



PARTICIPANT MATERIALS

Addressing Economic Hardships Is Key to Preventing Child Welfare Involvement

March 17, 2023

Krista Thomas

Addressing Economic Hardships is Key to Preventing Child Welfare System Involvement

Krista Thomas, PhD
Senior Policy Fellow, Chapin Hall

Ohio Summit on Children
March 17, 2023



 **CHAPIN HALL**
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

We partner with decision-makers at the forefront of research and policy development.

We apply a unique blend of scientific research, real-world experience, and policy expertise to construct actionable information and practical tools.

We produce positive change for children and families.

Policy Milestones:

Establishing the current child welfare system

Mother's Pensions

Provided aid via cash payments primarily for White widows with young children.

Early 1900s

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.

1960

CAPTA

First major federal legislation addressing child abuse and neglect. Required states to establish reporting and investigation procedures. Resulted in many unsubstantiated reports and an increase in children in foster care.

1974

Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act

Landmark legislation establishing federal oversight responsibilities and required states to make reasonable efforts to keep families together and reunify timely if separation occurred.

1980

Family Preservation and Support Program

Program established in response to concerns that insufficient efforts were being directed toward family preservation and reunification

1993

Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act

Designed to promote permanency by establishing the option of subsidized guardianship for kin caregivers, provide option for states to extend foster care to age 21, increased supports for older youth, and allowed Tribal title IV-E programs.

2008

1935

Social Security Act

Authorized the first federal grants for child welfare purposes.

1961

Social Security Act Amendments

Enabled states to receive federal matching funds for costs associated with foster care placements.

1978

Indian Child Welfare Act

Enacted in response to Native children being removed from their homes at higher rates than non-Native children. Governs the removal and out-of-home placement of Native children and requires "active efforts" to prevent removal.

1997

Adoption and Safe Families Act

Encouraged innovative efforts by states to focus on safety, permanency, and well-being. A specific focus was placed on expediting permanency decisions.

2018

Family First Prevention Services Act

Landmark legislation that made federal reimbursement possible for the cost of evidence-based prevention services for identified candidates and their families, implemented congregate care restrictions, and invested in kinship navigation services.

Total Annual Expenditures on Child Welfare Systems

\$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





Economic & Concrete Supports

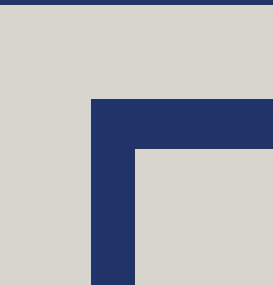
<https://www.chapinhall.org/project/a-key-connection-economic-stability-and-family-well-being/>

What Are Economic & Concrete Supports?

This is not an exhaustive list, but examples include:

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

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



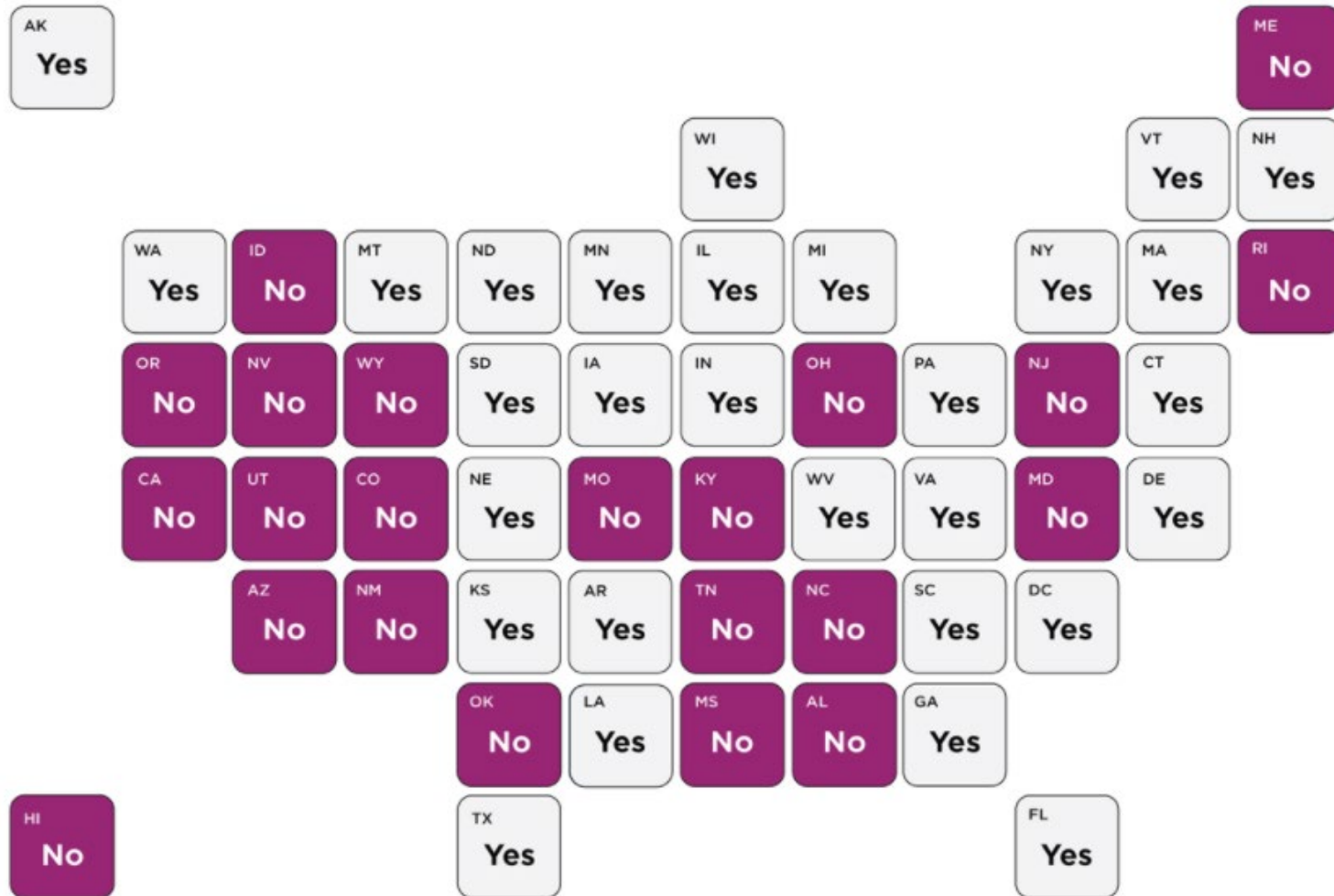
nearly **85%**

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

(\$43,920 for a family of 3 in 2021)

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



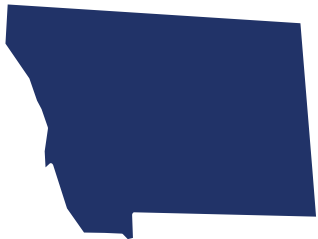
Washington State – [Keeping Families Together](#) (2021)

- 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%)

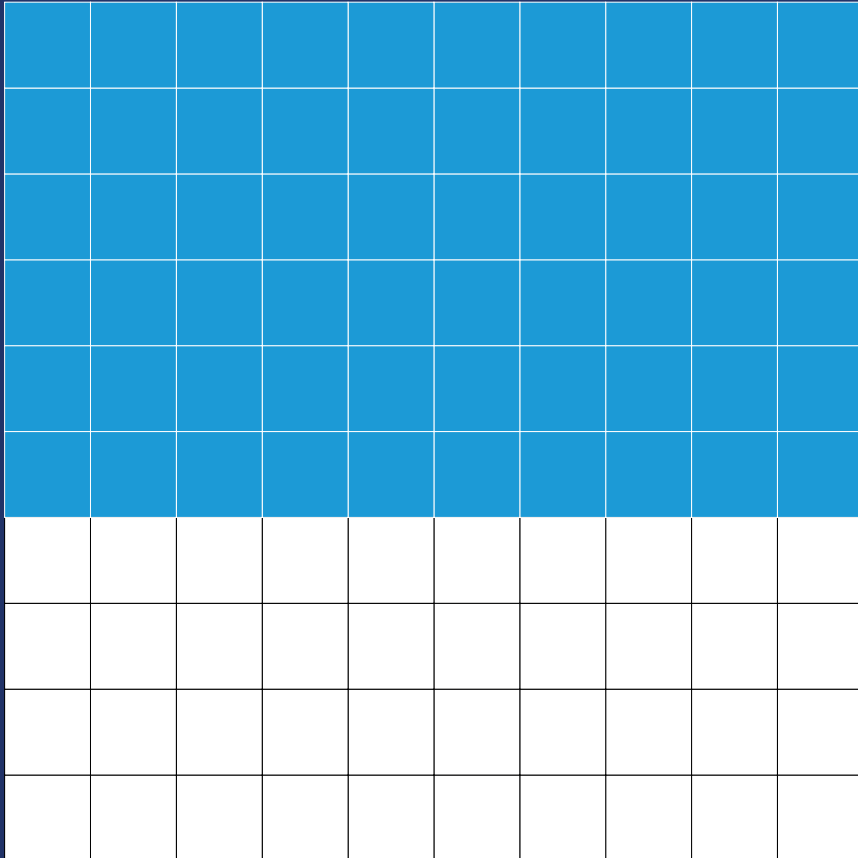
Vermont has created an “**economic firewall**” through:

