

TANF & Child Welfare Collaboration:

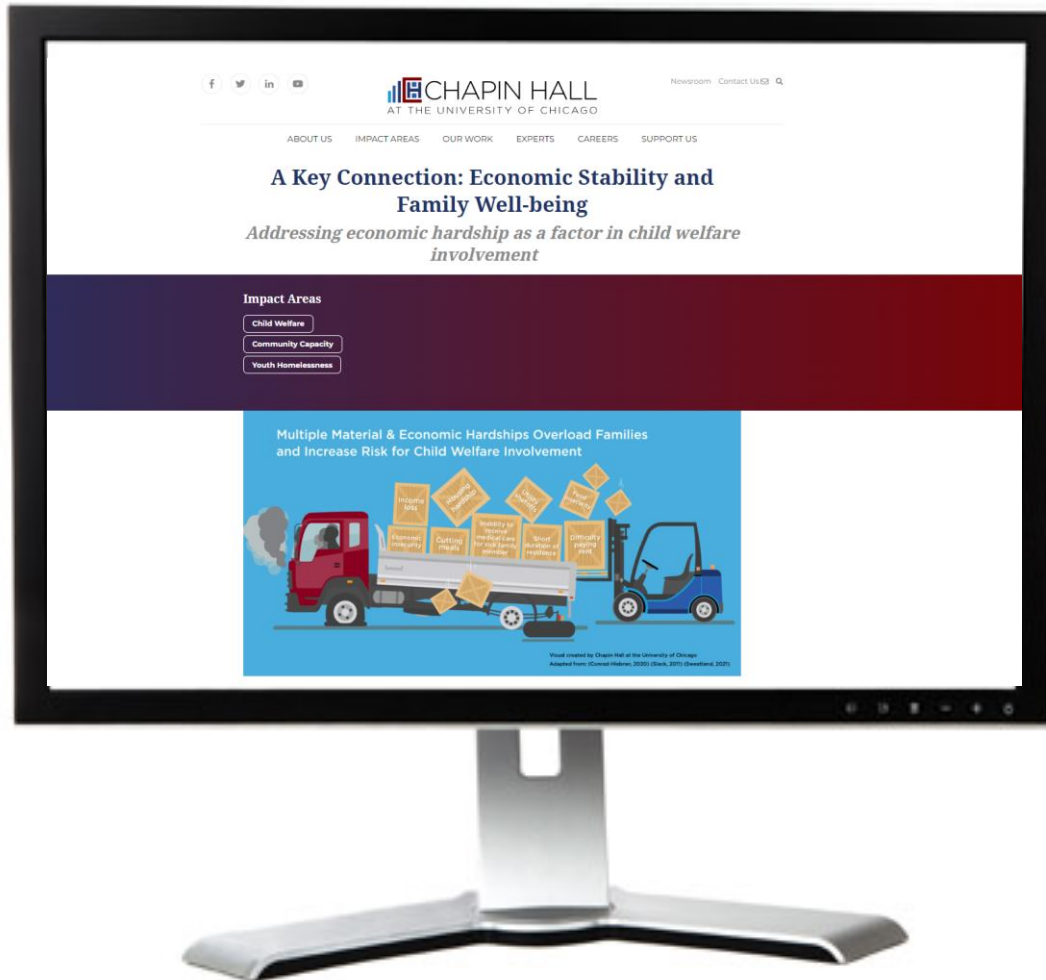
Preventative Strategies Focused on Family Well-Being: A Review of the Evidence & Implications for Practice

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Chapin Hall Resources



Chapinhall.org/ecspjroject

(Weiner, Anderson & Thomas, 2021)

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

Historical & Contemporary Context

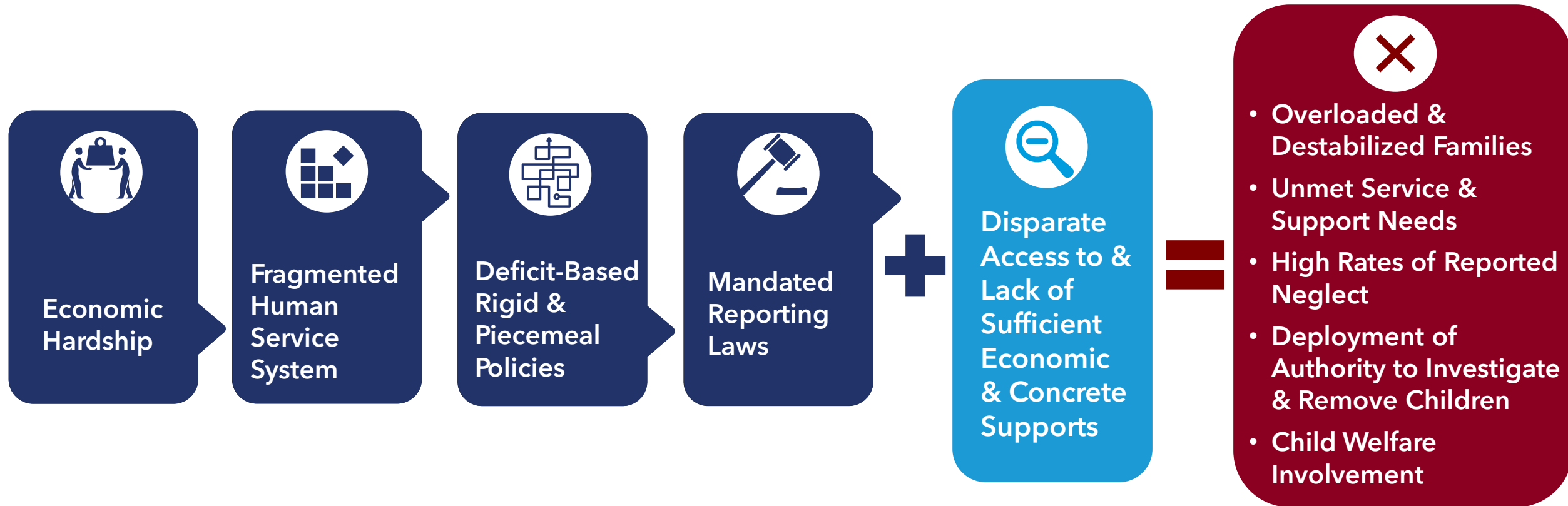


Child Welfare's Historic Structure

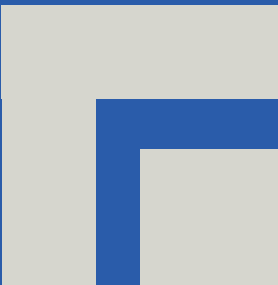
- Child welfare has been **reactive**—responding to allegations of maltreatment with investigations & foster care
- From the onset of child and family services, **policymakers repeatedly separated programs designed to address poverty from programs designed to protect children**
- **Prevention** services 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

