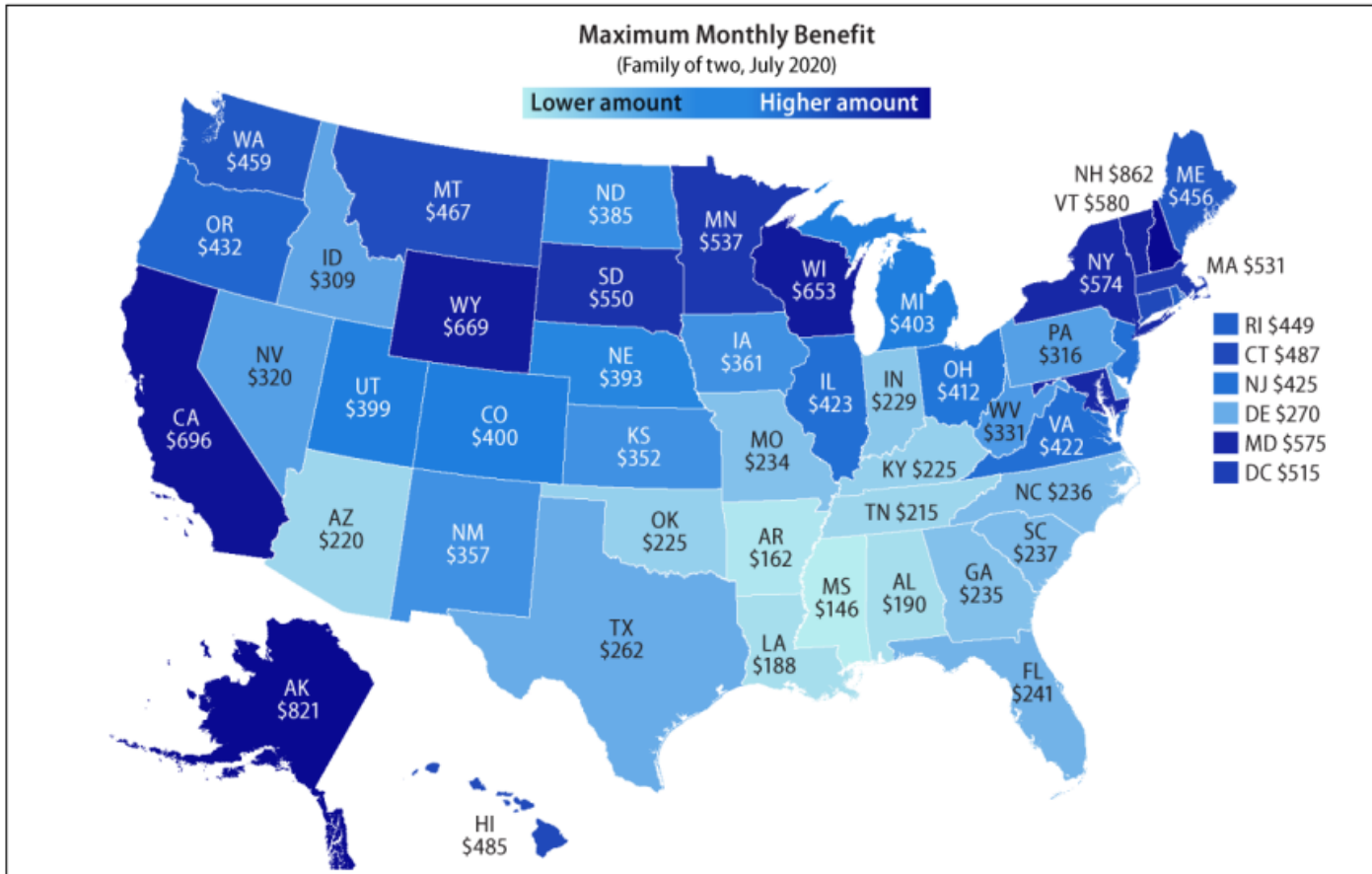


State policies that increase access to TANF are associated with **reductions in maternal self-reported physical child maltreatment**

- A \$100 increase in TANF cash benefits is associated with reductions in maternal self-reported physical child maltreatment

State Policy Option: Increase TANF Cash Assistance Benefit Amounts

Figure 3. TANF Cash Assistance Maximum Monthly Benefit Amounts for a Single-Parent Family with One Child, 50 States and the District of Columbia, July 2020



TANF cash benefit amounts are determined solely by states

- For a family of 2, maximum benefit amount varies from \$146 to \$862 per month (as of July 2020)
- Only **two states** have a maximum benefit amount > 50% of the federal poverty line (FPL)
- Although several states increased cash benefit amounts in 2021, benefits in most states remain at their **lowest value** since the program was created in 1996
- **48% of Black children** live in states with benefit amounts below 20% of the FPL, compared to 35% of white children

(CRS, 2022)

(CBPP, 2023)

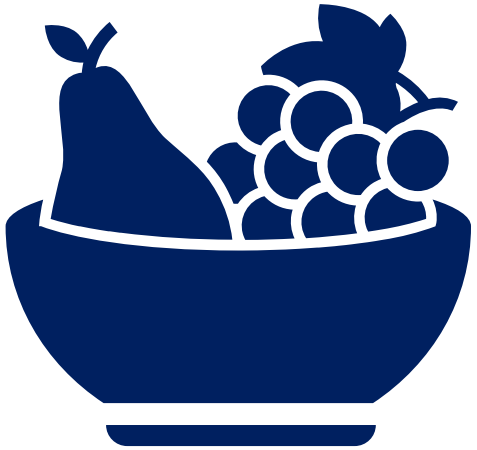
State Policy Option: Provide Concrete Supports through TANF Home Visiting Program



California – [SB 187](#) (effective 2022)

Increases the amount from \$500 to **\$1,000 for a one-time payment** for the purchase of material goods to families participating in the TANF home visiting program

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)



From 2006 to 2019, states that adopted both policies to **expand SNAP eligibility** under broad-based categorical eligibility (BBCE)

- ✓ **Increasing income limit for eligibility**
- ✓ **Eliminating the asset test**

were associated with **decreases in the number of CPS-investigated reports**

(on average, 9.3 fewer investigated reports per 1,000 children each year, than if these states had not adopted both policies)

*"...state adoption of these SNAP policies has the potential to contribute to reductions in CPS involvement at the **population level.**"*

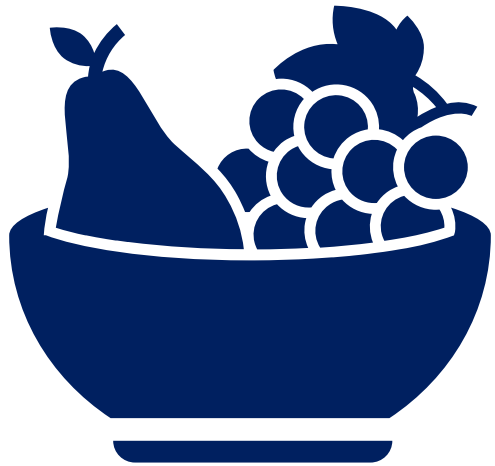
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

(slide 1 of 2)

States with **more generous SNAP policies** experienced:

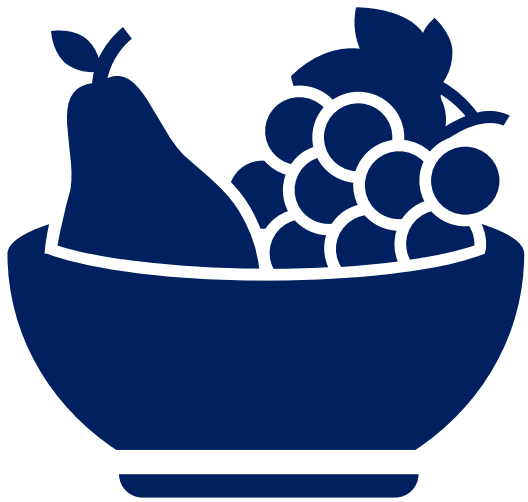
- Large reductions in CPS reports
(reduction of 352 reports per 100,000 children)*
- Fewer substantiated reports, particularly for neglect
- Fewer foster care placements

(from 2004 to 2016, compared to states with less generous SNAP policies)



Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

(slide 2 of 2)