- **Interagency collaboration & service coordination:** CPS is co-located with economic services division & early child development division
- 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)



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

Material Hardship Increases Risk for Child Welfare: 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**



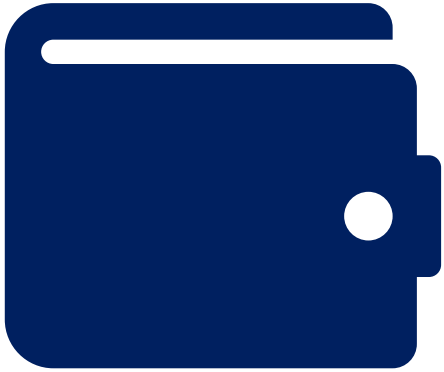
(Conrad-Hiebner, 2020)

Strongest predictors of **investigated neglect reports**



(Slack, 2011)

Negative Earning Shocks are Associated with Increased Risk for Subsequent Child Welfare Involvement



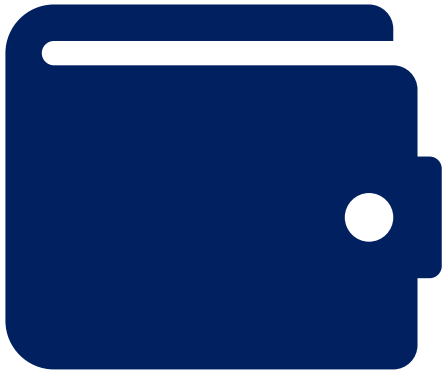
For low-income families with recently closed CPS investigations:

- Experiencing a **negative earnings shock** (*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

For low-income families with recently closed CPS investigations:

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



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



Visual created by Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago

Exploring the Context of Family Economic Insecurity, Income, & 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



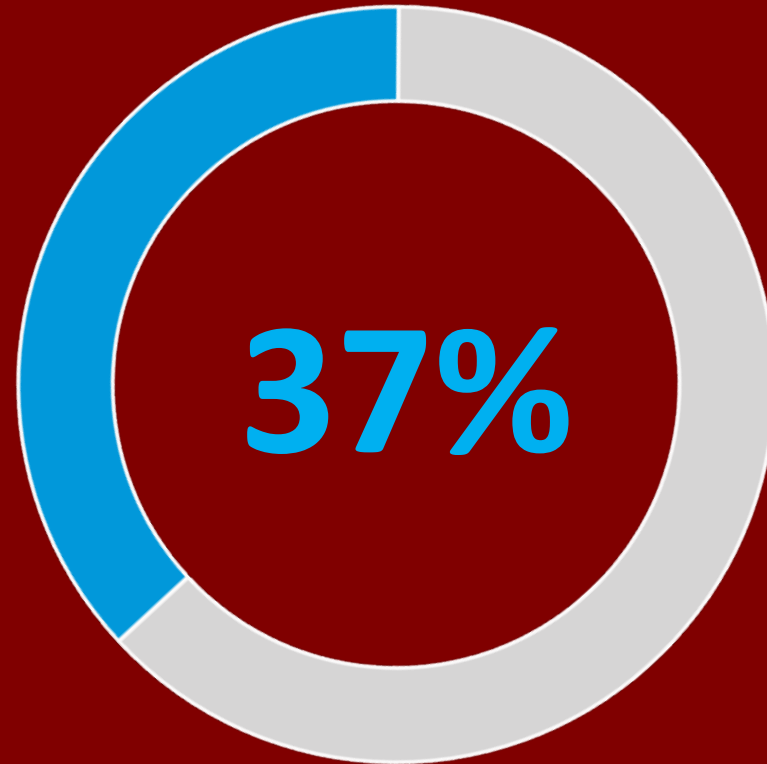
Almost 50% of those who become poor are out of poverty a year later



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

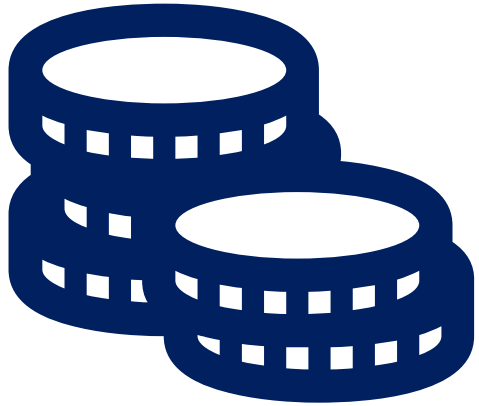
The Buffer is Thin



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

(Federal Reserve, 2020)

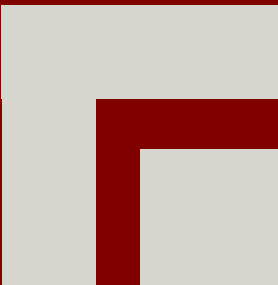
Family Income Instability Increases Risk for Child Welfare Involvement



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

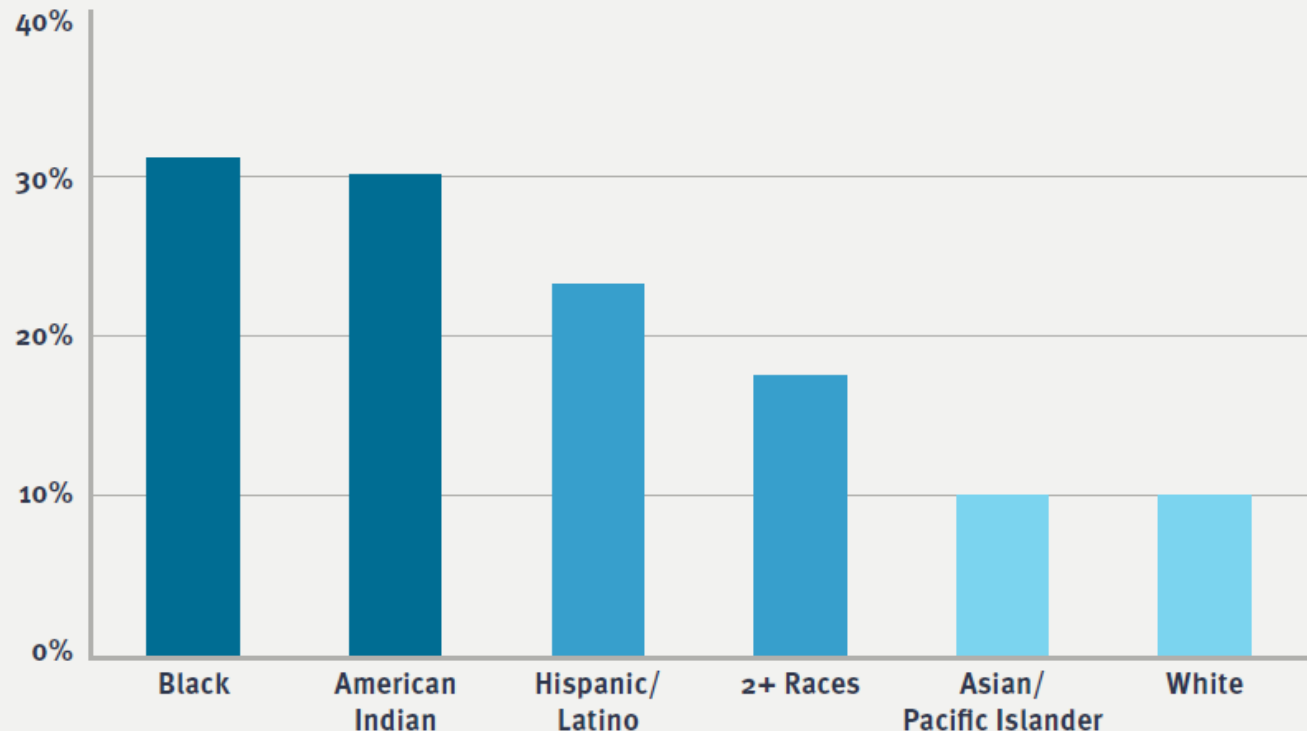
Economic & Concrete Supports:
A Race Equity Strategy to
Address Disparity & Disproportionality
in Child Welfare