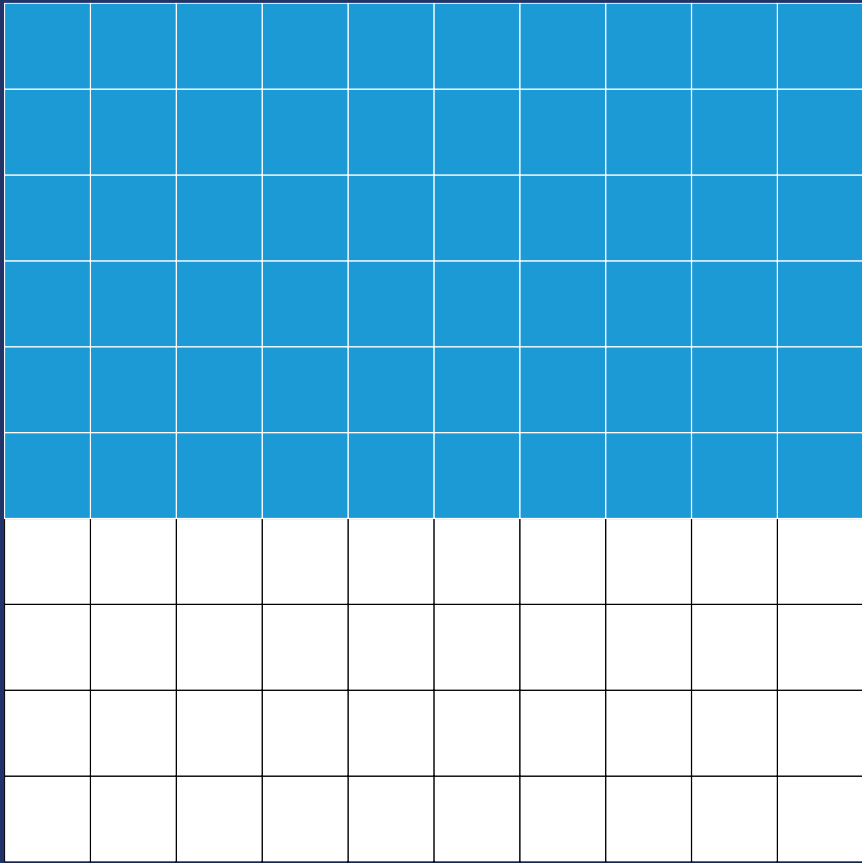


Impact of Historical Policy Choices



Overview of Family Economic Insecurity, Income & Child Welfare Involvement





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 **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**



(Conrad-Hiebner, 2020
systematic review)

Strongest predictors of investigated neglect reports



(Slack, 2011
cross-study comparison)

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

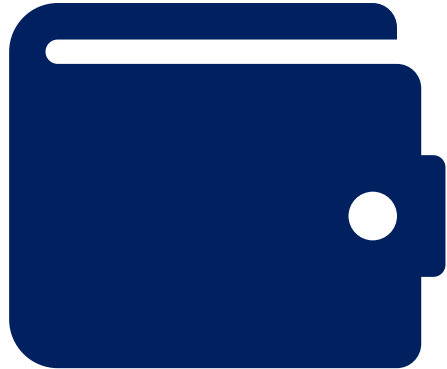
- Experiencing a **negative earnings shock** (*quarterly reduction in earnings of 30% or more*):
 - Increases risk of subsequent CPS investigation by 18%
 - Increases risk of physical abuse investigation by 26%
- Each additional negative earnings shock is associated with a **15% greater likelihood**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

(Cancian, 2013)
(randomized controlled trial - RCT)

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

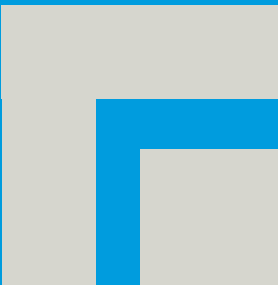
(Federal Child Welfare Policy Manual,
[8.4C Question 5](#))

“

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.

”

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



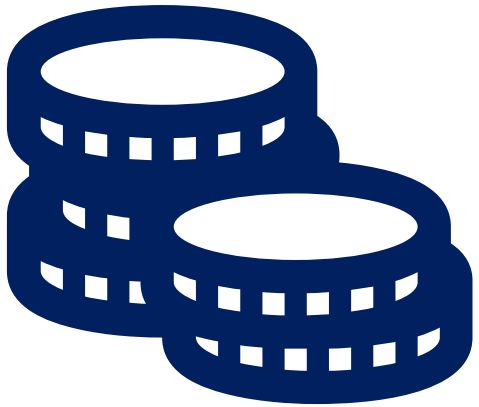
Almost 50% of those who become poor are out of poverty a year later



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

Family Income Instability Increases Risk for Child Welfare Involvement

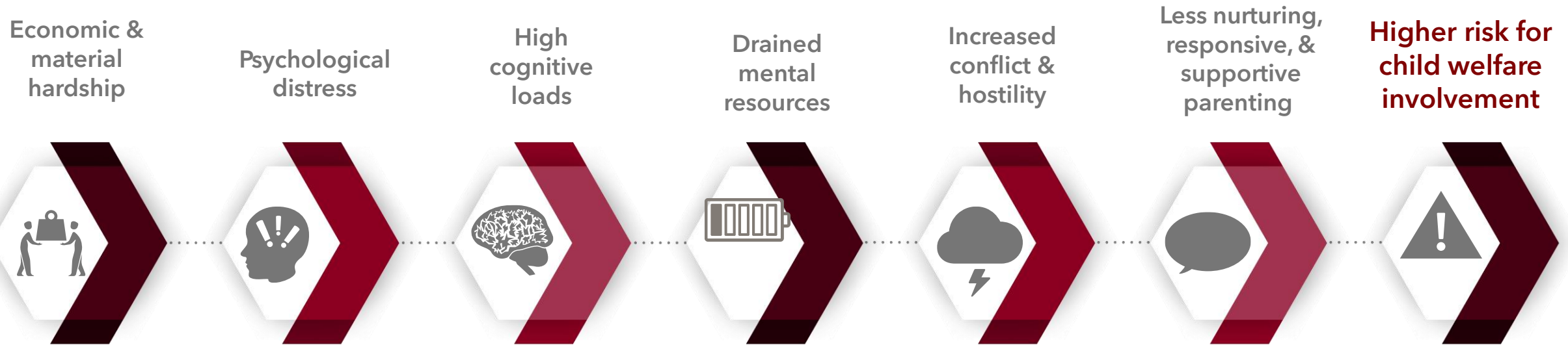


Low-income families at risk for child welfare involvement who have experienced **income instability** in the past year (*including changes in both earnings and public benefits*) are at **increased risk for CPS investigations**, even after controlling for household income level