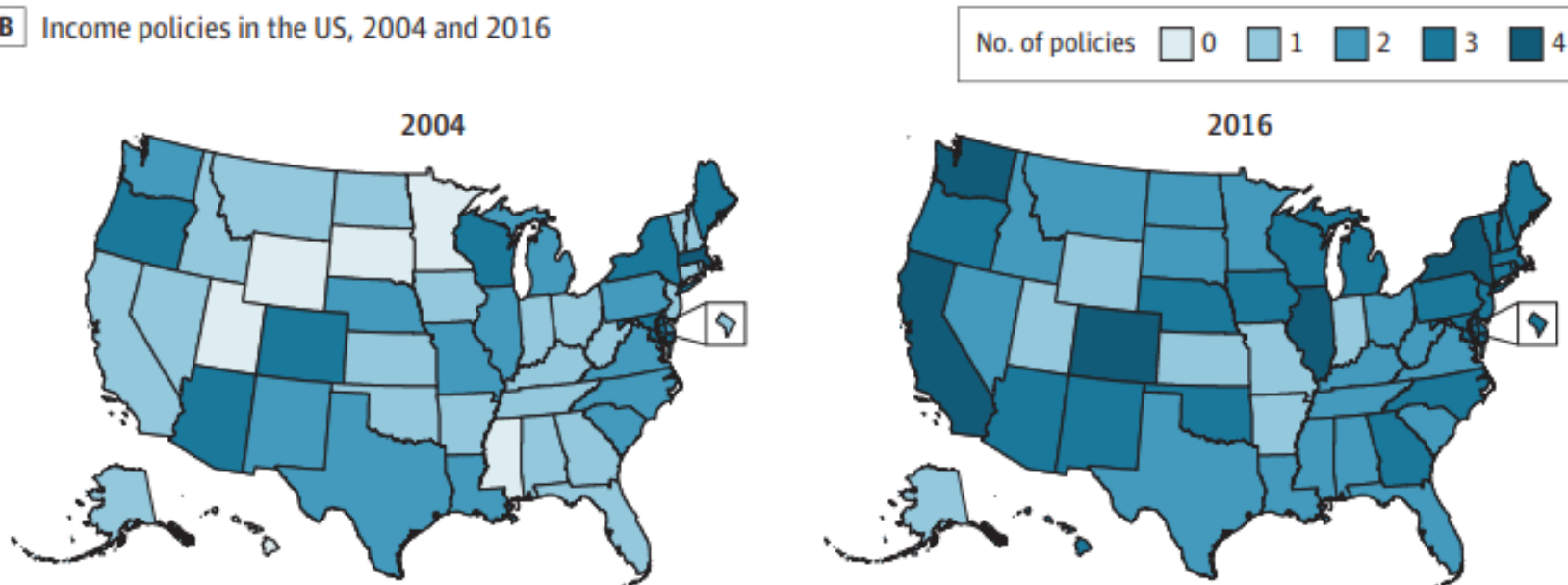
From 2004 to 2016:

- Every 5% increase in the number of families receiving SNAP benefits was associated with an **8% to 14% reduction in CPS & foster care caseloads**
- **Cumulative effect:** implementation of *multiple* more generous SNAP policies was associated with *larger reductions* in child welfare involvement
- Estimated reductions in CPS reports & substantiations were **particularly large** among states offering *transitional SNAP benefits to families leaving TANF*

State Policy Option: Implement More Generous SNAP Policies

Adoption of More Generous SNAP Policies Over Time

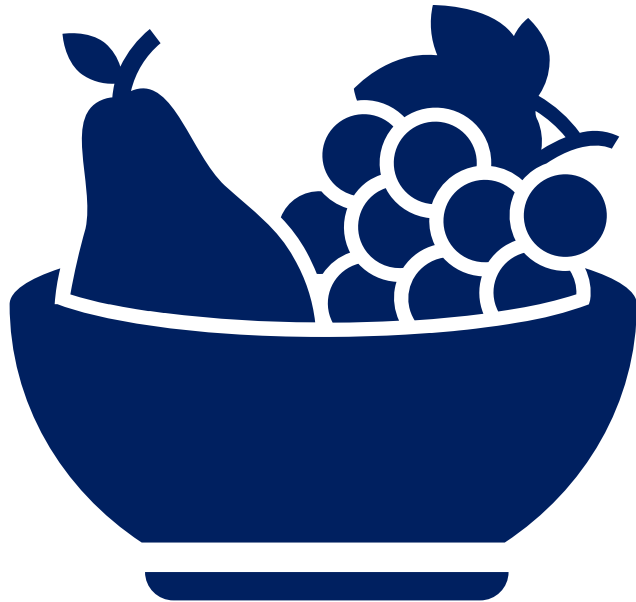
B Income policies in the US, 2004 and 2016



SNAP policy choices reviewed in this study:

- Increasing income limits under broad-based categorical eligibility (BBCE)
- Excluding legally obligated child support payments from total income
- Providing transitional SNAP benefits to families leaving TANF
- Using simplified reporting option for changes in household circumstances

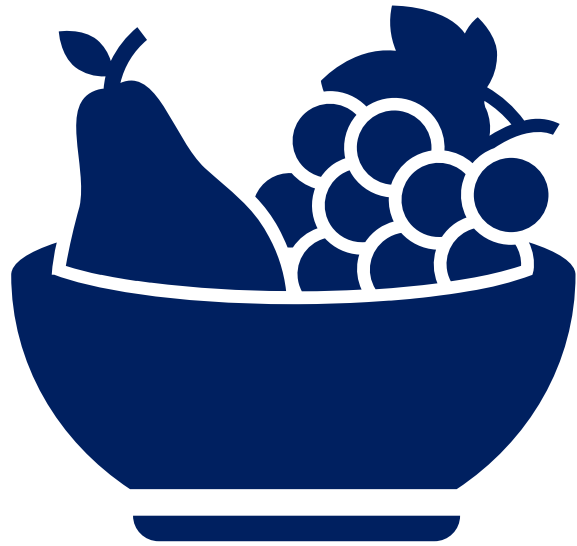
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)



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

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



Children from low-income families who participate in SNAP or WIC (jointly or alone) have a **lower risk of substantiated maltreatment reports**

(compared to children from low-income families who don't participate in either program)

State Policy Option: Reduce the Administrative Burden for SNAP

33

states have implemented a combination of policies to reduce the administrative burden for SNAP.



- Administrative burdens are barriers that increase the costs - **time, money & psychological distress** - of applying for and maintaining enrollment in public benefit programs
- For SNAP, **longer recertification intervals, online application materials & simplified income reporting** can reduce administrative burden and increase participation

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 without any concrete supports, are **less likely to experience a subsequent maltreatment report*** (43.2% v. 52.7%)

(concrete supports included housing, rent, utilities, food or clothing, appliances, furniture or home repair & other financial help)

Under Differential Response, families with screened-in CPS reports who are determined not to be high risk are diverted from CPS investigations and instead connected with services & supports to meet their needs

Differential Response with Concrete Supports

(slide 2 of 2)



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

- **Accepted maltreatment reports**
- **Child removals & placements**

Family Preservation with Concrete Supports



Families with open child welfare cases (mostly neglect) who receive a home-based services program with concrete supports are **17% less likely to experience a subsequent child maltreatment report** (during the first year)

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

Family Preservation with Concrete Supports

For families who report *difficulty paying bills* prior to receiving a home-based services program with concrete supports:



- Provision of clothing/furniture/supplies or housing assistance is associated with a reduced likelihood of **subsequent substantiated maltreatment**
- Provision of cash assistance or clothing/furniture/supplies is associated with a reduced likelihood of a **subsequent foster care placement**

State Policy Option: Provide Economic & Concrete Supports through Family Preservation Program

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



Families whose children are at risk of removal due to **lack of food, clothing, housing or other basic human needs** are referred by child welfare to this family preservation program which provides:

- **Emergency cash assistance** for:
Security deposit and/or first month's rent • Housing repairs • Utilities • Food • Clothing • Furniture and/or equipment • Transportation
- Assistance finding **housing**
- **Waiver to allow families to apply for TANF** if working towards reunification

State Policy Option: Provide Concrete Supports through Family Preservation Program



From SFY 2019 to SFY 2021



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



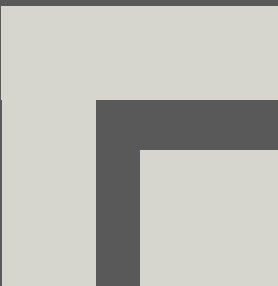
Out-of-home care expenditures decreased by **\$58.1 million**

Kentucky – SFY 2022 budget
State budget included **\$1,000 in flexible funds** for families participating in Kentucky’s family preservation program to meet concrete needs & prevent removal

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

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

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



almost 70%

of families with incomes below 200% of the federal poverty line report experiencing a **material hardship** in the past year
(difficulty paying for housing, utilities, food or medical care)

Of these families:

61% experienced a **financial shock** in the past year

Relationship Between Material Hardship & Mental Health

(Sareen, 2011)
(Austin, 2017)
(Lanzi, 1999)
(Heflin, 2009)
(Manual, 2012)

Living with low income is associated with increased risk for poor mental health

Low-income mothers with young children are at particularly increased risk of depression



Studies estimate between **16% and 48%** of low-income mothers with young children suffer from clinically significant depression

Longitudinal studies indicate that *material hardship*, in particular, is associated with & precedes poor mental health

Among low-income mothers with young children, experiencing a material hardship in the last 12 months is associated with an increased risk for depression



For these mothers, the risk of depression increases with a **greater number** of material hardships reported

Economic Supports Are Associated With Improved Maternal Mental Health

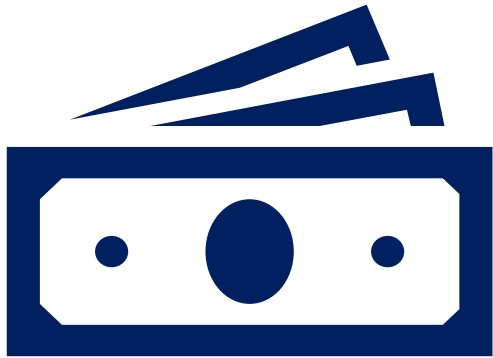


- After the 1993 Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) expansion substantially increased the benefit level for families with 2 or more children:
 - Mothers (with a high school degree or lower) who were eligible for the EITC and had 2 or more children self-reported **larger improvements in mental health & reductions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