Children in Families of Color Are More Likely to Experience Poverty

US Children in Poverty by Racial Category

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



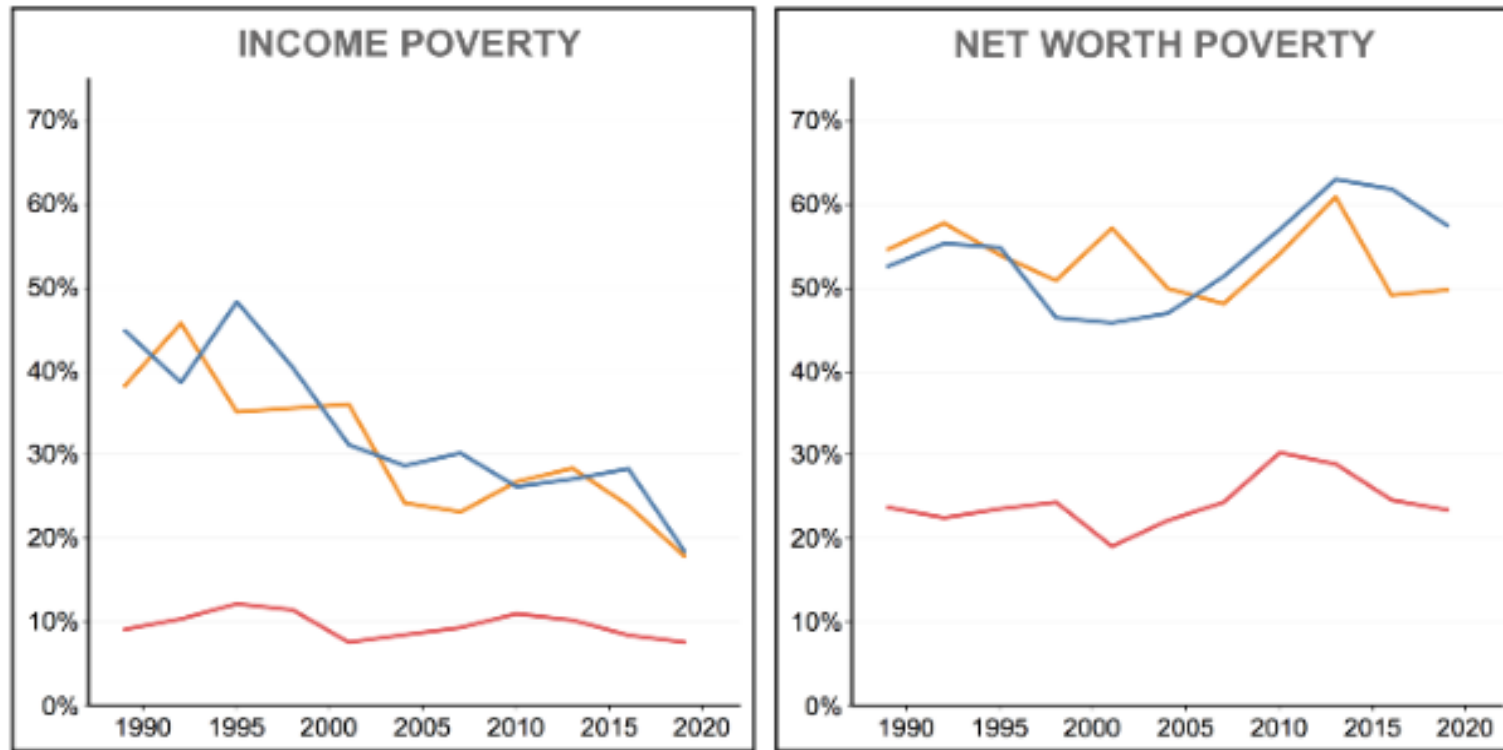
Source: KIDS COUNT Data Cent. 2020. Children in poverty by race and ethnicity in the United States. Data from U.S. Census Bureau, Am. Community Survey 2019, Annie E. Casey Found. KIDS COUNT Data Cent., Baltimore, MD.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

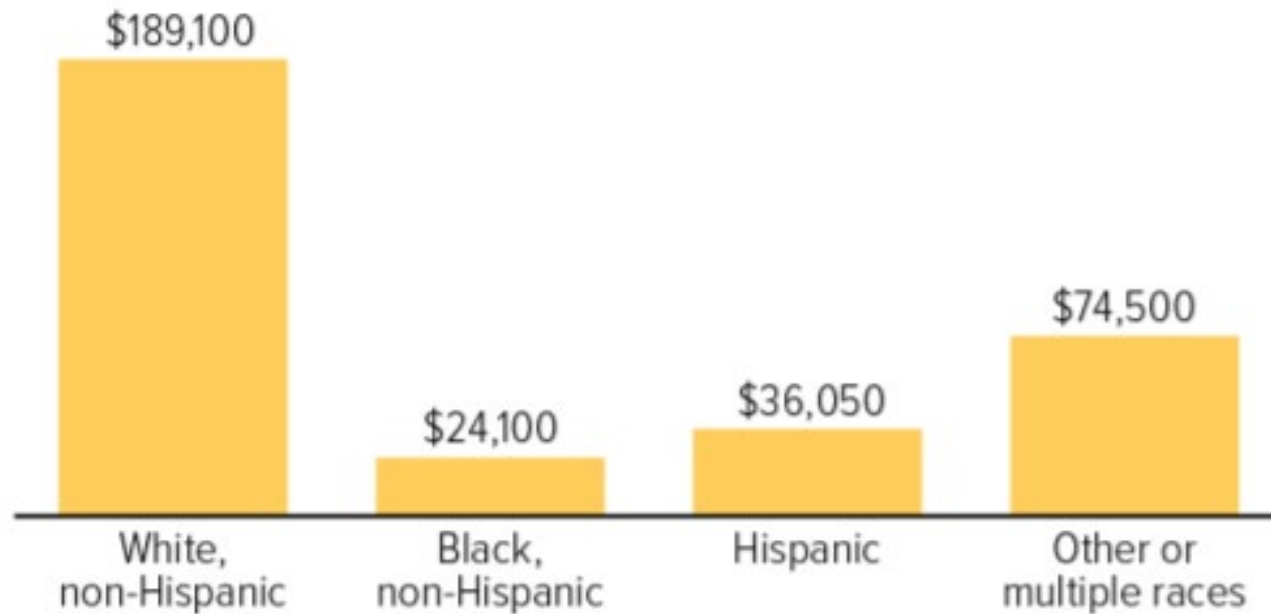
Net worth poverty = wealth (total assets minus total debts) < $\frac{1}{4}$ of the federal poverty line
(i.e., *wealth* < \$6,500 for a family of four in 2019)

(Gibson-Davis, 2021)

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

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

Median net worth, in 2019 U.S. dollars



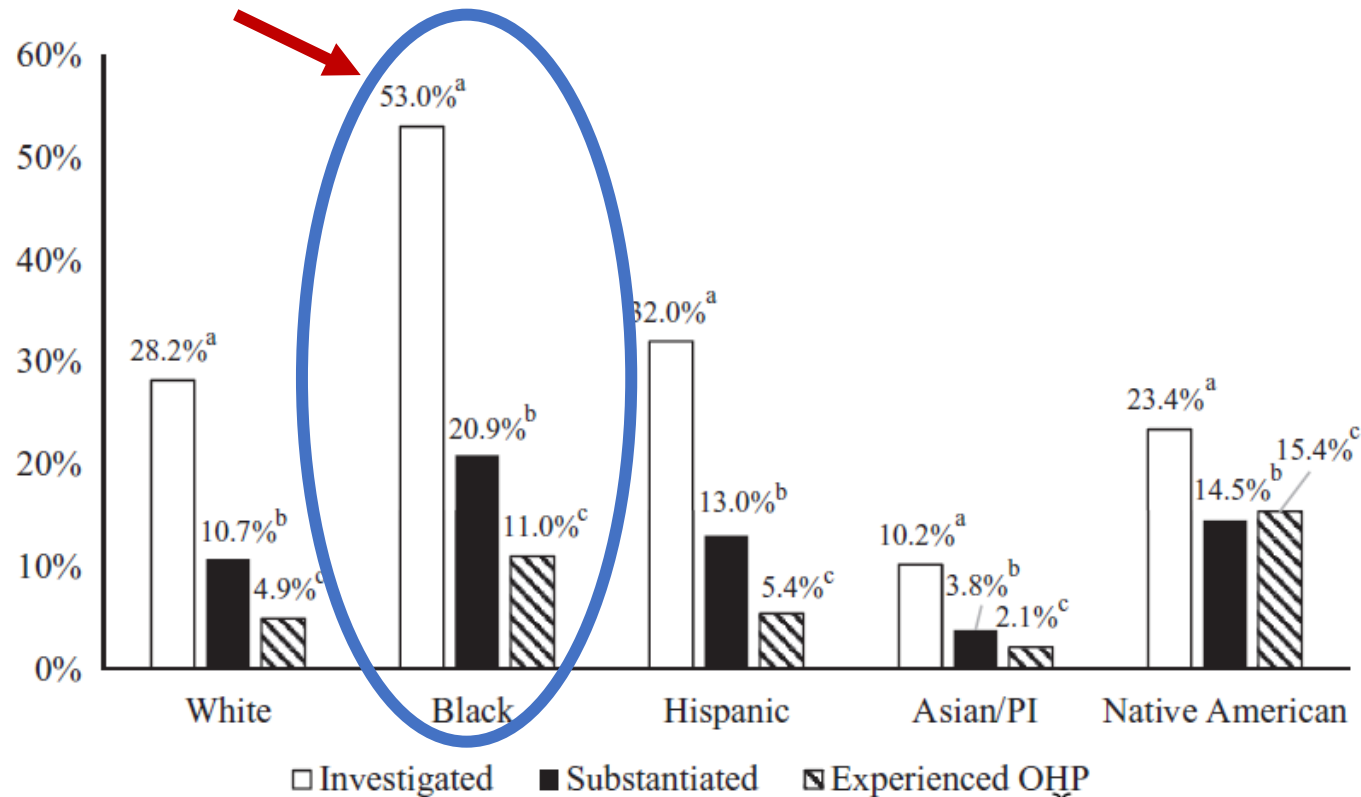
Note: "Other or multiple races" includes all respondents who identified as Asian, American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, Pacifica Islander, other race, and those who reported more than one racial identification. Roughly 69 percent and 23 percent of respondents in this grouping reported more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