- 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



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

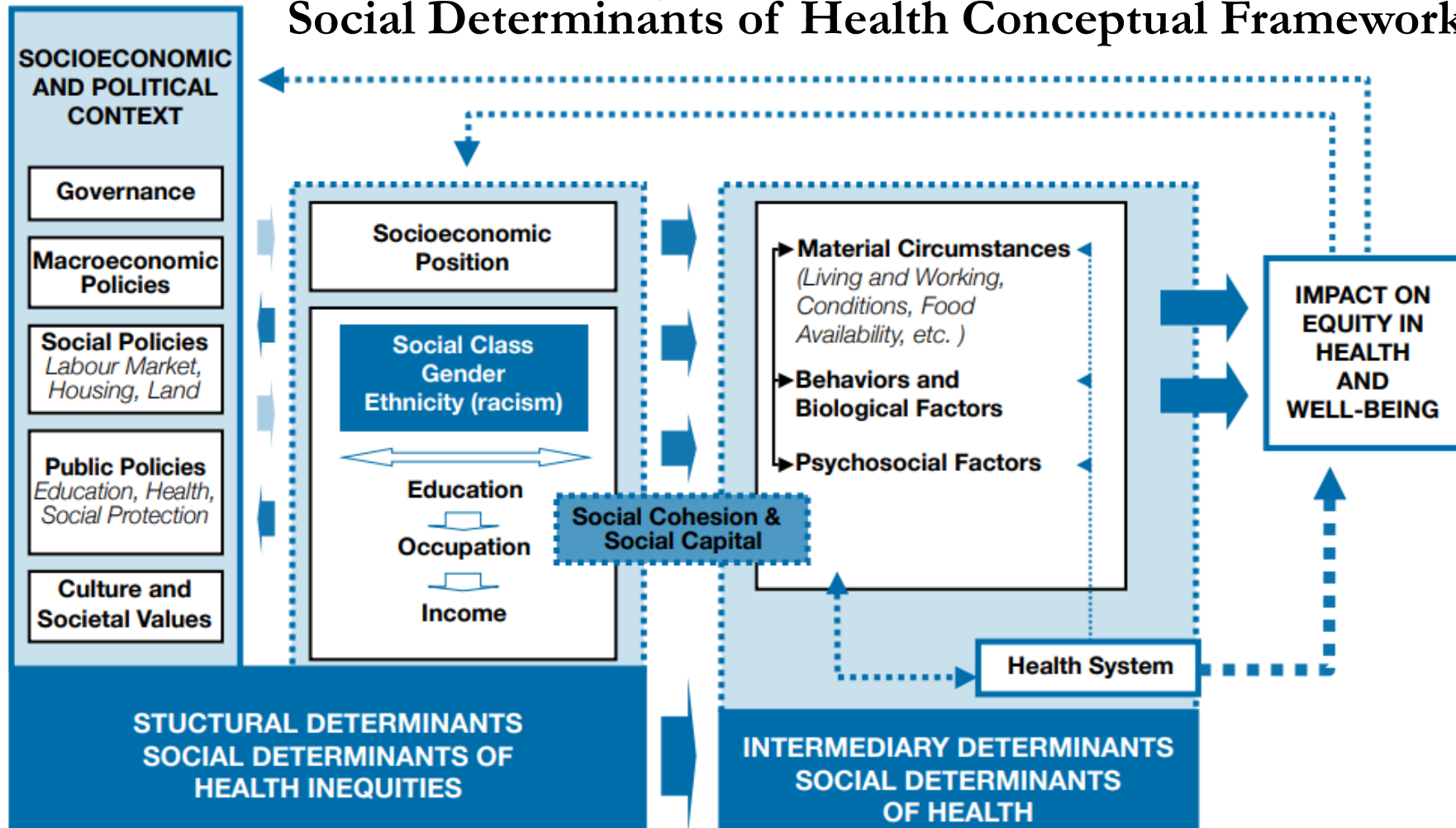


Visual created by Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago

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)

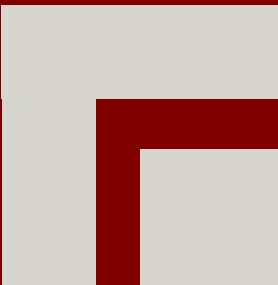
([*A Roadmap to Reducing Child Poverty*](#), 2019)

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

“Reports alleging child maltreatment and, particularly, child neglect are disproportionately common among low-income families, and existing research suggests that this link is only partially attributable to parental characteristics, suggesting that **substantial resource constraints lead directly to an increased likelihood of CPS involvement.**”

(Bath and Haapala 1993; Putnam-Hornstein and Needell 2011; Berger and Waldfogel 2011; Pelton 1987; Merritt 2020; Fong 2020; Bullinger, Lindo, and Schaller 2021) (Slack et al. 2004; Trickett et al. 1991; Berger 2004; Slack et al. 2011; Yang 2015)

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:

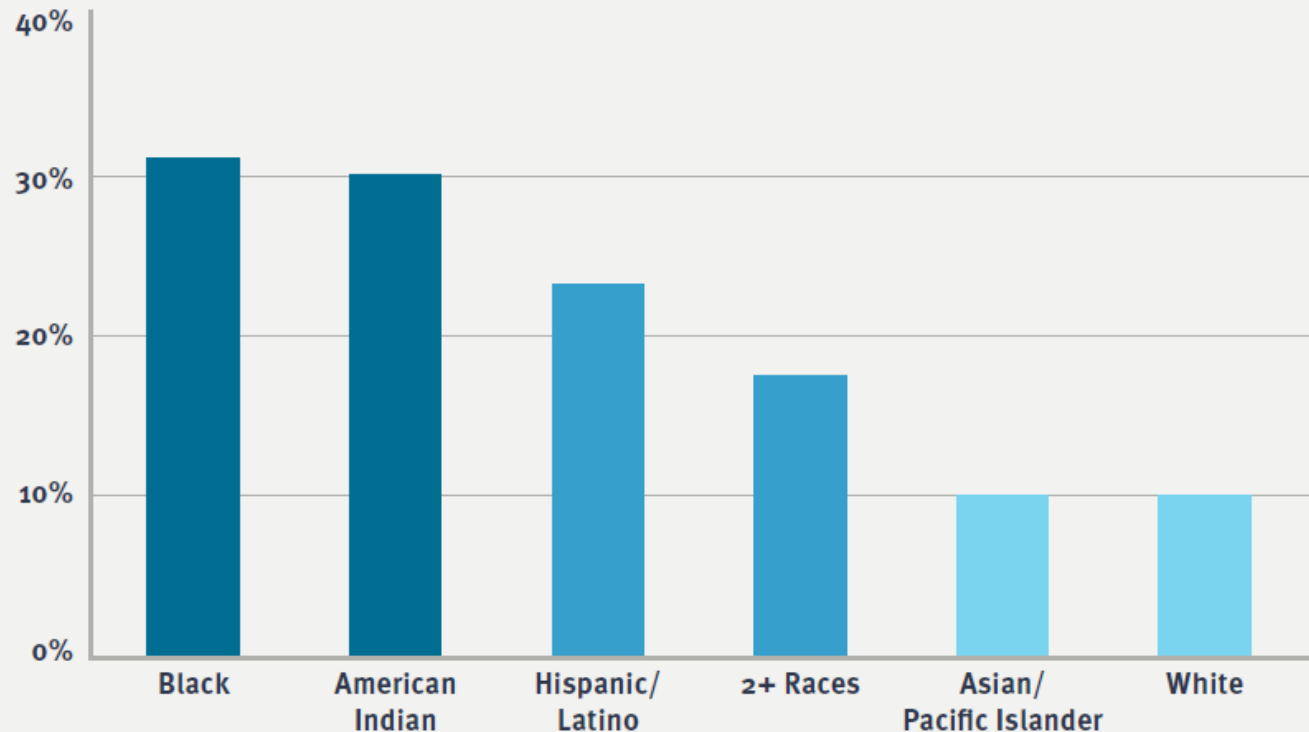
- Exclusion from homeownership via red-lining
- Denial of access to mortgages, banking & financial services
- Lending discrimination
- Exclusionary zoning policies
- Discriminatory federal housing policy
- Residential segregation
- Racially restrictive covenants & laws

- 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)