(Evans, 2014)

(Milligan, 2011)

Stockton Guaranteed Income Program (2019–2021)



With their monthly cash payment, recipients spent:

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

125 low-income residents of Stockton, CA were randomly selected to receive \$500 per month for 2 years

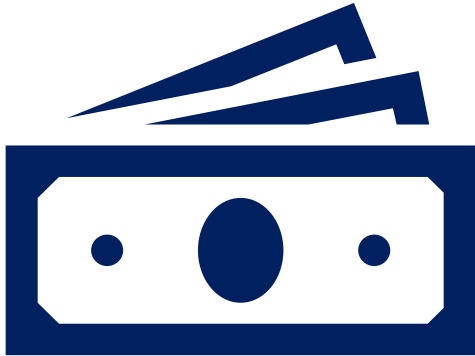
After 1 year, compared to the control group who didn't receive the payment, recipients experienced:

- ✓ **Improved financial stability**
- ✓ **Improved adult mental health**

Recipients also experienced:

- ✓ **Improved employment**
 - 28% of recipients had full-time jobs at start → one year later, 40% had full-time jobs

Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Family Cash Transfer Program (1996 – present)



Cumulative effect: At age 30, children whose families had received the supplement for the longest duration & for the largest amounts (*due to having multiple Tribal member parents*) reported:

- ✓ Lowest levels of psychiatric symptoms
- ✓ Highest levels of physical health & financial well-being

Every Tribal member receives an **annual income supplement** from casino profits of approximately \$5,000 (*child supplements are paid into trust fund until high school graduation*)

Longitudinal studies find children in Tribal families have:

✓ Improved mental health & well-being as adults

- At age 21, they were **less likely to have substance use issues & psychiatric disorders**
- At age 30, they reported **less anxiety & depression** and **better physical health**

✓ Improved financial well-being as adults

✓ Improved educational attainment

- For Tribal children in the poorest households before the program was established, an extra \$4,000 in annual household income **increased their educational attainment by 1 year**

(compared to nontribal adults in same community)

(Copeland, 2022)

(Akee, 2010)

(Costello, 2003)

(Costello, 2010)

Baby's First Years (2019–present)



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

- 1,000 low-income mothers of newborns were randomly assigned to receive *either* \$333 monthly unconditional cash payment *or* 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)

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 use prevention intervention*
- **Stockton & Baby's First Years** unconditional cash transfer recipients spent less than 1% of payments on tobacco & alcohol

State Policy Option: Provide Economic Supports for Families At Risk For Child Welfare Involvement

Washington State

Cash Grants: Family COVID Relief (2022)



- Allocated **\$5.5 million** of Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds to support families **at risk for child maltreatment** who were negatively impacted by COVID
- One-time \$250 cash grant per child to be provided directly to families in a manner that **increases accessibility**

Economic and Concrete Supports as the Evidence-based Service:

*Is attending to economic & concrete supports
in evidence-based programs more of the
active ingredient than currently understood?*



Services on Prevention Clearinghouse that Include Economic & Concrete Supports or Navigation to Resources

- ✓ **Homebuilders** (*rated well-supported*): Parenting intervention provides flex funds for family
- ✓ **Multisystemic Therapy** (*rated well-supported*): Mental health & substance use intervention provides flex funds for family
- ✓ **Intercept** (*rated well-supported*): Parenting intervention provides flex funds for family
- ✓ **Community Reinforcement Approach + Vouchers** (*rated promising*): Substance use intervention provides vouchers as incentives for sustaining abstinence, redeemable for material goods & experiences
- ✓ **Healthy Families America** (*rated well-supported*): Parenting intervention provides referral and coordination of services for families, including financial, food, housing assistance & child care
- ✓ **Child First** (*rated supported*): Parenting & mental health intervention requires care coordinator to assist families in accessing services such as SNAP, WIC, housing

Impact of Concrete Supports in Homebuilders

Evaluation of Homebuilders found that for families who reported *difficulty paying bills* prior to receiving this home-based program, which provides **emergency cash assistance & concrete supports** (based on family need):

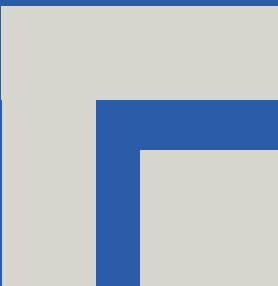


- Increases in the provision of housing assistance or clothing/furniture/supplies was associated with **reduced likelihood of subsequent maltreatment**
- Increases in the provision of cash assistance or clothing/furniture/supplies was associated with **reduced likelihood of foster care entry**

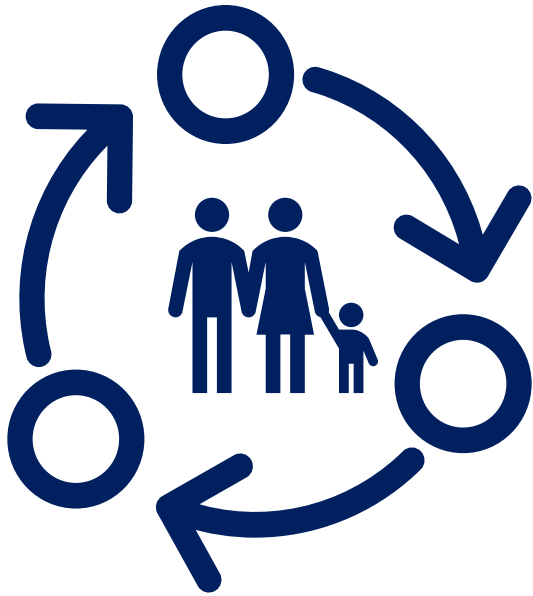
(Ryan, 2004)

(see also Fraser, 1991)

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



Context & Economic Factors Matter



- Economic factors are associated with neglect outcomes **above** individual-level parenting behaviors & capacities
- 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.”*

(Slack, 2011)

(Yang, 2015)

(Escaravage, 2014)

Higher Income Inequality Is Associated with Higher Child Maltreatment Rates



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

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

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 bottom of income ladder in childhood to top in adulthood is associated with **2.3% fewer maltreatment reports**

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

(Bullinger, 2021)

(Chetty, 2019)

County Spending on Prevention Services is Associated with Individual Maltreatment Investigations



Mothers receiving WIC benefits 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)

- The effect of county prevention spending on individual maltreatment investigations is **irrespective of actual receipt of prevention services**

Prevention services included in study:

- 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

Connecting Families to Resources via Universal Home Visiting to Reduce Child Maltreatment at Population Level



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

- **Focuses on addressing material needs:** 1–3 home visits to assess family needs, connect families to community resources, and provide education & intervention as needed
- **Randomized clinical trials** of all families with births in selected hospitals in Durham, NC over a 6-month period found that families randomly assigned to FC experienced:
 - **More positive maternal mental health** (at age 6 months)*
 - **44% lower rate of CPS investigations** (through age 2)
 - **39% fewer CPS investigations** (through age 5)

*“The findings... suggest that, when implemented with high quality & broad reach, a brief postpartum nurse home visiting program can **reduce population rates of child maltreatment**.”*

(Goodman, 2021)(RCT) *(compared to families who didn't receive FC)*
(Dodge, 2019)(RCT)

** Approaches statistical significance*

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% reduction in child maltreatment reports
- 4% reduction in substantiated child maltreatment
- 2% reduction in foster care placements
- 8% reduction in child fatalities due to maltreatment

(independent of federal spending)