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

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

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

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



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

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

Economic & Concrete Supports:

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

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

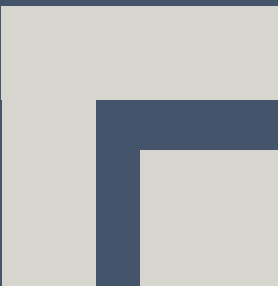
Economic & concrete supports to stabilize families and prevent child welfare involvement may be a mechanism to **reduce racial disparities**



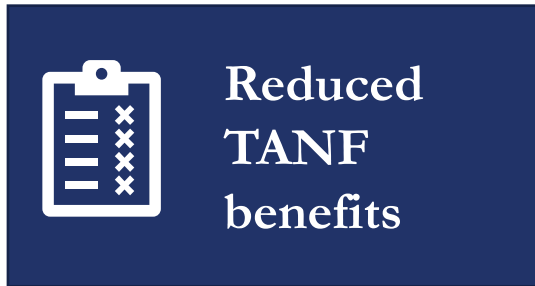
Due to systemic inequities, families of color are **more likely to experience economic hardship** & this may contribute to their disproportionate child welfare involvement

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

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



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

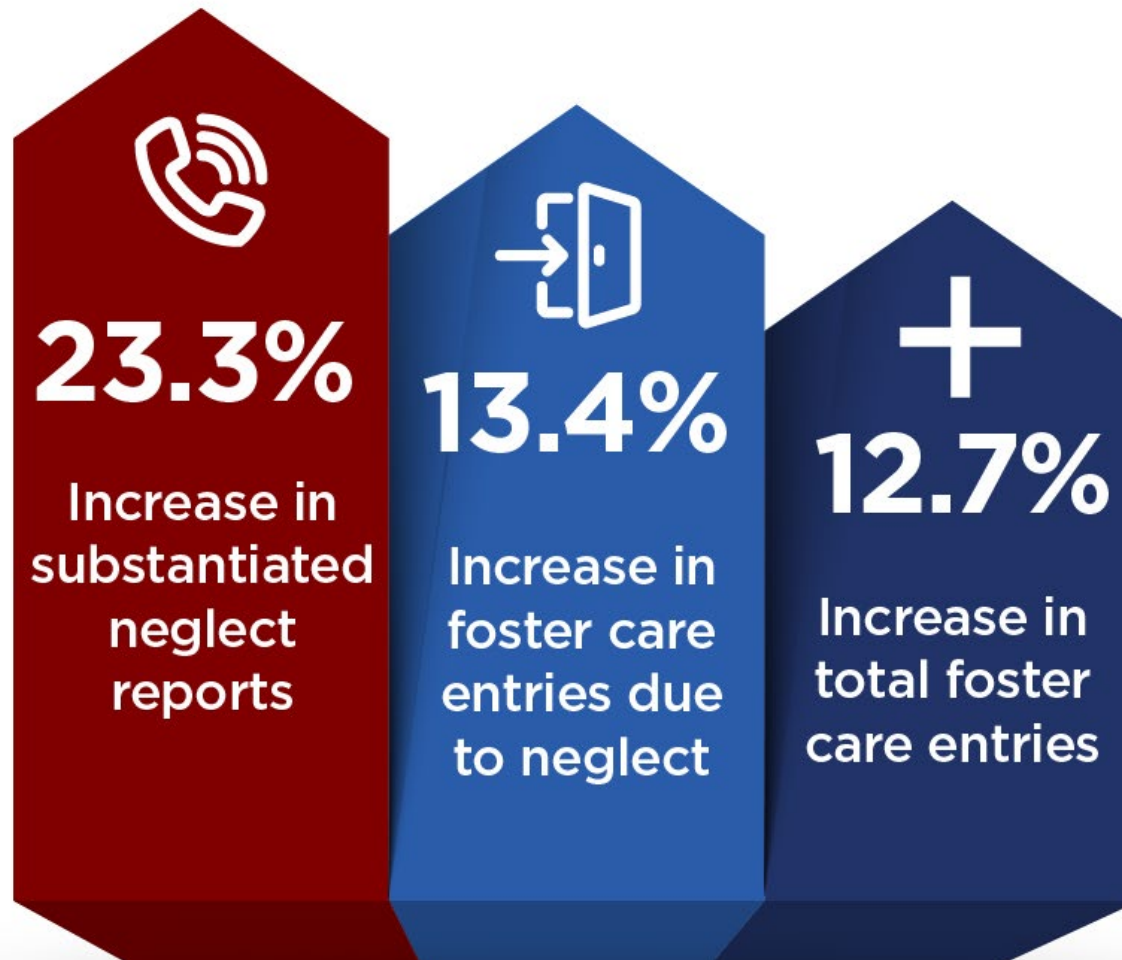


= ↑ **Increased risk
for child welfare
involvement**

(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:

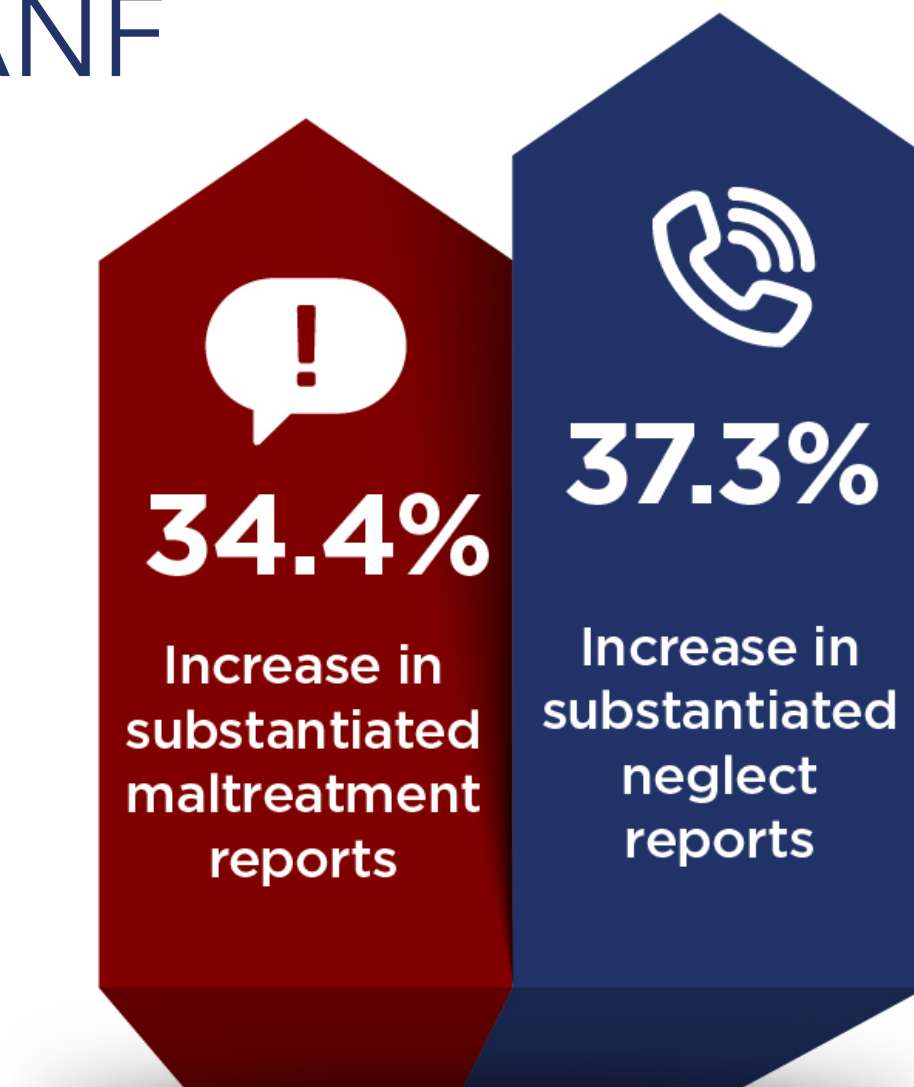


Reminder: The first statutory goal of TANF is to support needy families so that children can remain safely at home or with relatives.

