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# Supporting TANF Families' Child Care Needs Challenges and Opportunities

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# Why Child Care Matters for TANF Families

- Child care is essential to meet work requirements
  - 57% TANF families have at least one child age 5 or younger
  - An additional 24% have at least one school-age child young enough to need supervision if parent is at work or training
  - 30% have a child with special needs
- *Quality* child care is essential to support children's development/success
  - TANF children face many risk factors (parents with limited education, physical or mental health challenges, experiences with domestic violence, very low incomes)
- TANF has potential to function as two-generation support for families

# What We Know About TANF and Child Care

- Child care subsidies vital for participating in work activities
- TANF, child care, and workforce “systems” complex, devolved, and relatively unstudied
- Enormous variation and remarkably little information on funding, numbers served, how funds administered, etc.
- Child care subsidy funds not sufficient to serve all those eligible
- TANF families are only a fraction of those served by CCDF

# Challenges to Partnering with Child Care

- Lack of knowledge about subsidies and time to make decisions
- Nonstandard, unpredictable work schedules
- Inadequate supply of high quality care
- TANF rules (short authorization, specific hours)
- Reluctant providers

# CCDF Reauthorization Opportunities

- 12-month authorization
- De-linking work hours and child care hours
- Attention to child development, health, and safety
- Enhanced parent education

# CCDF Reauthorization Risks

- New requirements without new resources = tradeoffs
- Tradeoffs that separate TANF child care from CCDF may undercut opportunities
- New health and safety standards and focus on high-quality (often center-based) options may reduce access to informal child care

# Final Thoughts...

- Families and children on TANF need the highest quality child care, yet may be particularly challenging to serve
- Reauthorization presents some opportunities, but also significant challenges
- Addressing needs of families on TANF will require intentional focus and prioritizing:
  - Focus on supporting quality, continuity for this population, AND ensuring access to support work participation
  - Will require strategies to support care for non-traditional schedules
  - Consider using consumer education and supply building focus and goals to support families on TANF

# About Our Report

- Presentation largely derived from *Supporting the Child Care and Workforce Needs of TANF Families*,\* April 2016 (Heather Hahn, lead author)
  - Focus on TANF intersection with both child care and workforce development
  - Based on interviews with leaders and policy experts in TANF, child care, and workforce development, and reviews of administrative data, policies in Welfare Rules and CCDF databases, and the literature
- Supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation
- Part of larger Urban Institute project *Bridging the Gap: Exploring the Intersection of Education & Training and Child Care*\*

\*See *Resource List* at end for links to report and *Bridging the Gap* project publications



# Resource List (all available at [www.urban.org](http://www.urban.org))

- *Supporting the Child Care and Workforce Development Needs of TANF Families.* April 2016; Heather Hahn, Gina Adams, Shayne Spaulding, and Caroline Heller
- All Urban Institute publications from the *Bridging the Gap* project can be found at the project landing page: <http://www.urban.org/bridging-gap>
- *Child Care Subsidies and TANF: A Synthesis of Three Studies on Systems, Policies, and Parents.* December 2005; Pamela Holcomb, Gina Adams, Kathleen Snyder, Robin Koralek, Karin Martinson, Sara Bernstein, and Jeffrey Capizzano
- *Child Care Subsidies for TANF Families: The Nexus of Systems and Policies.* December 2005; Gina Adams, Pamela Holcomb, Kathleen Snyder, Robin Koralek, and Jeffrey Capizzano
- *Child Care Subsidies and Leaving Welfare: Policy Issues and Strategies.* December 2005; Gina Adams, Robin Koralek, and Karin Martinson