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

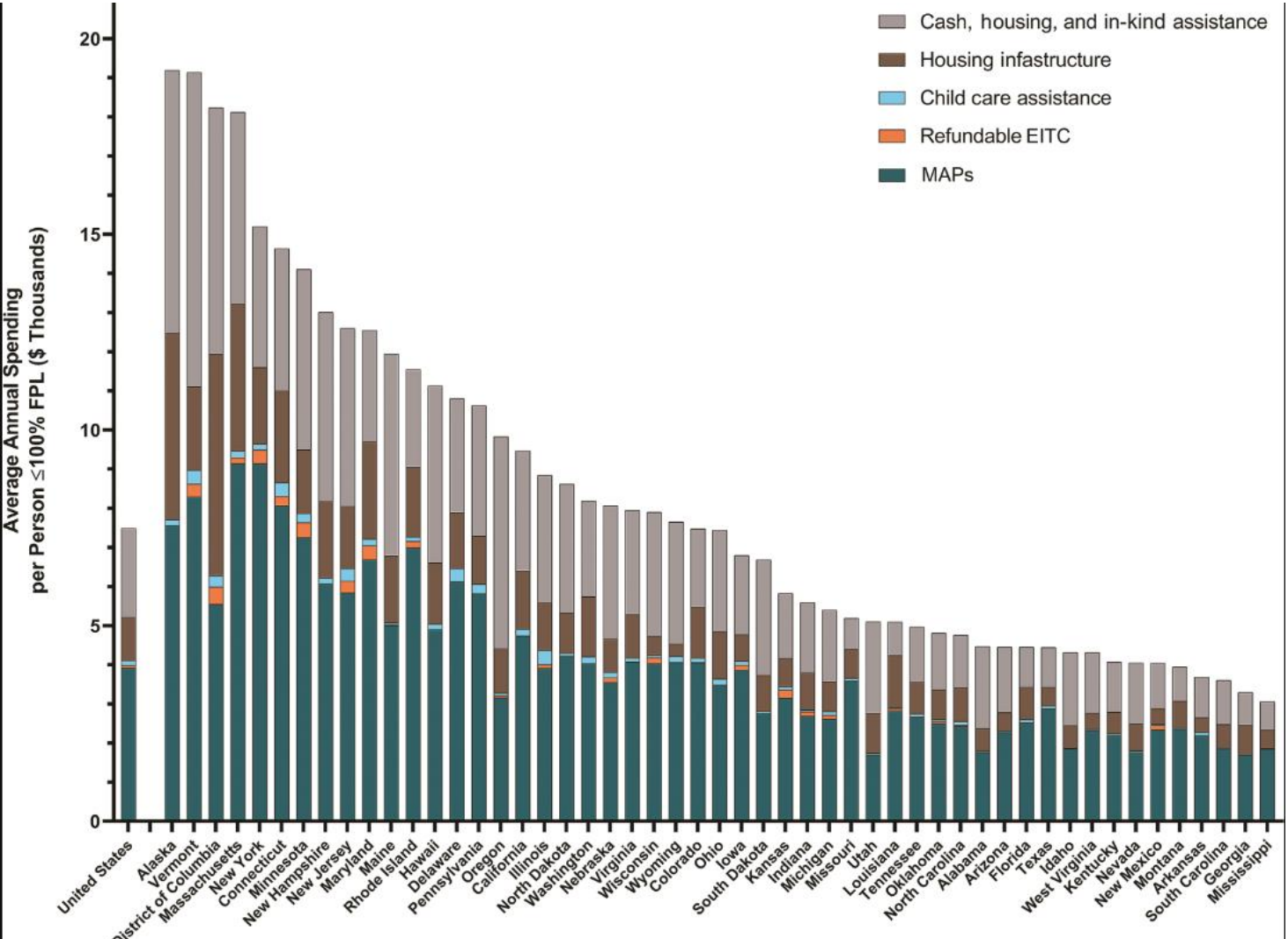
In 2017, if all states had increased investment in public benefit programs by 13.3% there would have been an estimated:

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

Long-term cost savings:

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** due to reduced maltreatment-related costs

State Policy Option: Level & Mix of State Spending on Public Benefits Per Person Living in Poverty



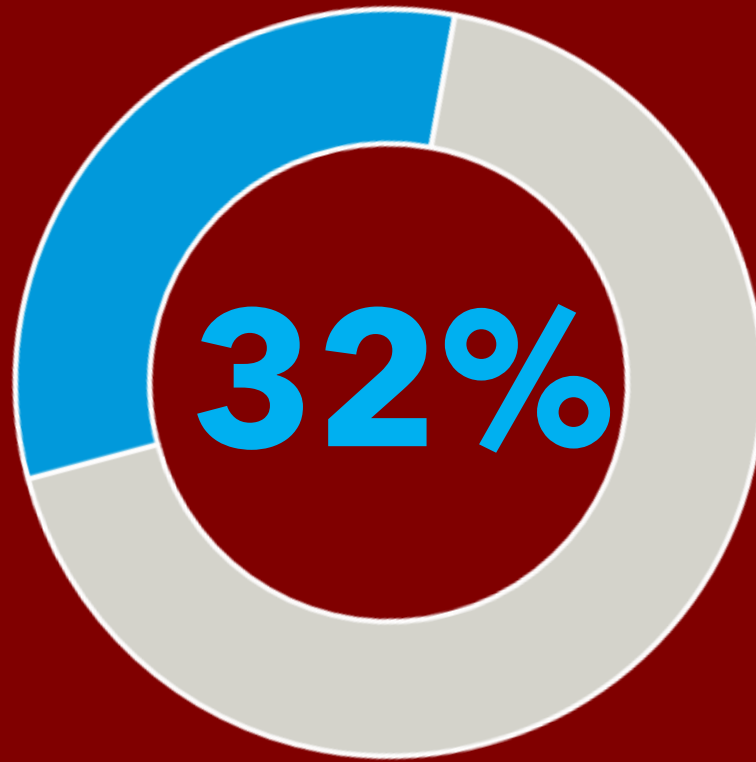
States' total annualized spending on public benefit programs per person living in poverty (FFY 2010 - 2017)

(Puls, 2021 - graphic)

Elevating Federal Policies that
Improved Child & Family Well-being
During the COVID Pandemic



The Buffer Increased in 2021 to the Highest Level Recorded...but



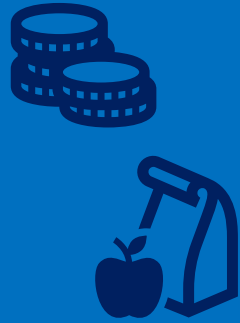
Financial well-being of U.S. households reached an all-time high in 2021, which *"aligns with improved economic conditions & the additional COVID-19 relief measures enacted in 2021."*

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

Enhanced Government Assistance Led to Sharp Declines in Poverty & Food Insecurity

Enhanced federal government assistance during pandemic (2020-2021) included:

- ✓ Federal stimulus payments
- ✓ Expanded unemployment assistance
- ✓ TANF emergency assistance
- ✓ Emergency rental assistance
- ✓ Expanded child care assistance
- ✓ Increased SNAP benefits
- ✓ Expanded EITC & CTC



2021: Poverty rates declined

- ✓ Overall poverty rate **fell to record low 7.8%**
- ✓ Child poverty rate **fell to record low 5.2%**
(compared to 9.7% in 2020)
- ✓ Black child poverty rate **declined to 8%**
(compared to 17% in 2020)

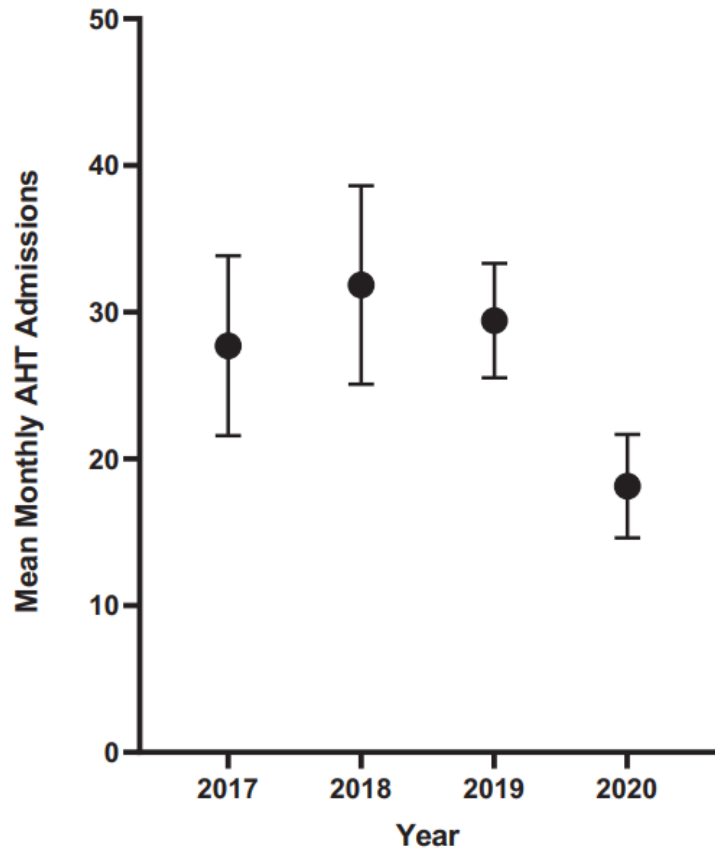
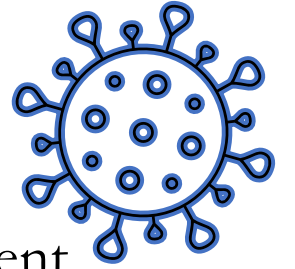
(measured by the Supplemental Poverty Measure, which accounts for impact of government programs & tax credits)

2021: Food insecurity among households with children fell to a record low of 12.5%

[\(U.S. Census Bureau, 2022\)](#)

[\(USDA, 2022\)](#)

Child Maltreatment Appeared to Decline in 2020



Child maltreatment appeared to decline during the first year of the pandemic

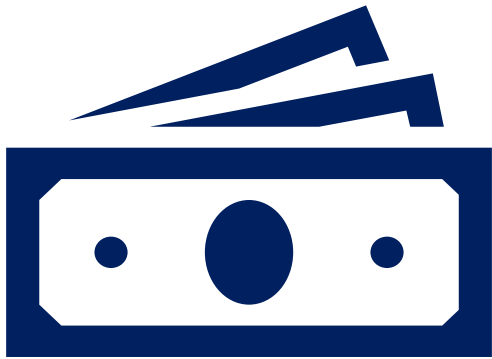
- **Emergency room visits** for suspected child maltreatment substantially declined
- **Hospitalizations** for abusive head trauma (AHT) decreased
- Child **fatalities** due to maltreatment decreased 4.4%
(*Black child fatalities **increased 17%** but returned to pre-pandemic levels in 2021*)

Government assistance to families in financial distress may be protective

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

(Sege, 2021) (Maassel, 2021 - graphic)
(CDC, 2020) (Child Maltreatment 2020, 2021)
(Bullinger, 2023) (see Klika, 2022 for 2021 & 2022 considerations)

Federal Stimulus Checks Associated with Improved Mental Health, Food Security & Financial Stability



Who experienced the **greatest declines** in material hardship?