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*)

Lack of Access to TANF

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



(Ginther, 2017)

(Increases observed from 2004 to 2015)

Reduced State Public Benefits

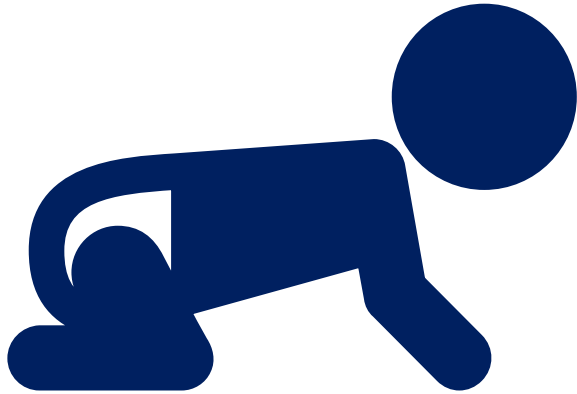


- Reductions in state public benefit levels (*AFDC/TANF plus the value of food stamps*) are associated with **higher numbers of children in foster care**
- Lifetime limits on receipt of TANF benefits & sanctions for noncompliance are associated with **higher levels of substantiated maltreatment**

(Paxson, 2002)

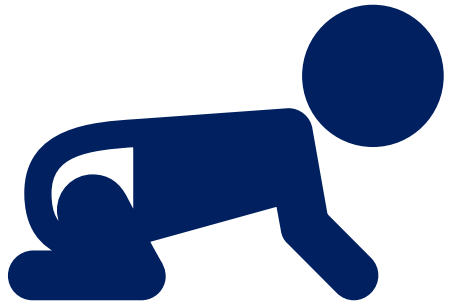
(Paxson, 2003)

Lack of Access to Child Care



- For every additional child care concern reported by families receiving TANF, the **risk of supervisory child neglect increases by 20%**
- Mothers entering substance 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 difficulty securing child care*)
 - Difficulty finding child care was a stronger predictor of maternal neglect than almost any other factor measured in this study, including mental health & severity of drug use

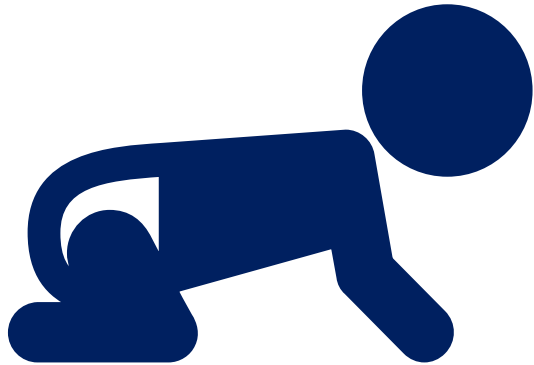
Lack of Access to Child Care Subsidies



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

- Only **14% of children** eligible for child care assistance receives 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**

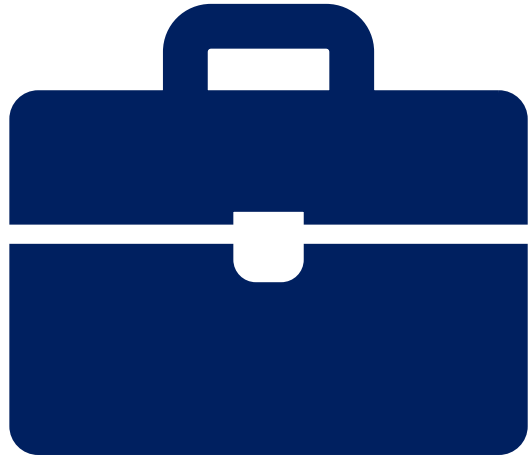
Lack of Access to Child Care



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*)

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)

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*)

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

(Fowler, 2013)

(Warren, 2015)

([ACF Dear Colleague Letter](#), 2021) ([NCTSN](#), 2005)

“

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

”

Housing Insecurity - Evictions



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

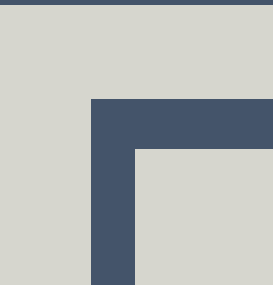
1 in 4 children born in large U.S. cities who are living
in deep poverty will experience at least one eviction
for nonpayment of rent by age 16

Housing Insecurity - Foreclosures



- Households experiencing a foreclosure filing in next 6–12 months are at **70% greater risk of a CPS investigation** (*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

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



Increased Access to These Economic & Concrete Supports (ECS) Is Associated with Decreased 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

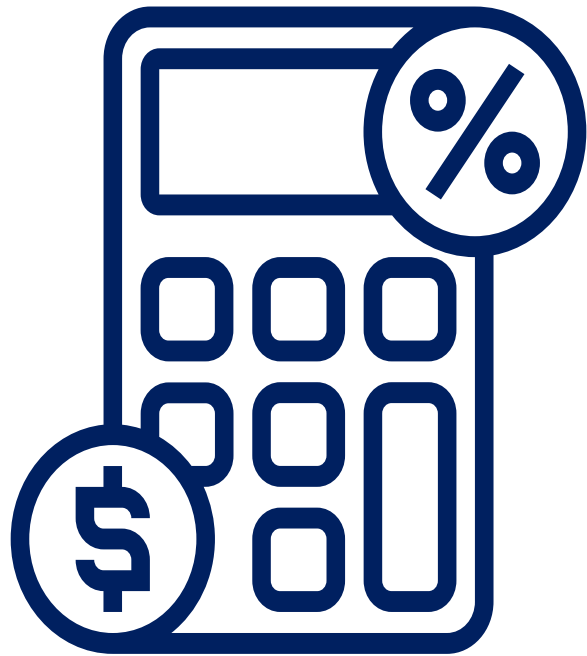
- Differential response
- Family preservation



Public Benefits

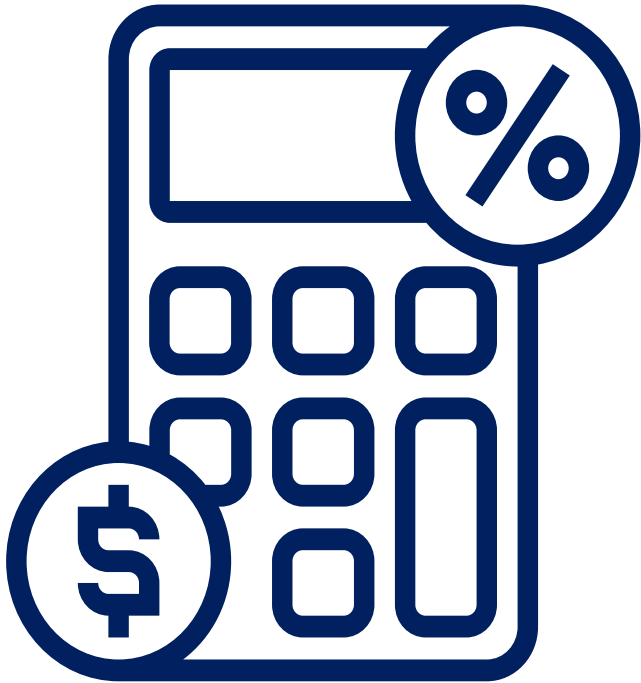
- Overall state spending on benefits
- TANF
- SNAP & WIC