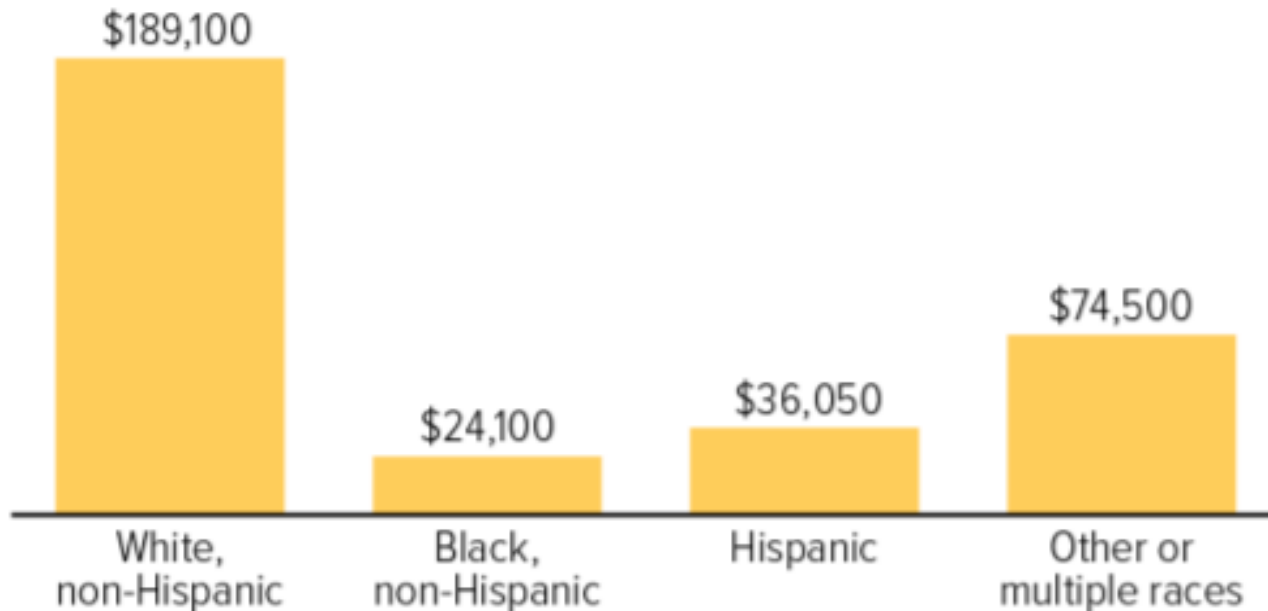
([US Census Bureau](#), 2020)

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

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



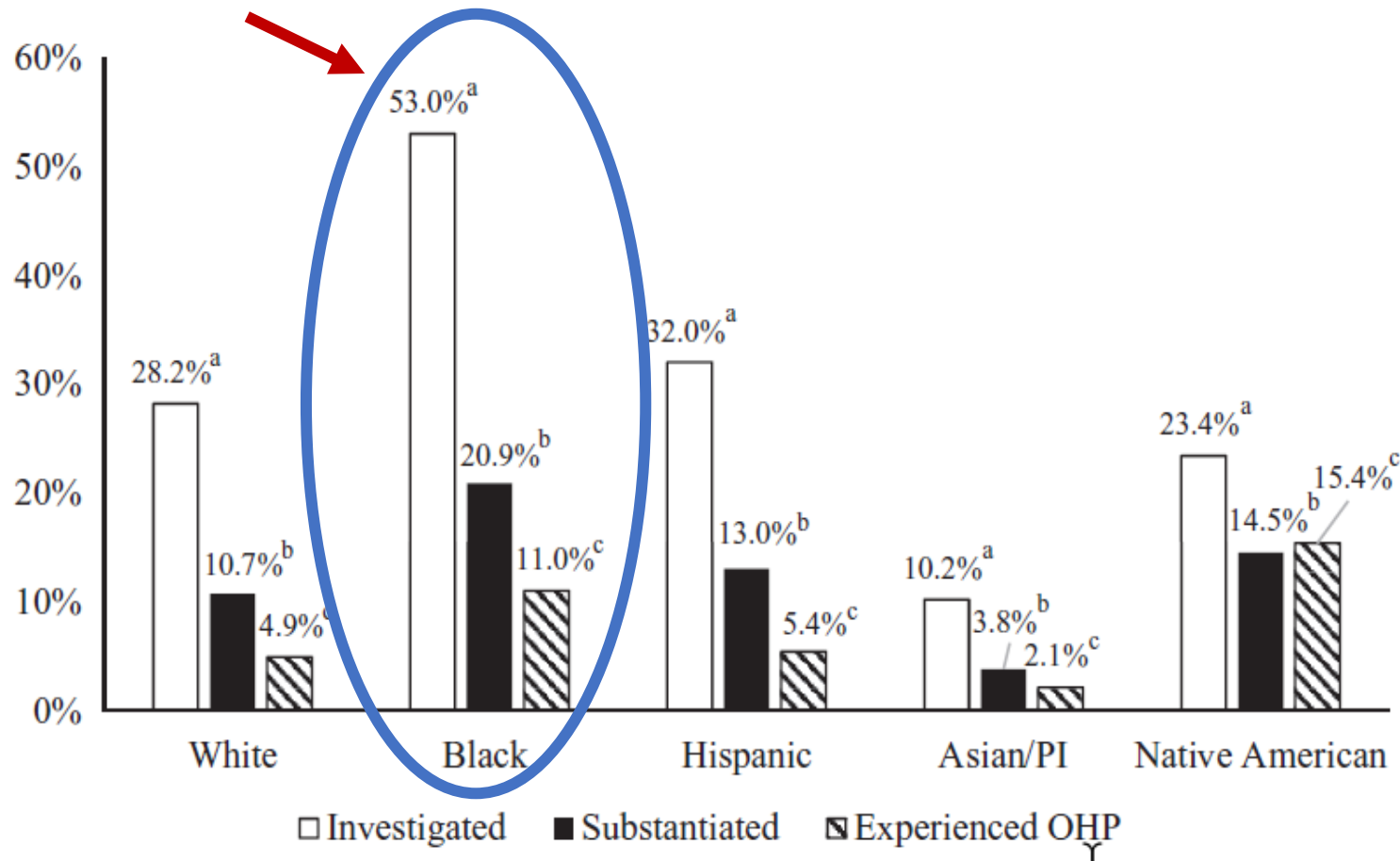
Note: "Other or multiple races" includes all respondents who identified as Asian, American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, Pacifica Islander, other race, and those who reported more than one racial identification. Roughly 69 percent and 23 percent of respondents in this grouping reported more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

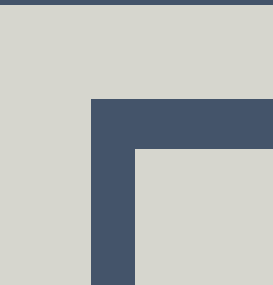
“

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.