- ✓ Poorest households
- ✓ Families with children

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, share of Americans reporting:

- **Adverse mental health symptoms fell by 20%** (*among all households*)
- **Food insufficiency fell by 41%** (*among households with children*)
- **Financial instability fell by 43%** (*among households with children*)

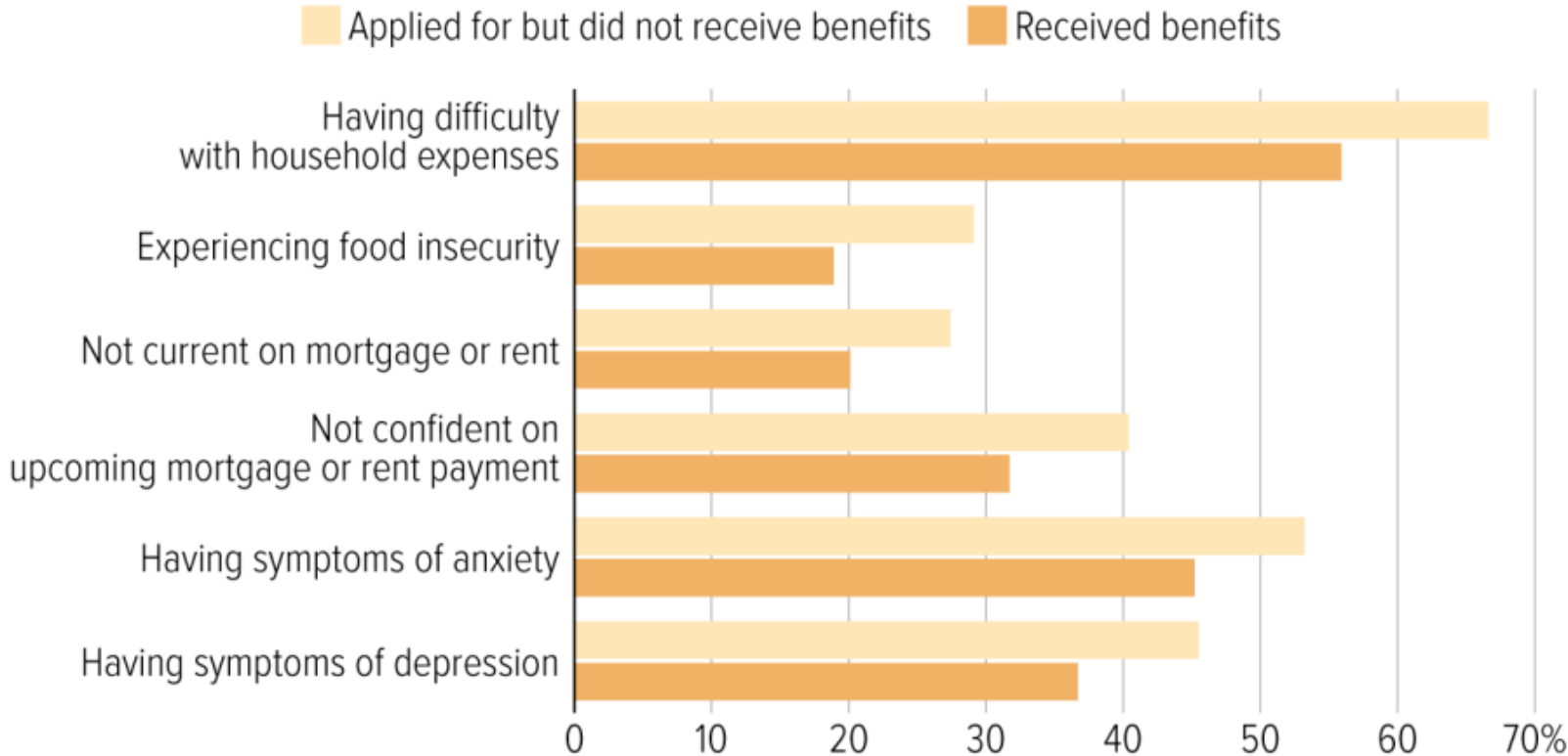
While the economic recovery, tax credits & other forms of aid may have also contributed to these improvements, **largest declines in measures of hardship coincided with arrival of stimulus checks**

"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."

Enhanced Unemployment Benefits Associated with Improved Mental Health

Applicants Who Receive Unemployment Benefits Have Less Hardship

Percent of applicants with distress



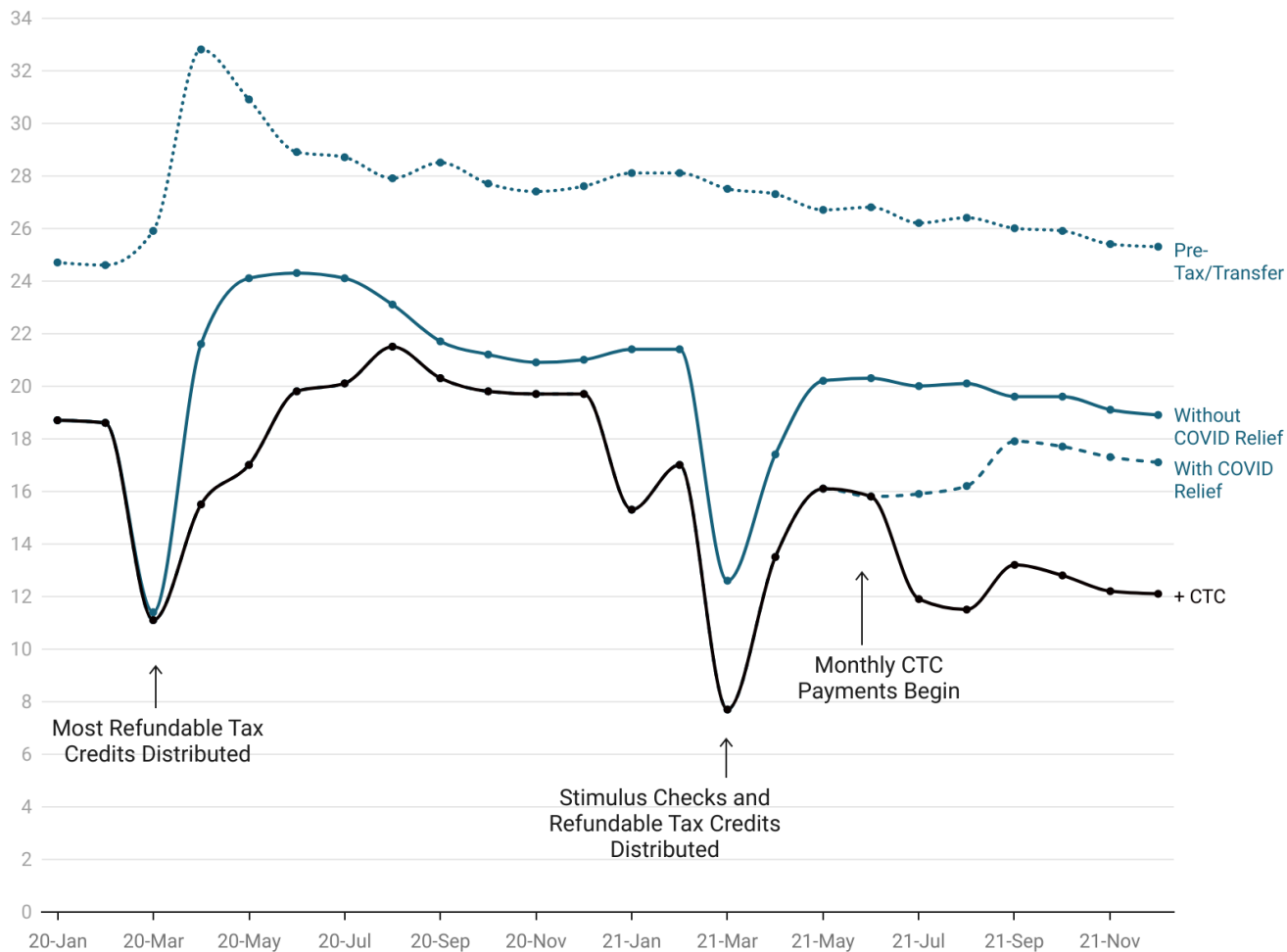
Applicants who received enhanced unemployment benefits reported **fewer adverse mental health symptoms** than those who applied for, but did not receive, these benefits
(from August to December 2020)



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

2021 Expanded Monthly Child Tax Credit (CTC) Significantly Reduced Child Poverty

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



- 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 average CTC benefit is associated with a **1.1% increase** in single mother labor force participation (as of 2013)

2021 Expanded Monthly Child Tax Credit (CTC) Associated with Improved Mental Health for Parents



American Rescue Plan Act provided 6 monthly CTC payments of up to \$300 for each child under age 6 & up to \$250 for each child aged 6-17 to eligible families
(from July to December 2021)