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



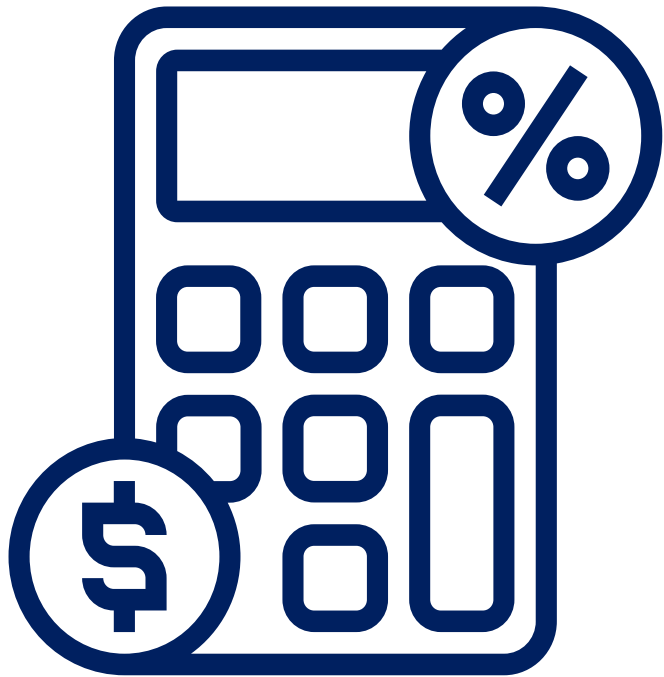
- EITC and CTC payments are associated with **immediate reductions** in state-level child maltreatment reports
- Each additional \$1,000 in per-child EITC and CTC refunds is associated with a decline in state-level child maltreatment reports of:
 - 2.3% in the week of payment
 - 7.7% in the 4 weeks after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

Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)



- A \$1,000 increase in income via EITC is associated with **8–10% reduction in self-reported CPS involvement** for single-mother households that are low income
- Federal expansion of EITC (in 2009) is associated with a **7.4% decrease in foster care entry rates** per year in states with a state-level EITC (*relative to those without*)

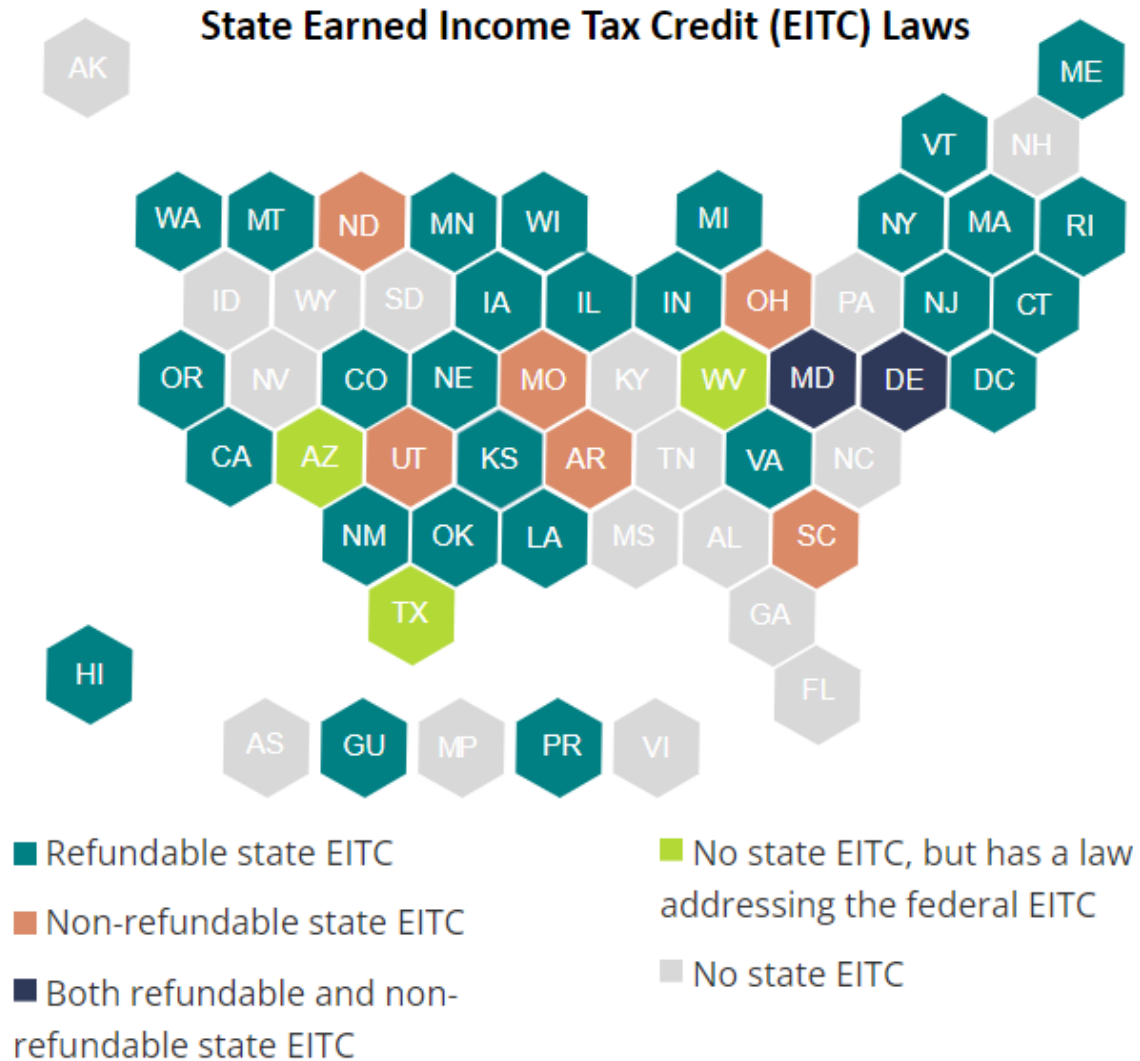
Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)



States with a state-level refundable EITC, compared to those without, had **11% fewer entries into foster care** (*even after controlling for poverty, race, education, and unemployment*)

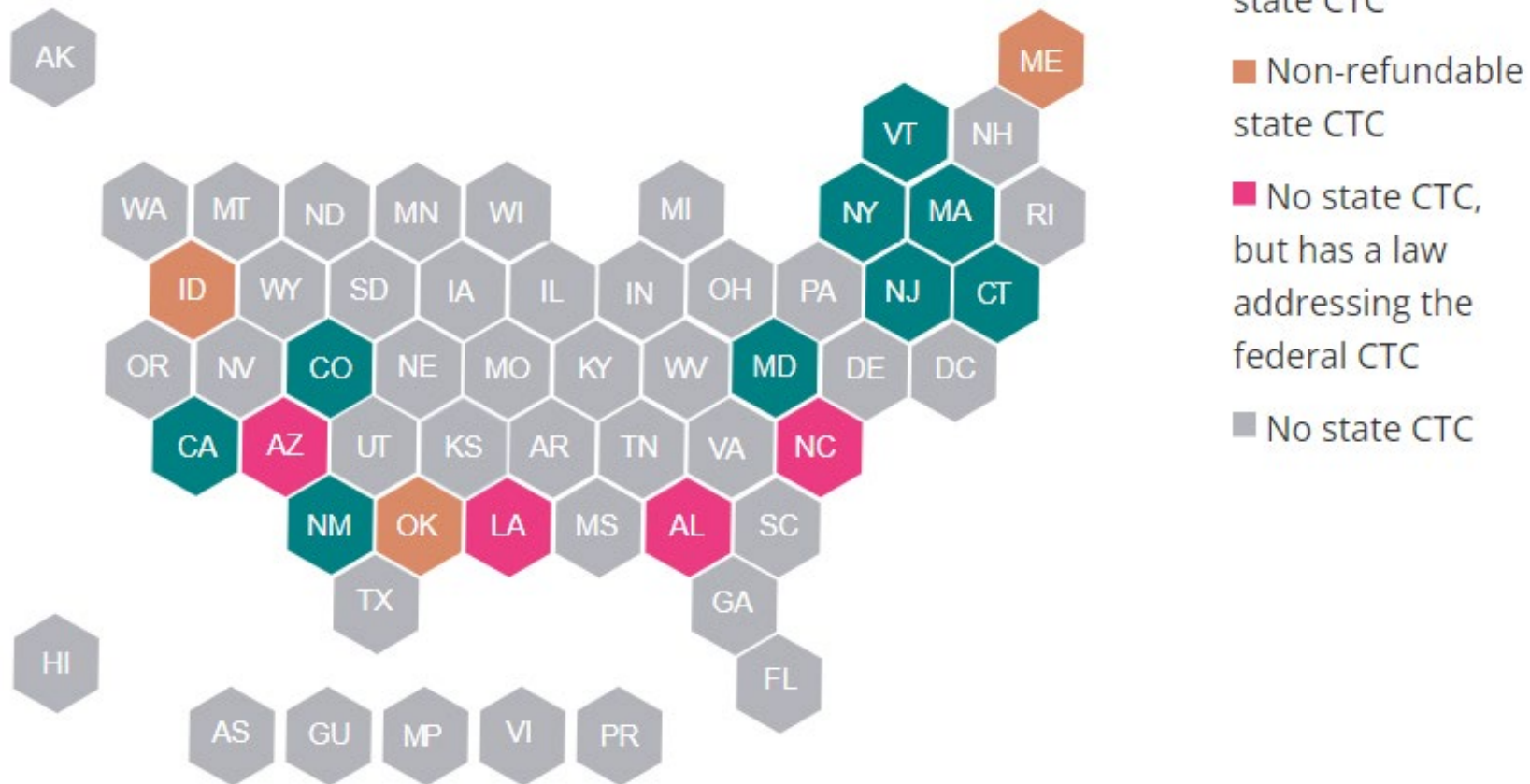
- If states without any EITC implemented a refundable EITC, an average of **668 fewer children would enter foster care** annually in each state