”

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

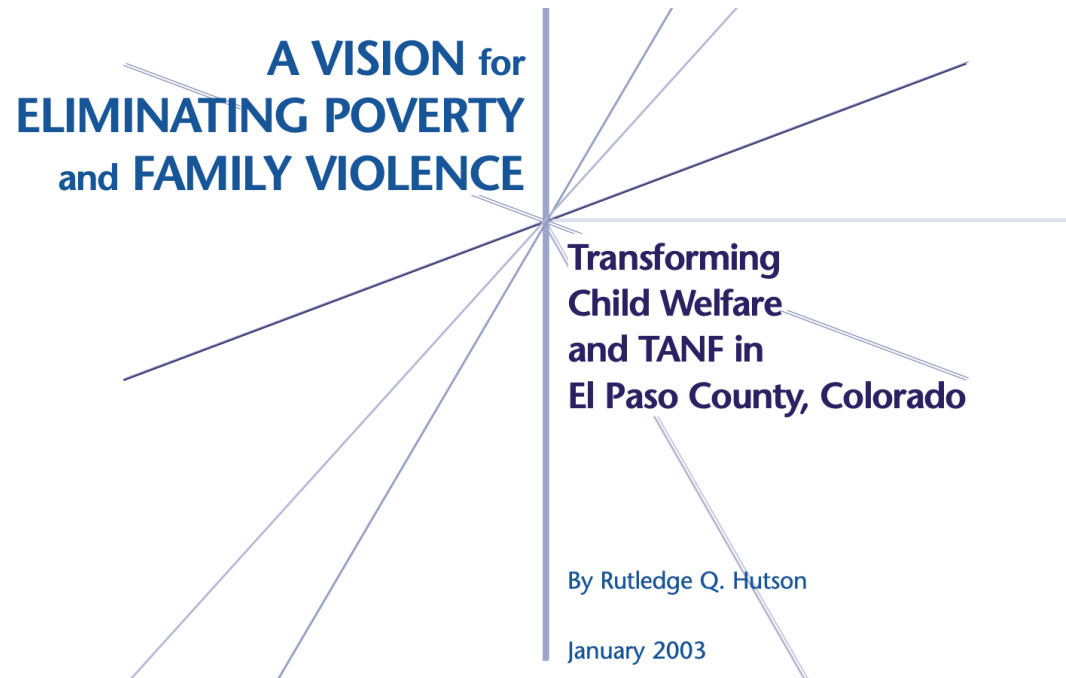
- ❖ Flexible funds
- ❖ In-kind benefits
- ❖ Child care
- ❖ Housing supports
- ❖ SNAP
- ❖ WIC
- ❖ Medicaid
- ❖ Unemployment benefits

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

Access to TANF Benefits & Child Welfare Involvement



"Bold New Vision" from **2003**...



The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program...considers itself a child abuse and neglect prevention program, while the child welfare program considers itself an anti-poverty program.

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)

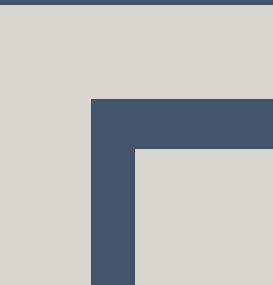
([Child Maltreatment 2019](#))

State Policy Option: TANF Statutory Goal & Reserve Funds

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

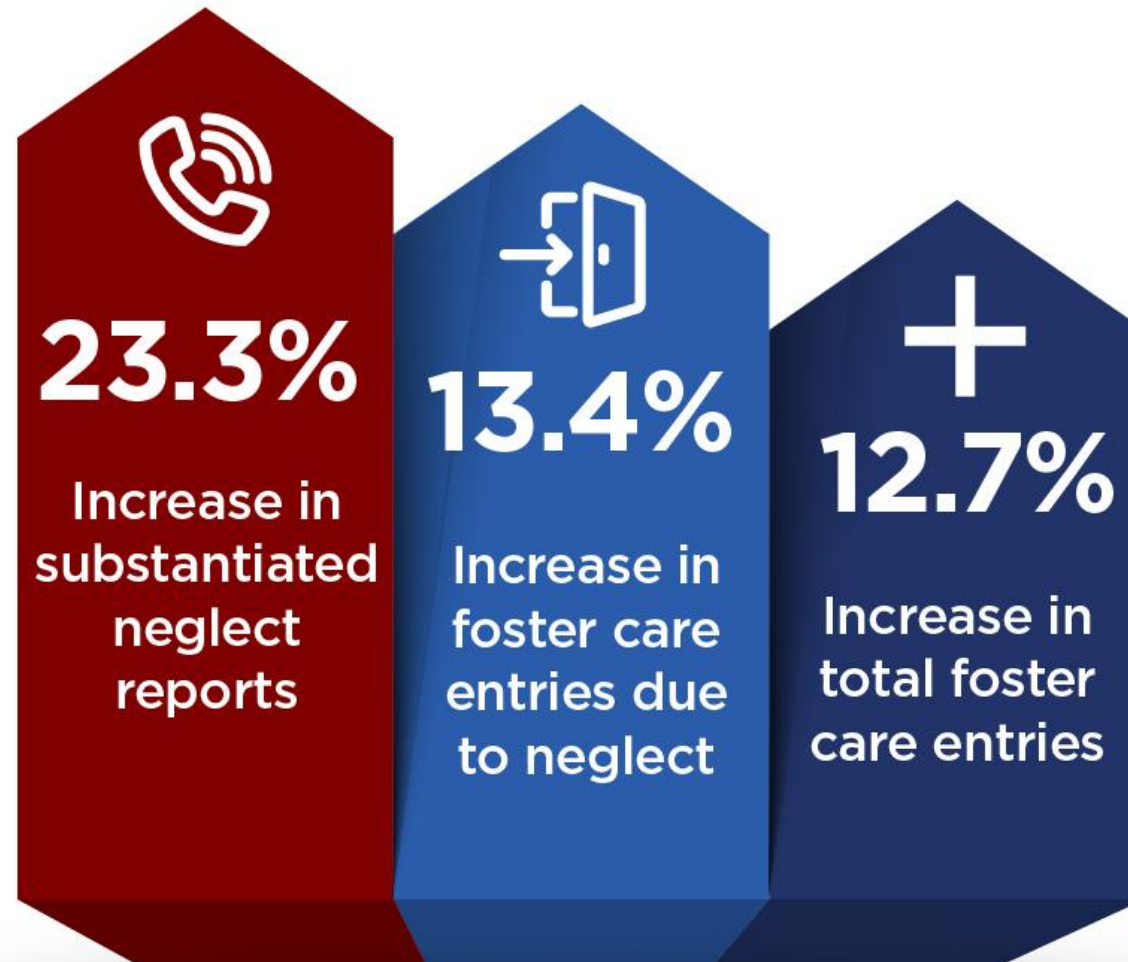
In FY 2021, up to **\$6.2 billion** in federal TANF funds were being held in reserve by states
(ranging per state from \$0 to \$1.2 billion)

What does the evidence suggest happens when access to TANF is **reduced**?