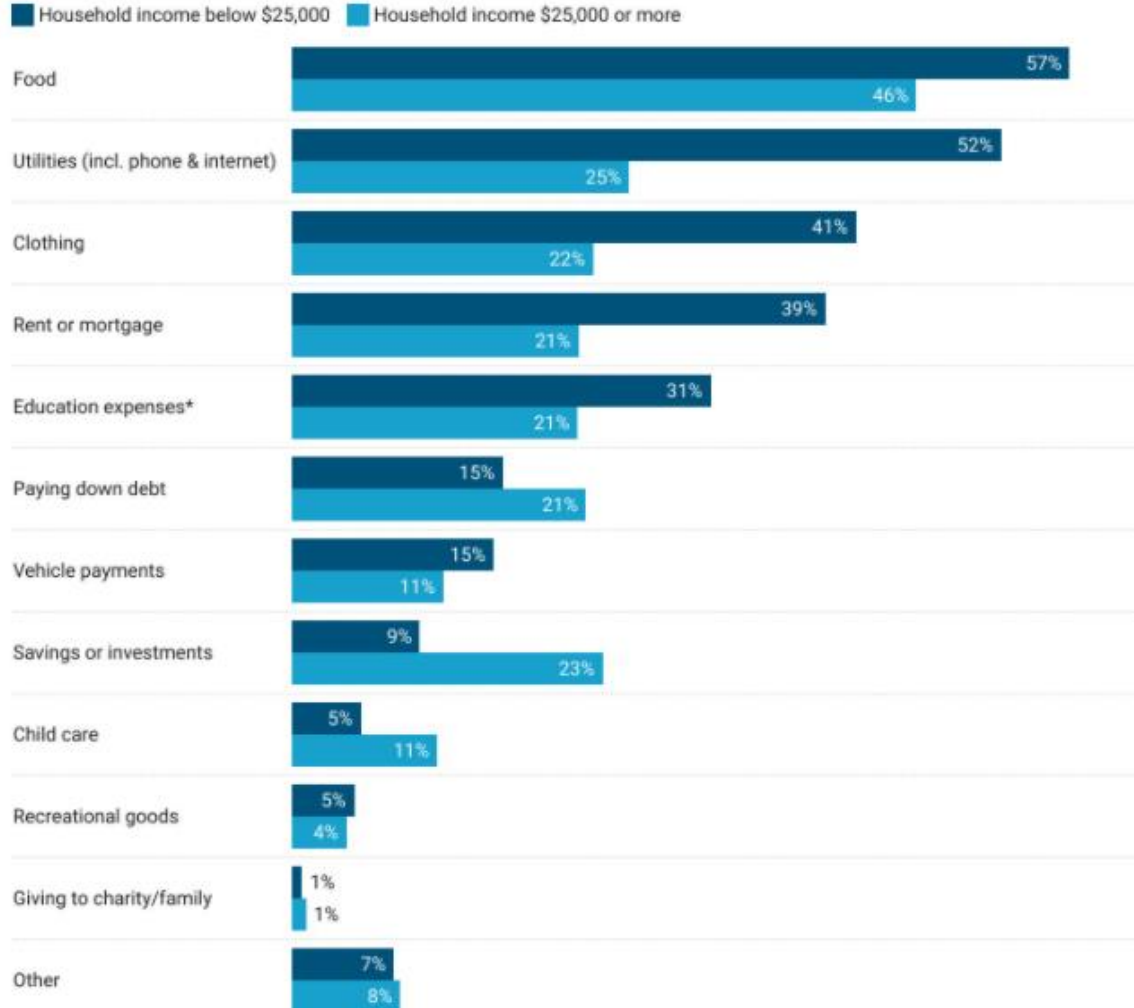
National survey data from samples of low-income parents during a period *before* and *after* the CTC expansion suggests the expanded CTC was associated with **improved mental health**

- 9.2% decrease in depressive symptoms
 - 13.3% decrease in anxiety-related symptoms
- Black and Latinx low-income parents experienced the **greatest mental health benefits**

(from April 2021 to January 2022, despite no changes in mental health care use)

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

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



Data collected from July 21 – August 2, 2021

Families with incomes below \$25,000 were more likely than other families to spend their CTC payments on **basic needs**:

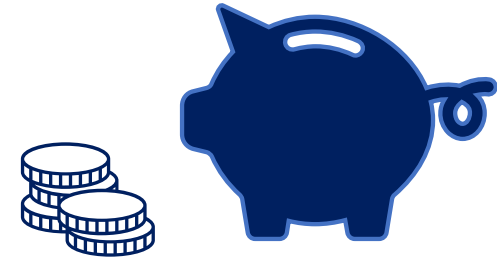
- ✓ Food
- ✓ Utilities
- ✓ Clothing
- ✓ Housing

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

Expanded 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

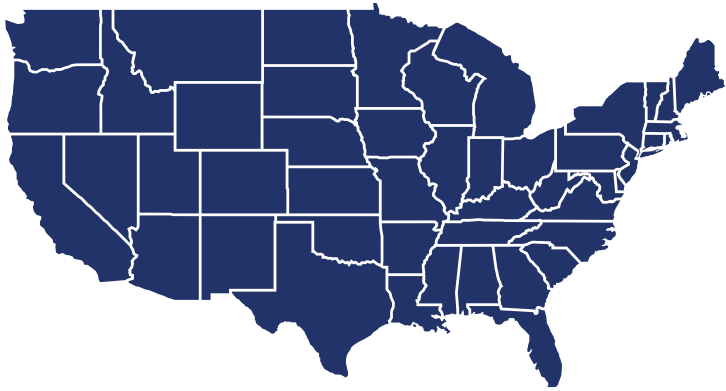


"The biggest single benefit to children and society as a whole comes from the substantial increases in children's health & longevity."

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

(Garfinkel, 2022)

Federal Policy Option: Proposed Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition & Health (2022)



([White House](#), 2022)

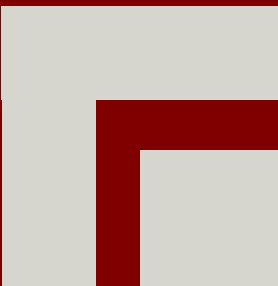
Reduced child welfare involvement evidence:

(Pac, 2023) (Puls, 2021)
(Kovski, 2022) (Berger, 2017)
(Biehl, 2018) (Raissian, 2017)
(Brown, 2019) (McGinty, 2022)
(Meloy, 2015) (Yang, 2019)
(Klevens, 2015) (Cash, 2003)
(Farrell, 2018) (Gubits, 2015)

Federal strategy proposal includes:

- Permanently extending expanded, refundable Child Tax Credit
- Extending expanded Earned Income Tax Credit
- Raising minimum wage to \$15 an hour
- Closing the Medicaid coverage gap for those in non-expansion states
- Investing in affordable, high-quality child care
- Expanding Housing Choice Voucher program

Resource Considerations for 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)

(Gelles, 2012)

(Peterson, 2018)

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

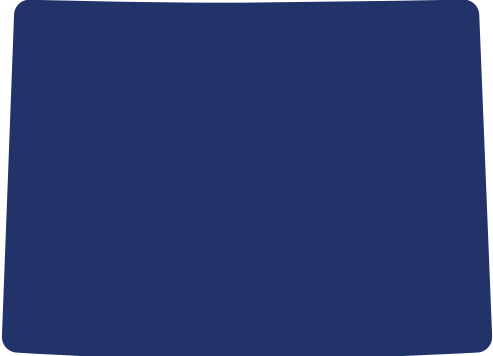


- Find your state's prevention percentage in the Child Trends Financing Study
- What would it take to flip this percentage?

([Child Trends](#), 2021)

State Policy Option: Expand Family Resource Centers to Provide Economic & Concrete Supports to Families

Colorado



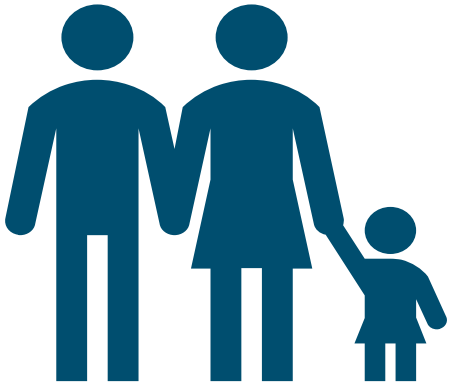
Family Resource Center (FRC) in Teller County connects families who have been screened out of child welfare to **community resources, family support services & financial assistance**

- After a formal partnership between child welfare & FRC was established, Teller County saw a **63% reduction in its child maltreatment rate & saved an estimated \$2.5 million** (*in 2018*)

For every **\$1**  invested, the savings to child welfare in terms of **fewer cases of maltreatment**  was **\$2.92**  in Teller County, CO.

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**



- An estimated **6% of all children, 15% of Native American children and 11% of Black children** spend some time in foster care by age 18
- While foster care remains a necessity for some children, there is no consistent evidence that as an intervention it is beneficial broadly to children & there is substantial evidence that it is associated with **poor outcomes**

(Nielsen, 2019)

(Wildeman, 2014)

(Doyle, 2007) (Sariaslan, 2022)

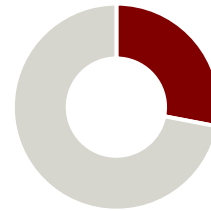
(Hobbs, 2021)

Human Longevity Costs of Family Instability & Poverty

Compared to children who do not experience early life adversity:

Children who experience **family instability**

(changes in parents' marital status; parental divorce/separation, frequent changes in residence; parent or sibling death; **foster care**)



Are associated with a **28% higher risk for premature death**

Children who experience **poverty + crowded housing**



Are associated with a **41% higher risk for premature death**

“

Once adversities occur, findings such as ours highlight the importance of **integrating anti-poverty programs with family-based interventions** in mitigating the long-term consequences of early adversity.