State Policy Option: Establish a State Earned Income Tax Credit



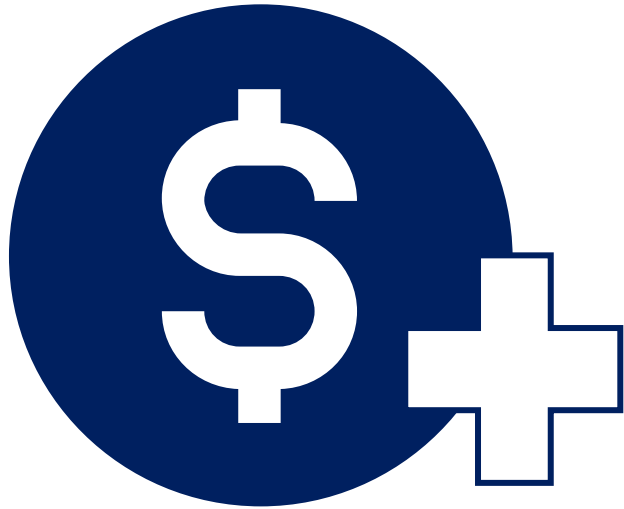
26 states, D.C., Guam & Puerto Rico
have a refundable EITC
(as of August 2022)

State Policy Option: Establish a State Child Tax Credit



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

Minimum Wage

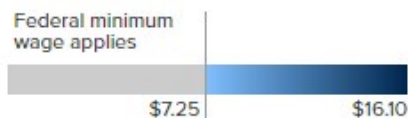


- States that increased the minimum wage beyond \$7.25 per hour experienced a **reduction in child maltreatment reports**
- For every \$1 increase in the minimum wage, there was a **9.6% reduction in neglect reports**
(primarily for children < 12 years)

State Policy Option: Establish or Increase Minimum Wage

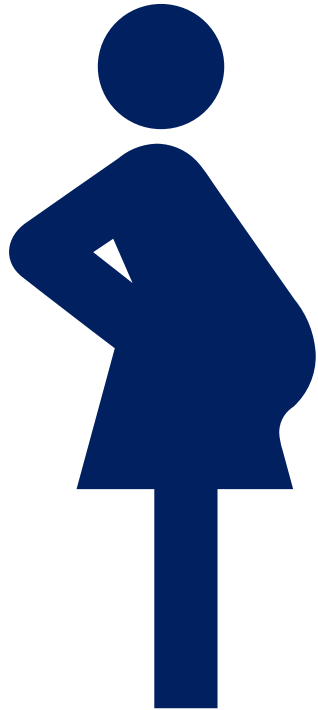


- **18 states + D.C.** have adopted minimum wages of \$12 or higher
- The current federal minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour is now **worth less than at any point since 1956**
- A worker paid the current federal minimum wage earns **40% less** than a minimum wage worker in 1968
(as of January 2023)



([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)

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)

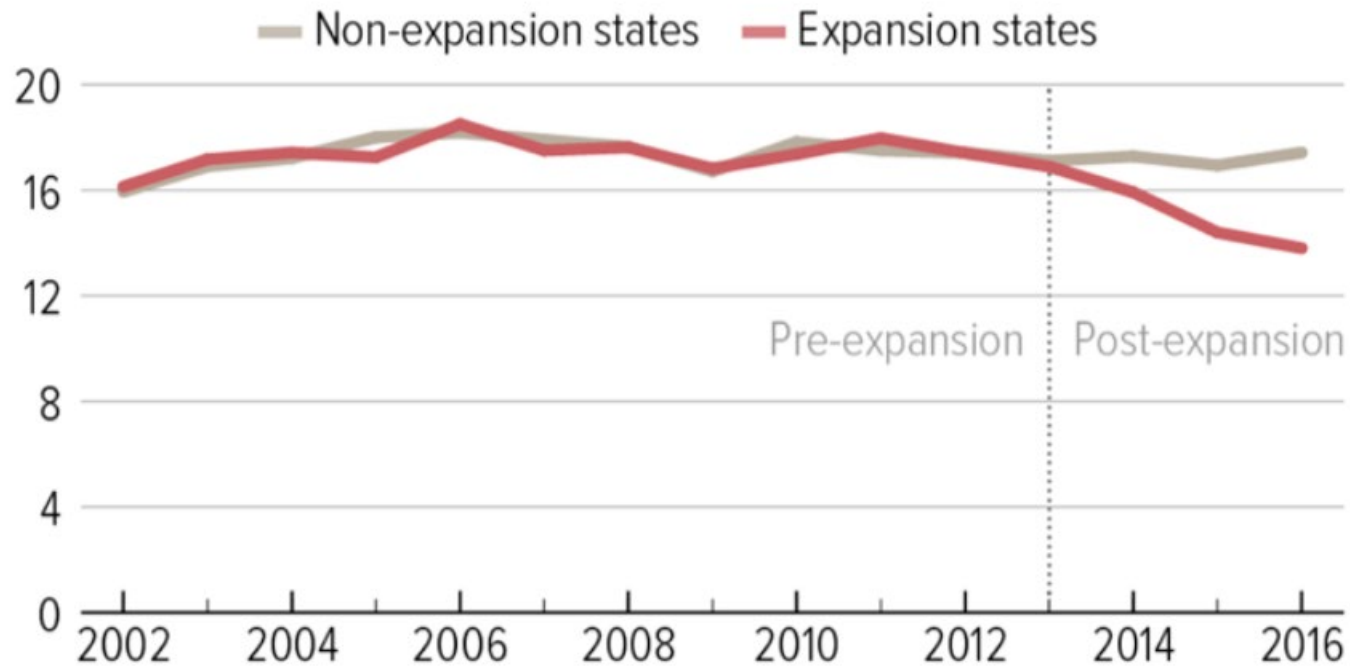
- Almost **60%** of uninsured children are eligible for Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)
- **7.6%** of children in non-expansion states, compared to 3.8% of children in expansion states, are uninsured *(as of 2019)*



Medicaid Expansion & Housing Stability

Evictions Fell Sharply in Medicaid Expansion States

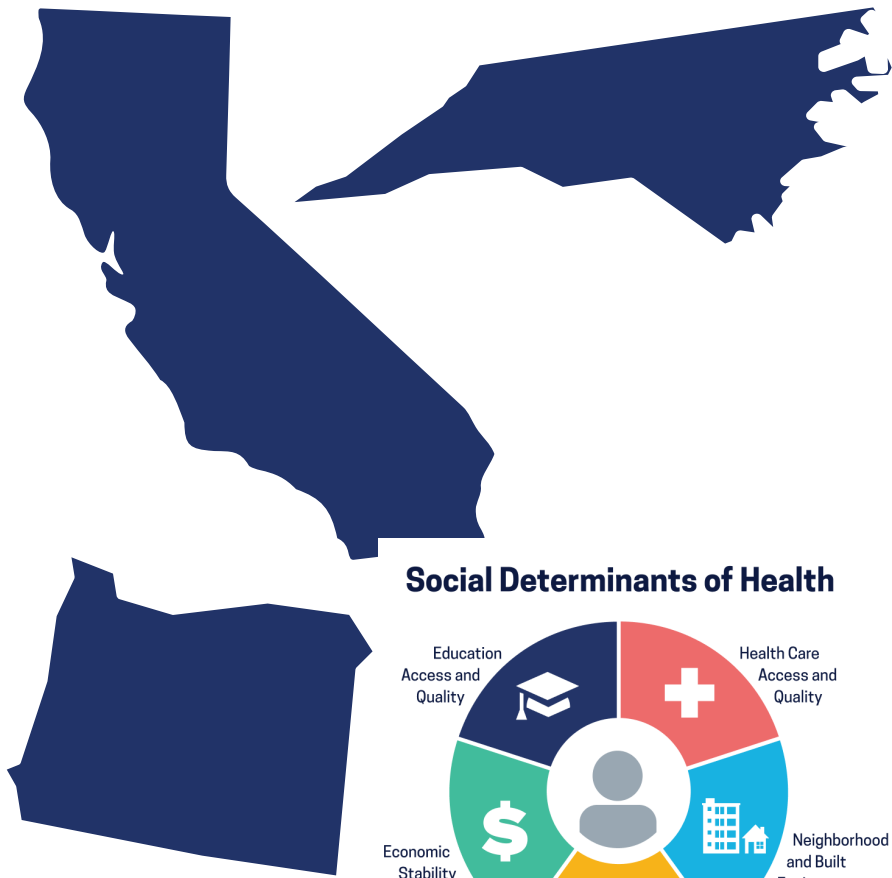
Evictions per 1,000 renter-occupied households