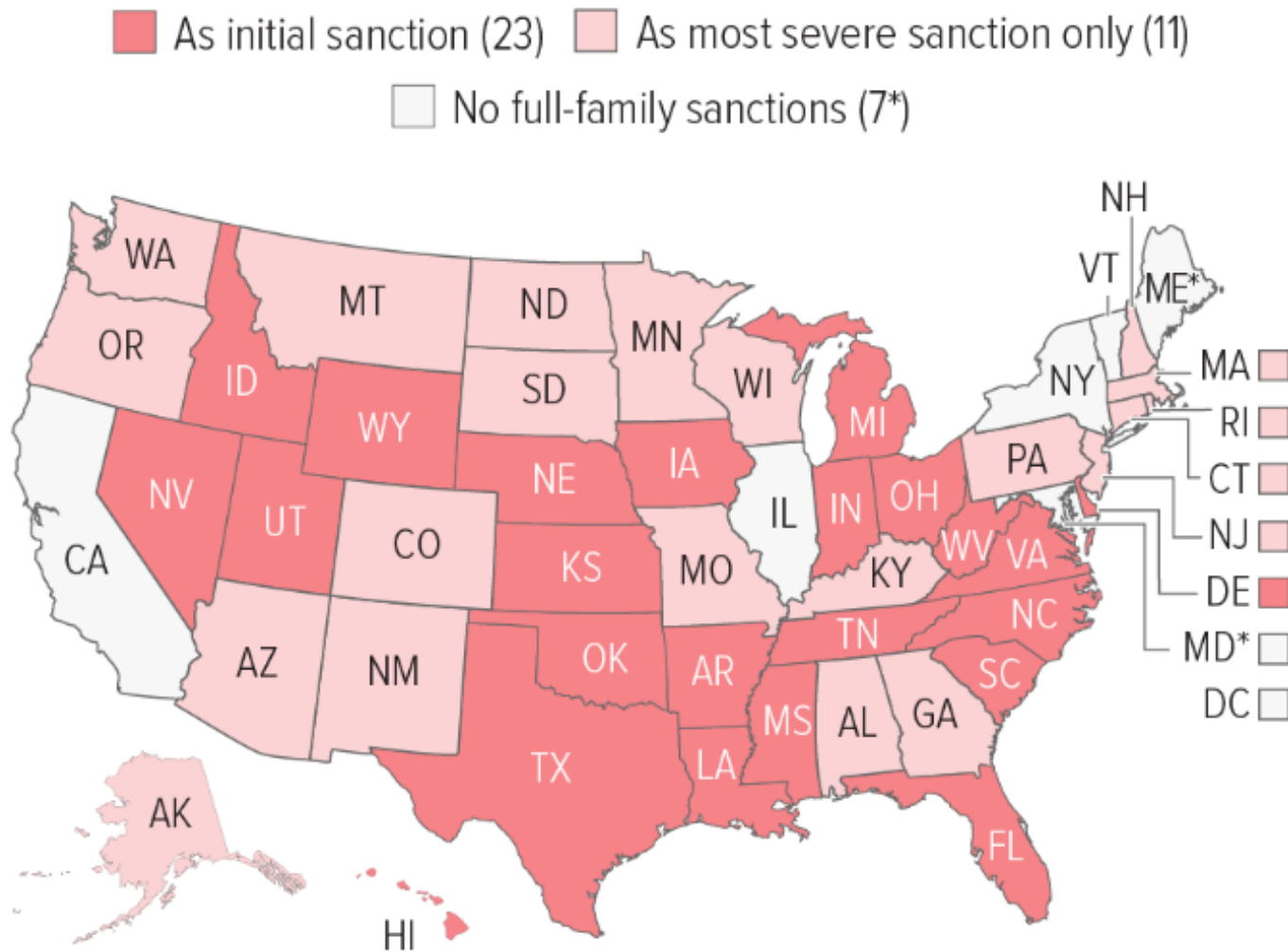


Lack of Access to Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)

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



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.

(Center on Budget and Policy Priorities ([CBPP](#)), 2021)

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

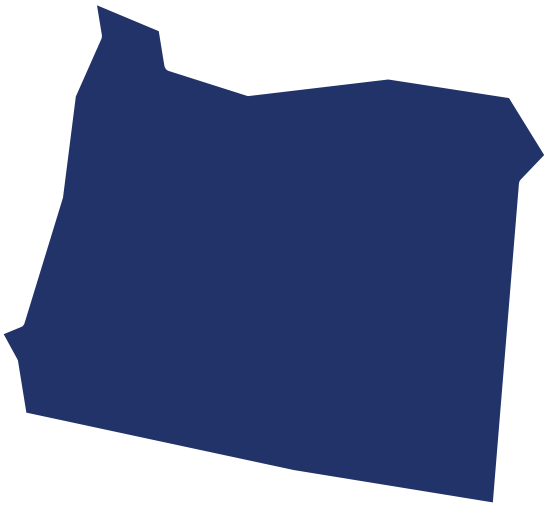
Oregon – [ODHS policy](#) (effective 2023)

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

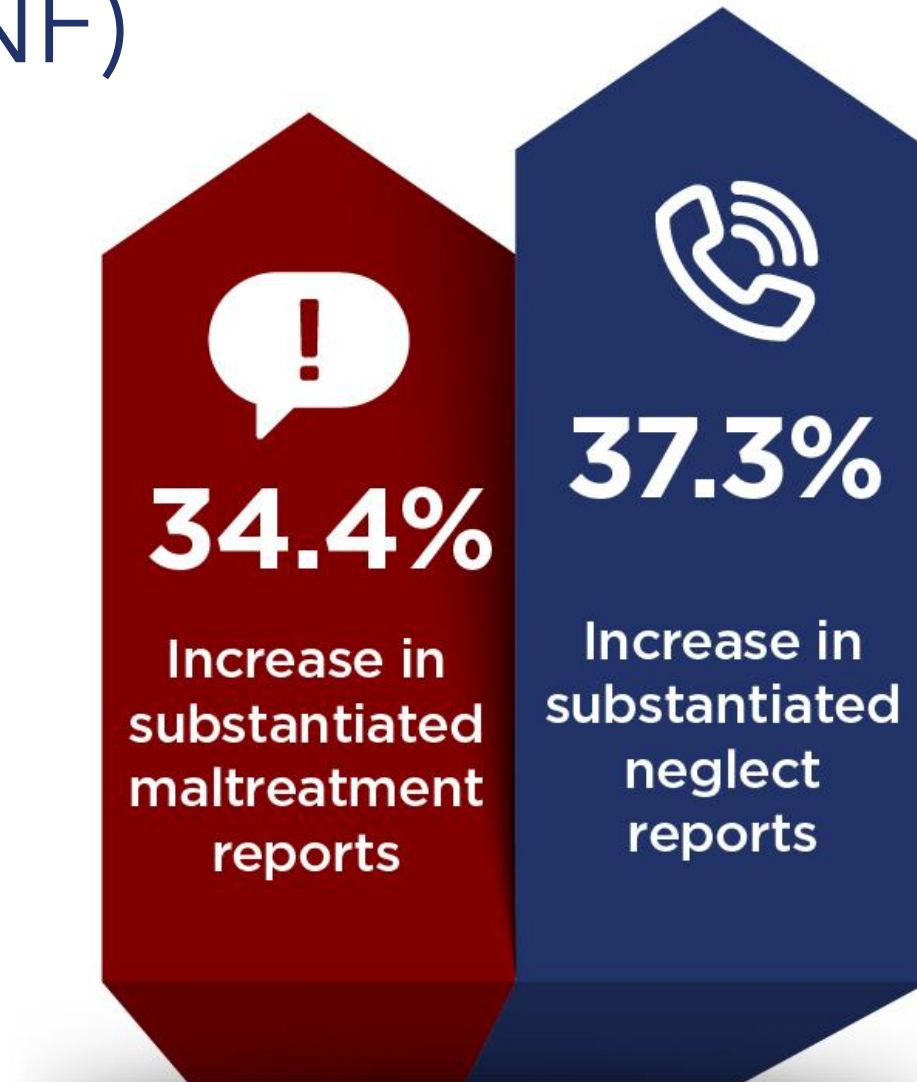
Stated reasons for policy change:

- “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:



(Ginther, 2017)

(Increases observed from 2004 to 2015)

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

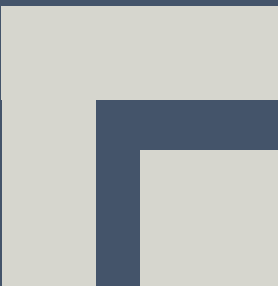
Reduced TANF Cash Benefits

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**

What does the evidence suggest happens when access to TANF is **increased**?



Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)

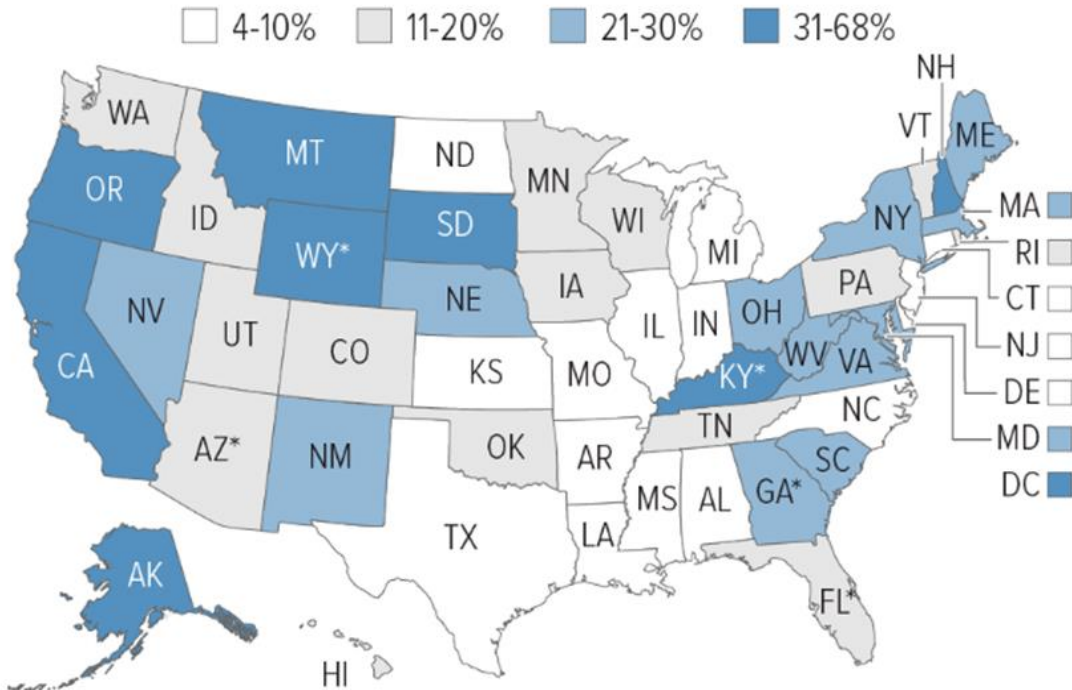


A 10% increase in state public benefit levels (*AFDC/TANF + the value of food stamps*) for a family of four is predicted to **reduce foster care placements by 8%**

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-fact-sheets-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)

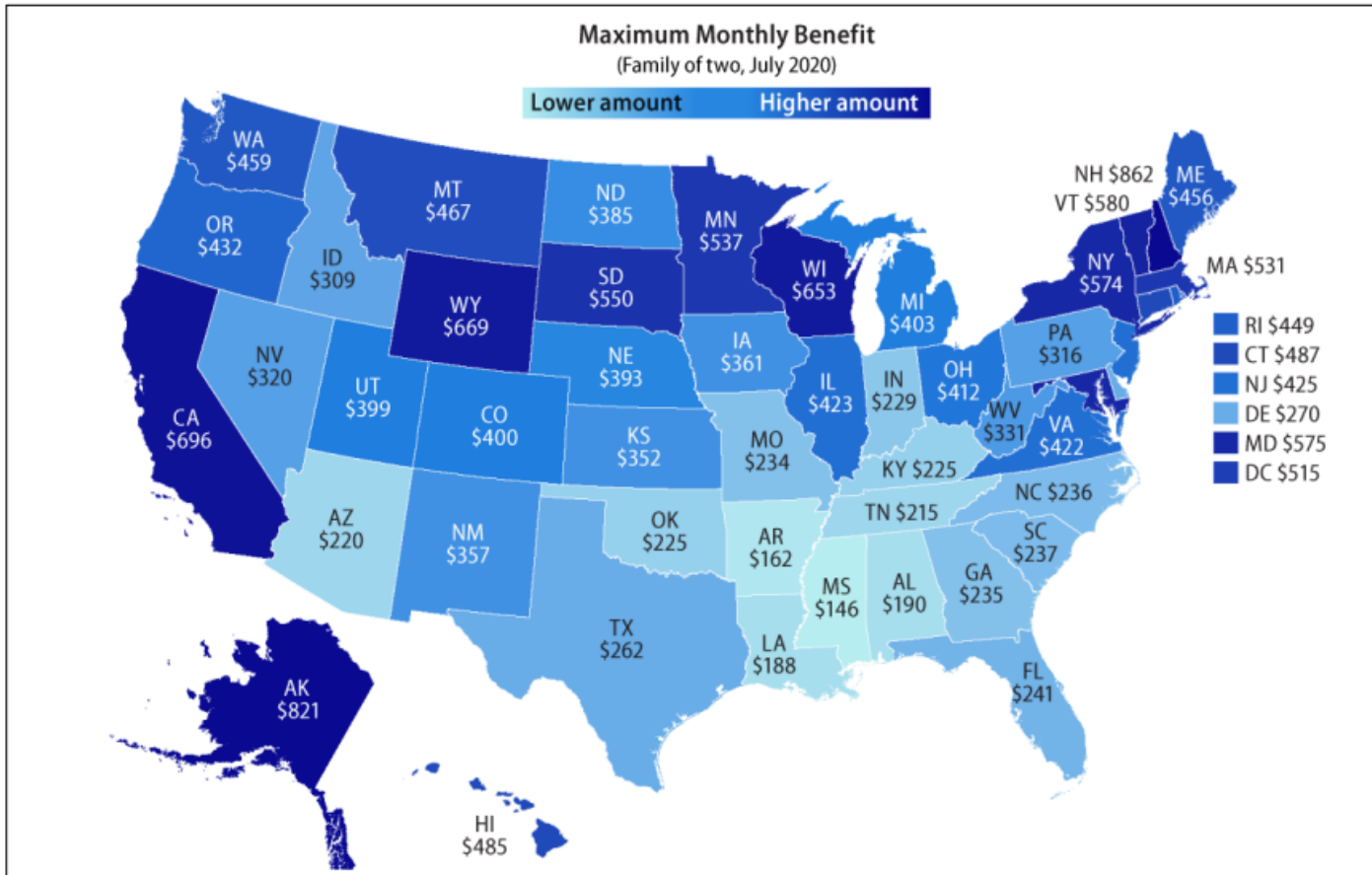


State policies that increase access to TANF are associated with **reductions in maternal self-reported physical child maltreatment**

- 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

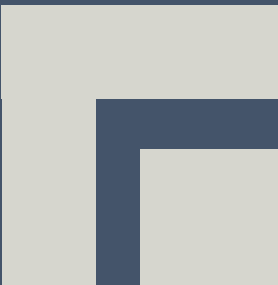
- For a family of 2, maximum benefit amount varies from \$146 to \$862 per month (*as of July 2020*)
- Only **two states** have a maximum benefit amount > 50% of the federal poverty line (FPL)
- Although several states increased cash benefit amounts in 2021, benefits in most states remain at their **lowest 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)

Source: Congressional Research Service (CRS), based on data from the Welfare Rules Database, funded by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and maintained by the Urban Institute. The Welfare Rules

What does the evidence suggest happens when **other** 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 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)

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

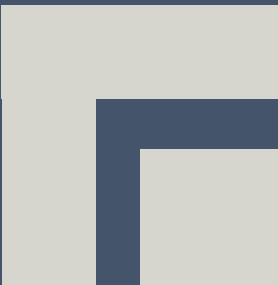
Housing Insecurity - Mortgage Delinquencies & Foreclosures



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 **other** economic & concrete supports
are *increased*?