”

(Yu, 2022 - five-decade prospective study)

Economic & Concrete Supports to Prevent Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

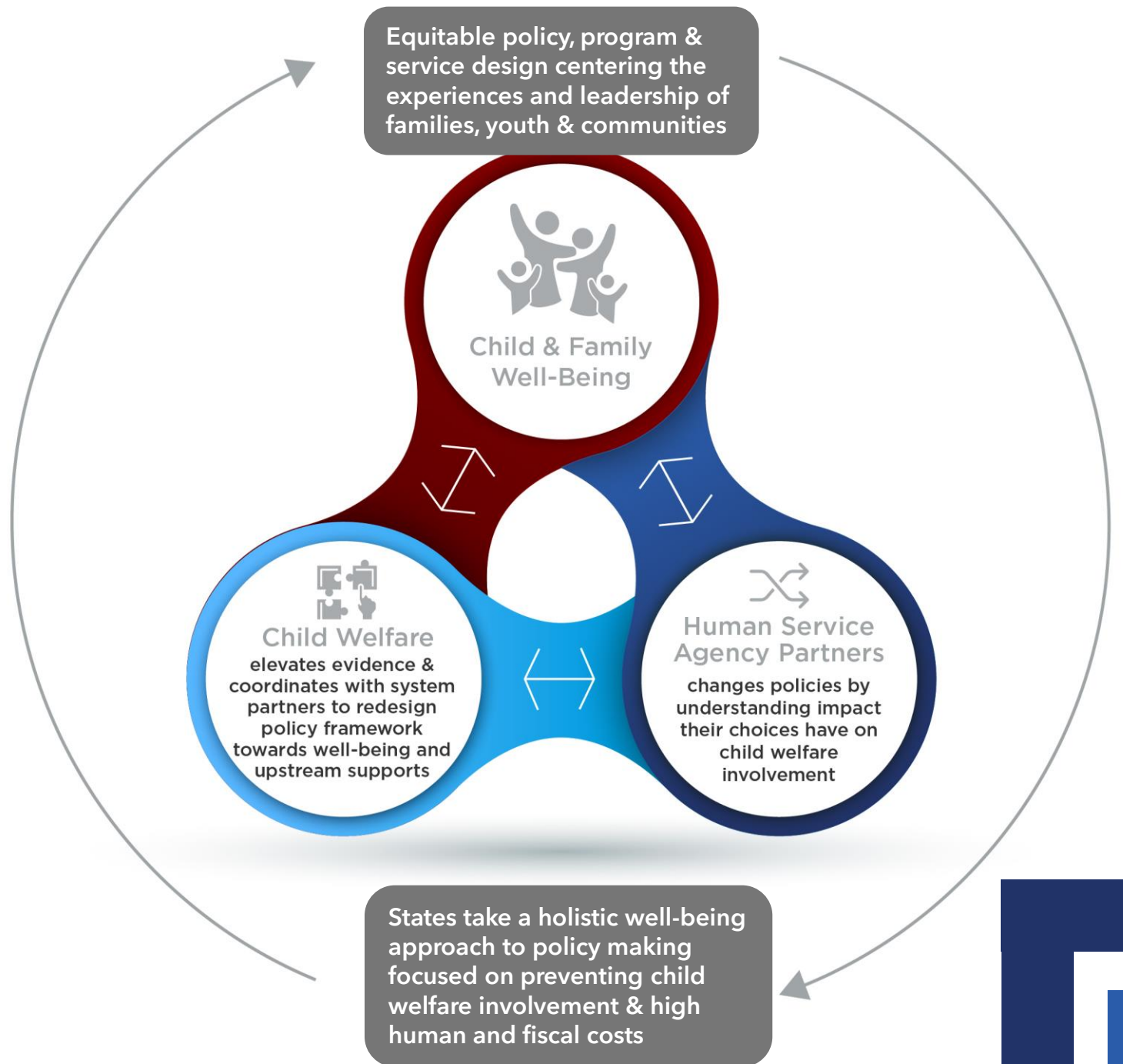
“ **Strengthening economic supports for families is a multi-generation strategy.**

Policies that strengthen household financial security (e.g., tax credits, child care subsidies, temporary assistance & livable wages) and family-friendly work policies (e.g., paid leave & flexible and consistent work schedules) **can prevent ACEs** by:

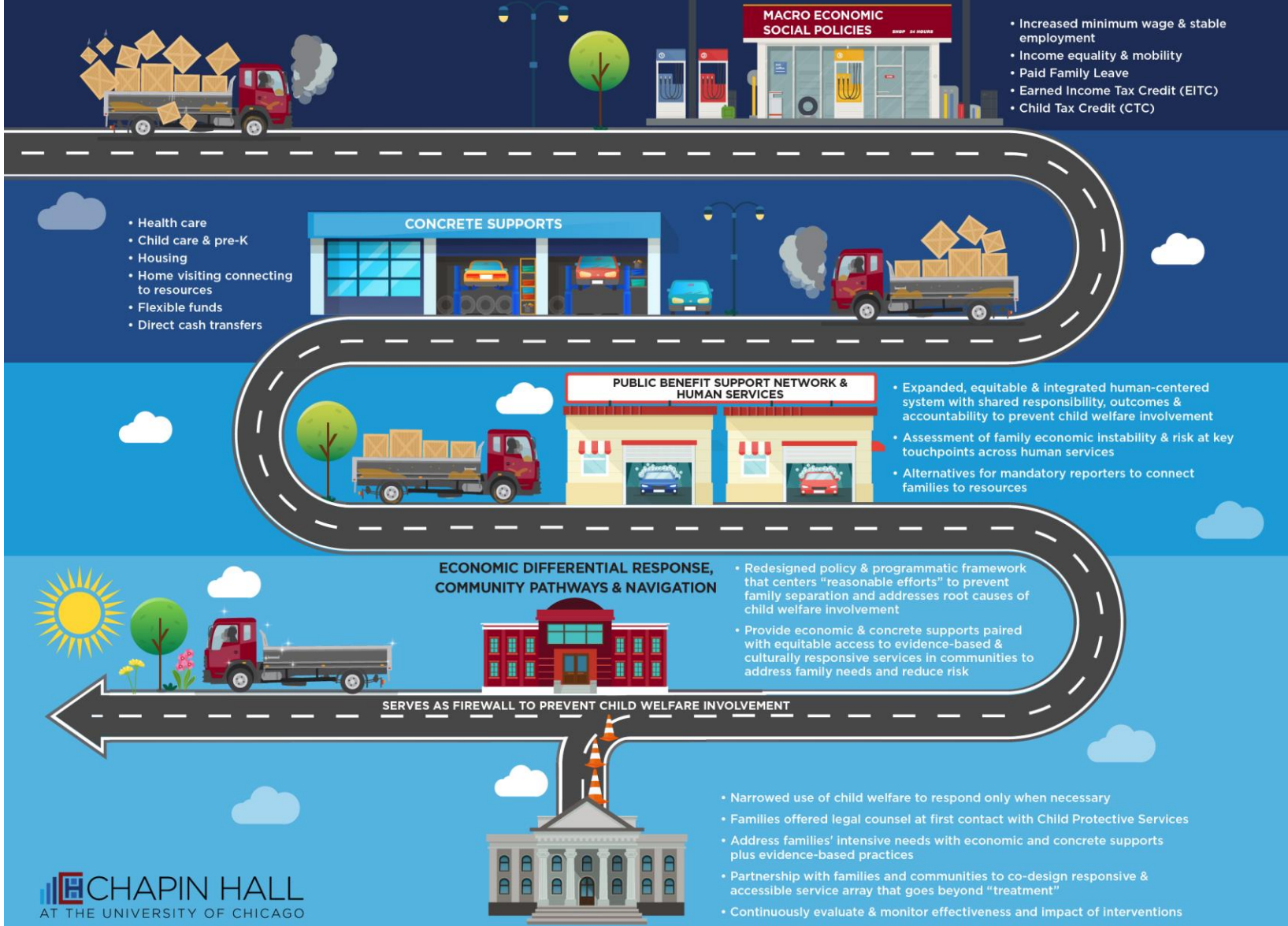
- Increasing economic stability & family income
- Increasing maternal employment
- Improving parents' ability to meet children's basic needs & obtain high-quality childcare
- Reducing parental stress & depression
- Protecting families from losing income to care for a sick child or family member

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (2019). [Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACEs\): Leveraging the Best Available Evidence](#)

Evidence-based Policy-Making to Build a Well-Being System: Making it **ACTIONABLE**



RECONCEPTUALIZING & RESOURCING FAMILY WELL-BEING & PREVENTION OF CHILD WELFARE INVOLVEMENT WITH ECONOMIC & CONCRETE SUPPORTS



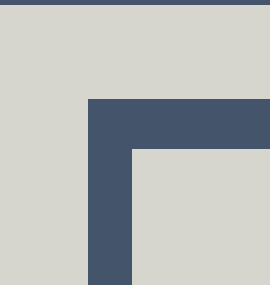
CHAPIN HALL
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

(Evidence-based policy-making map adapted from Economic & Concrete Supports Reference List)

CHILD PROTECTION & FOSTER CARE

**Reference
List**

Additional Resources



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 & minimize poverty-related neglect cases
- Services that address behavioral health, housing instability & 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**

Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University

[Moving Upstream: Confronting Racism to Open Up Children's Potential](#) (2021)

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."