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



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

California – [CalAIM](#) (2022)

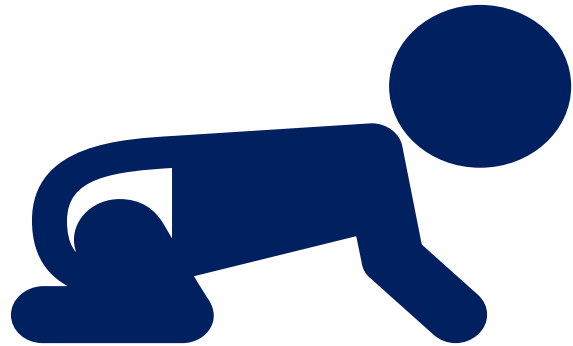
Oregon – [Oregon Health Plan](#) (2022)

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

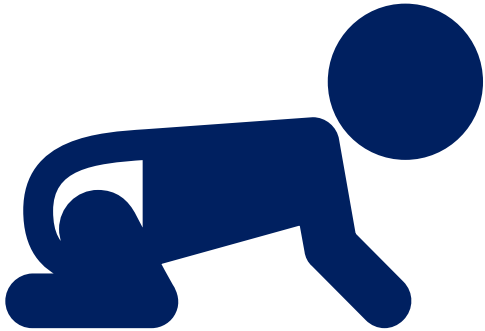


Child Care Subsidies



States with more flexible Child Care & Development Fund (CCDF) program policies regarding subsidies for child welfare-supervised children have, on average, **fewer child removals** than other states

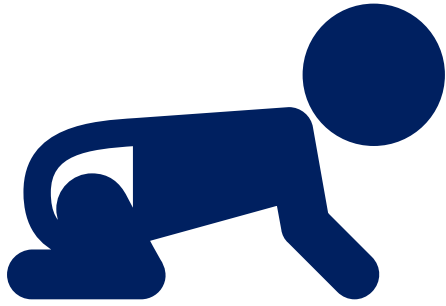
Child Care Subsidies



Each additional month that mothers who are low income receive a child care subsidy is associated with a **16% decrease in the odds of a neglect report** *(in the following 12 months)*

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

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
justice costs

Improved health
& healthy
behaviors

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

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

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 at the 20-month follow-up:

- **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

(Gubits, 2015) (RCT)

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

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)

- Will provide **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%**

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

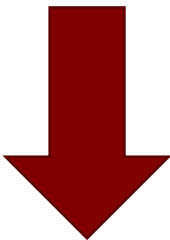
Policy Example: Flexible Funds to Meet Economic & Concrete Needs of Families with Children at Risk of Removal



From SFY 2019 to SFY 2021



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



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

Kentucky – SFY 2022 budget

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

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

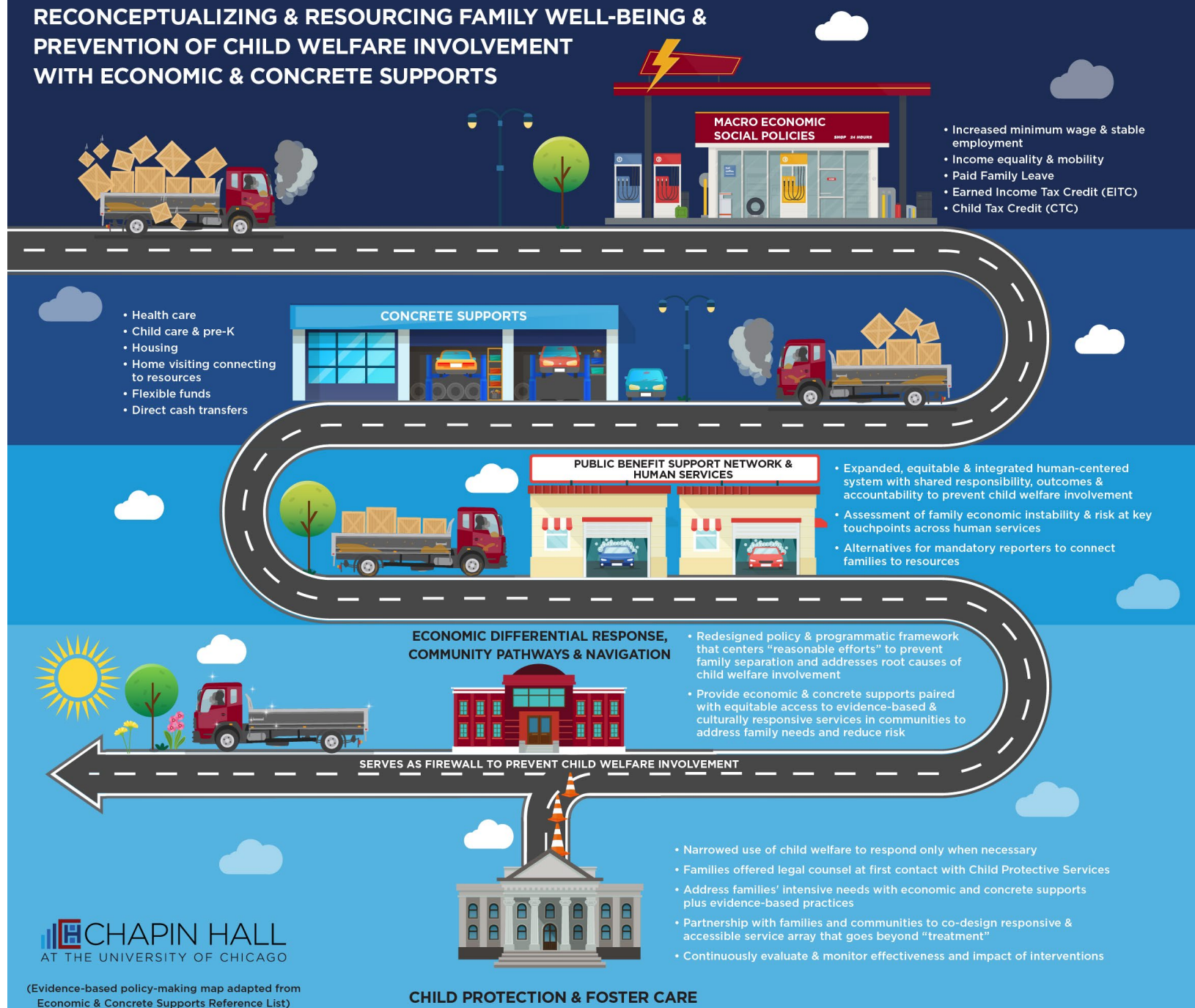
([Kentucky Interim Joint Committee on Health, Welfare & Family Services](#), July 21, 2021)

Integrating Family First and Flexible Funding



- FFPSA created opportunity to leverage additional funding to expand services to match need for first time ever
- Homebuilders and Motivational Interviewing were already part of FPP services
- Added other EBPs and increased total investment in prevention services each year
- **Flexible funding** is a component of all FFPSA services in Kentucky

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



Supporting Families in Ohio: Select Examples



Providing Economic and Concrete Supports in Ohio: Select Examples

- Family Success Network (Ohio Children's Trust Fund)
 - Columbiana
 - Mahoning
 - Trumbull
- Kinship Support Program
- Kinship Supports Intervention





OhioKAN is a flexible and responsive kinship and adoption navigator program designed to support children, youth and their families. Building on the premise that families are inherently capable of finding solutions to the circumstances and challenges they face, the OhioKAN program will take an inclusive, engaging, and genuine approach to strengthening families and their networks.

Questions and discussion



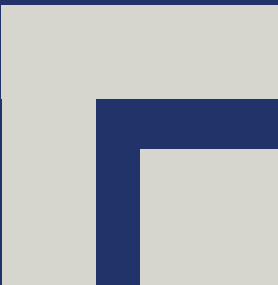
Resources

System Transformation to Promote Child and Family Well-Being: The Central Role of Economic and Concrete Supports

<https://www.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/Economic-and-Concrete-Supports.pdf>

Child and Family Well-being System: Economic and Concrete Supports as a Core Component (slide deck)

<https://www.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/Economic-Supports-deck.pdf>



Speaker contact information

Krista Thomas
Senior Policy Fellow
847-372-3895
kthomas@chapinhall.org