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:



Reducing
child
poverty

Access to
quality child care,
early childhood
services &
education


Healthy
food

Affordable
health care

Stable
housing

Safe
neighborhoods

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



Social Currents, Prevent Child Abuse America & FrameWorks Institute

**BUILDING
BETTER
CHILDHOODS**



Website and Toolkit Now Live

Communications toolkit that reframes childhood adversity as a public issue & emphasizes:

- **Collective responsibility** for child and family well-being
- **Social conditions** that contribute to maltreatment

<https://buildingbetterchildhoods.org/>



Center for the Study of Social Policy
Ideas into Action



Prevent Child Abuse America



casey family programs



Investing in Families Prevents Child Welfare Involvement

The path forward is clear: strengthening household financial security can reduce child abuse and neglect, improve the opportunity for parents to meet their children's basic needs, provide developmentally appropriate care, and reduce parental stress and depression. Both risk factors for child abuse and neglect. Overall, research has shown that children in households and depression, both risk factors for child abuse and neglect, are at a higher rate of other children and that risk factors for child abuse and neglect include low parental income, parenting in high unemployment rates.)

Systemic racism compounds these challenges associated with poverty for families of color, driving them into living in poverty at disproportionately higher rates. In some situations, poverty is coupled with neglect when families experience crises. Research has also shown that stress from factors associated with poverty, and the stress of being able to provide day-to-day necessities, can increase the risk of parenting difficulties and can lead to feeling angry, depressed, fearful, and overwhelmed.

To truly take an anti-racist approach to prevention, child welfare and safety net policies must address economic and concrete needs of children and families. The policies highlighted below can make a significant impact for children and families when implemented as part of a multi-pronged approach to supporting the well-being of children and families outside of child welfare.

Expand Tax Credits: Recent research examined the effect of Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) on foster care entries by comparing states with and without a state-level EITC. After controlling for poverty rates, unemployment, education, and race/ethnicity, researchers found that state-level EITC is associated with an 11 percent decrease in foster care entry rates. Research on the expanded Child Tax Credit of 2021 found that it reduced parental child poverty were dramatic, as it reduced monthly child poverty by an estimated 30 percent overall, lifting 16 million Asian children, 737,000 Black children, 1.4 million Latino children, and 1.4 million White children above the \$14,900 poverty line.

Expand Medicaid Coverage: A recent study of Medicaid expansion found that in states that expanded Medicaid, there was a decrease in overall cases of neglect (422 per 100,000 children) for young children. This study found that between 2013 and 2016, rates of neglect decreased in the 31 states that expanded Medicaid, on average, by 10 percent. These reductions were seen primarily for young children under age 12.

Increase the Minimum Wage to a Livable Wage: The effect of minimum wage increases on child maltreatment has been studied by analyzing hotline reports between 2004 and 2013 using data from the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System. For every dollar increase in the minimum wage, there was a corresponding 9.9 percent reduction in neglect reports. These reductions were seen primarily for young children under age 12.

Expand Access to Food Security Support Programs: Access to healthy food is critical to a family's ability to thrive and reduces parental stress. A recent study found that states with expanded eligibility and family-supplemental nutrition assistance programs (SNAP) policies, including transitional benefits for families who are currently Black and Hispanic households are more than twice as likely compared to White households to experience food insecurity and data gathered during the COVID-19 pandemic found that Black and Latino households suffered disproportionately during this time, highlighting the importance of food security as an essential anti-family strengthening strategy.

Increase Strategies to Meet Families' Concrete Needs through Financial Supports: Research shows that financial supports are critical to reducing maltreatment. Income supports to parents who were members of the Eastern Cherokee tribe were found to lead to positive outcomes for children including greater educational attainment, beneficial changes in children's emotional and behavioral health, and fewer behavioral problems such as conduct disorders. Another study found the provision of concrete supports through differential response in Minnesota was associated with reduction in hotline reports and foster care entry.



**POLICY TOOLKIT:
ECONOMIC SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES AS PREVENTION STRATEGY**

Prevent Child Abuse America
Chapter Network
Policy Affinity Group

January 2022

2022-2024 FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

PCA America includes a nationwide network of chapters and one of the most widely implemented home visiting programs, with nearly 600 **Healthy Families America** evidence-based program sites, delivered approximately one to three visits every year. We process programs and resources proven by science that enable kids, families, and entire communities to thrive and prosper for generations to come.

Evidence shows that children's early experiences impact them throughout life—both positively and negatively. Kids raised in safe, stable, and nurturing relationships 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 **lifelong risks of health** 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.

Prevention services and supports are critical for families and communities. Working alongside families, together with a foundation for children and for the success of the entire family. Poverty, unemployment, inadequate housing, and/or food is an overall risk of stress on parents, a significant risk factor for child abuse and neglect. At PCA America, we are committed to conditions like these that put our children at risk. We directly address social determinants of health, including systems that ensure equitable access to high-quality services and supporting communities to effectively address health disparities.

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

Reauthorize and increase funding for the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)

PCA America supports a strong and comprehensive CAPTA reauthorization bill that includes significantly higher funding for prevention services, and more equity.

An updated CAPTA must include significant funding increases for Title II, the Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP), to provide states and communities the resources to implement community-based solutions. Expanding CAPTA support for communities and families is a national priority to create environments where children thrive and families are supported. CAPTA support programs, including voluntary evidence-based home visiting services, community support programs, early childhood and childcare programs, family resource centers, and coordination with mental health and domestic violence services, among others.

ISSUE BRIEF TRANSFORMING WELFARE SYSTEMS

How do economic benefit families communities?

Access to basic necessities — housing, health care services, legal representation, education — is fundamental to the well-being of families. Providing these types of services and communities by providing targeted economic supports — and how they can have the material items they need to sustain attention of a child protection agency — supporting families to access and receive services who have been removed from their parents or neglect, and enhance child and family well-being.

This brief outlines key themes that are critical to child protection agencies that are not in place and help drive economic supports to address families' basic needs, keeping children safe and families together.

Updated February 2022

Policy Levers for Preventing Child Maltreatment

Report

Updated February 20, 2022

Executive Summary

Preventing child maltreatment, in a population level that will require a multifaceted approach that builds on multiple policy levers across the range of policy areas to impact the lives of children and their families. States are already using many child maltreatment prevention policy levers available to them but sometimes their programs may not be recognized as child maltreatment prevention strategies.

A scaffolded approach also offers the potential of long-term cost savings for states resulting from fewer child welfare interventions, including foster care.

By intentionally implementing a variety of prevention strategies across multiple policy areas and connecting them with state goals for child maltreatment prevention, states will be better able to leverage policy to achieve population-level change. Research has identified many promising evidence-based prevention strategies, identifying and understanding the full suite of prevention levers states use or want to use can help state lawmakers develop a more targeted and comprehensive strategy to addressing child maltreatment.

What Is Child Maltreatment and How Can It Be Prevented?

Child maltreatment broadly refers to incidents where a child suffers harm due to abuse or neglect by a caregiver. There are numerous types of child maltreatment, and states have authority to determine what definitions of what constitutes child maltreatment. Child maltreatment is associated with many risk and prevention factors and is a complex problem with many causes not reduction that prevents child maltreatment from occurring.

In 2021, child protection agencies received nearly 4 million referrals alleging maltreatment of 7.2 million children. Two-thirds of the calls came from mandatory reporters, including teachers, police officers, lawyers and social service staff. Eighty percent of child maltreatment reports in 2021 were confirmed as child maltreatment. The same year, more than 395,000 children were in the foster care system.

The problem of child abuse and neglect has serious, long-term consequences for victims and high costs to society. In 2012, a study by Prevent Child Abuse America estimated the annual nationwide cost to society of child abuse and neglect was more than \$80 billion. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention used 2015 data to estimate lifetime economic costs of child maltreatment of more than \$430,000 for a single maltreated case and up to \$16.6 million for a fatal child maltreatment case. Beyond the financial costs, being the subject of a child protective services investigation due to a child maltreatment allegation can also be traumatic for families and children.

While some types of child maltreatment have declined substantially over the last three decades, the field of child welfare is currently reevaluating how to best advance preventing child maltreatment before it happens and protecting children from harms when it does occur.

Over the last decade, research on risk factors for child maltreatment, protective factors that can mitigate risks, and how certain policies can prevent child abuse and neglect have gained policymakers in a new prevention-oriented, family-oriented direction. This research provides insights into the regional policy levers available to state legislatures.

Evidence suggests that by significantly reducing child abuse and neglect at the population level, child, family and community well-being will improve across many social domains, and states will realize significant cost savings over time when compared to the long-standing reactive, crisis-oriented approach.

Full Brief

Full Brief

Full Brief

Full Brief

Full Brief

Contact

Clare Anderson, Senior Policy Fellow
canderson@chapinhall.org

Suggested citation:

Anderson, C., Grewal-Kök, Y., Cusick, G., Weiner, D., & Thomas, K. (2023). Family and child well-being system: Economic and concrete supports as a core component. [Power Point slides]. Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

Full reference list is available [here](#).

Main slide deck available at:
Chapinhall.org/ecspjroject