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

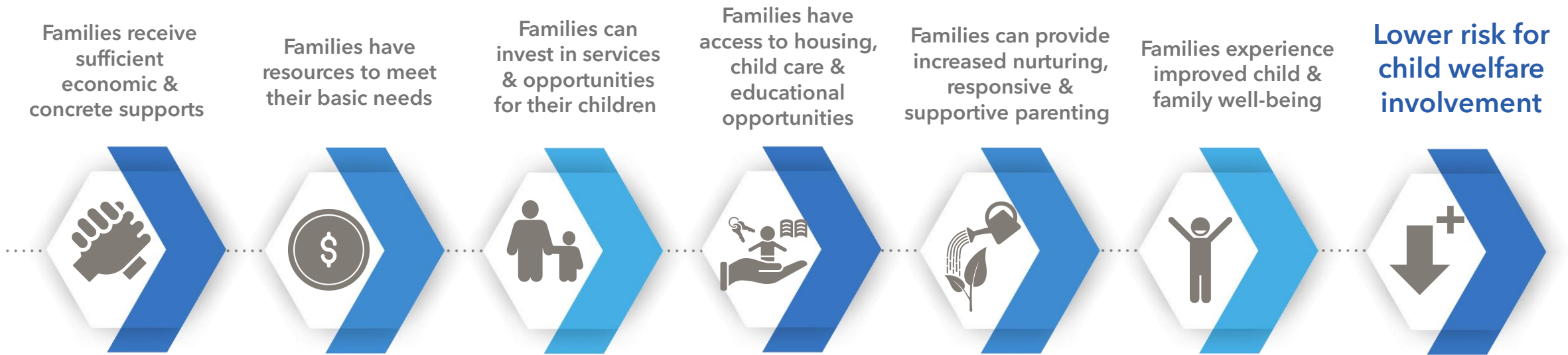


Public Benefits

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

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

Family Investment Model



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:

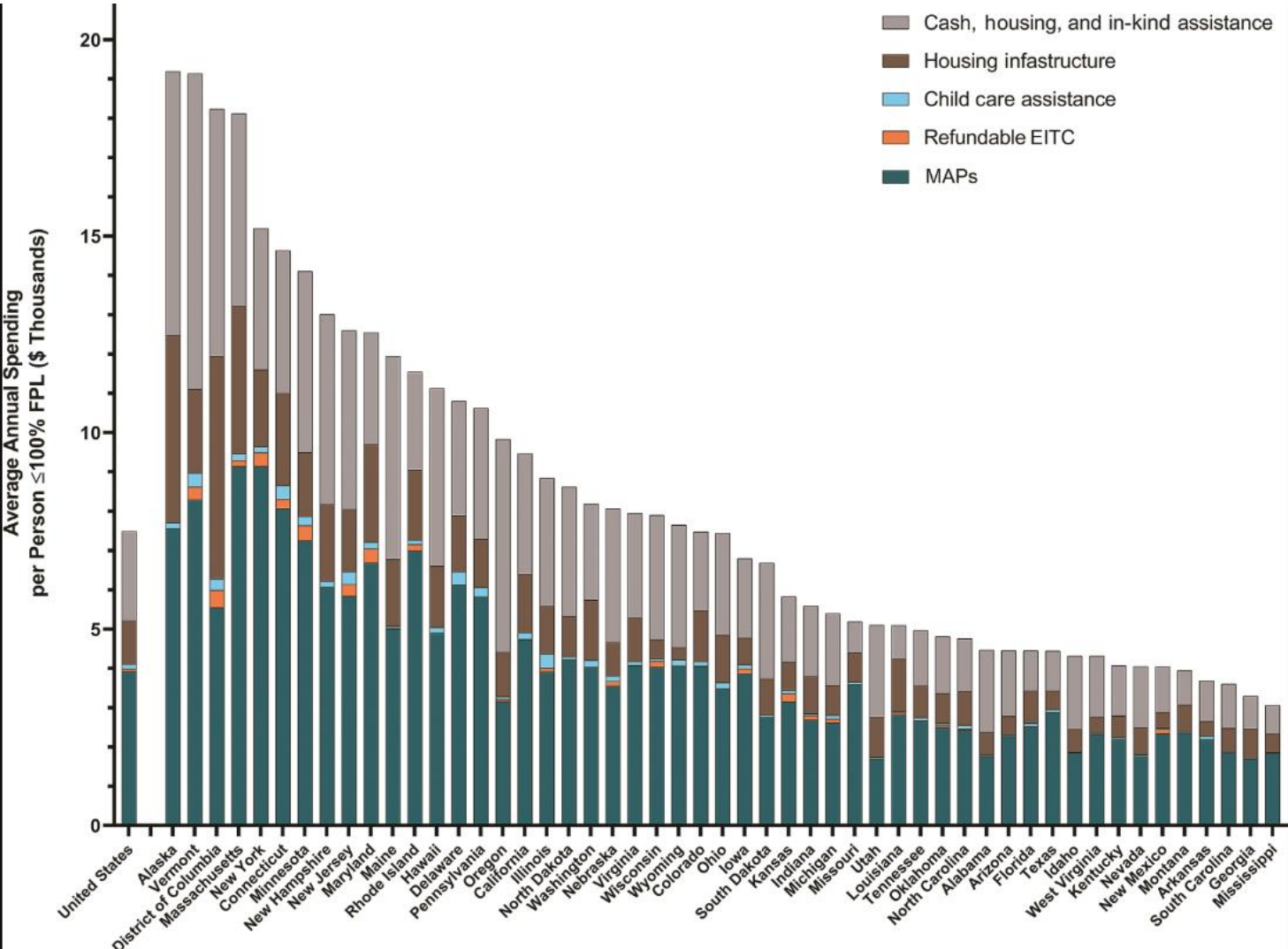
- 4% reduction in child maltreatment reports
- 4% reduction in substantiated child maltreatment
- 2% reduction in foster care placements
- 8% reduction in child fatalities due to maltreatment

(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)

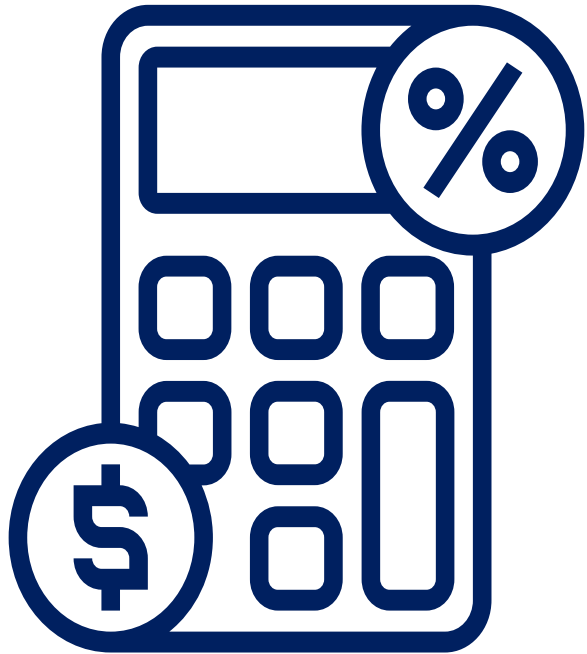
State Policy Option: Level & Mix of State Spending on Public Benefits Per Person Living in Poverty



States' total annualized spending on public benefit programs per person living in poverty

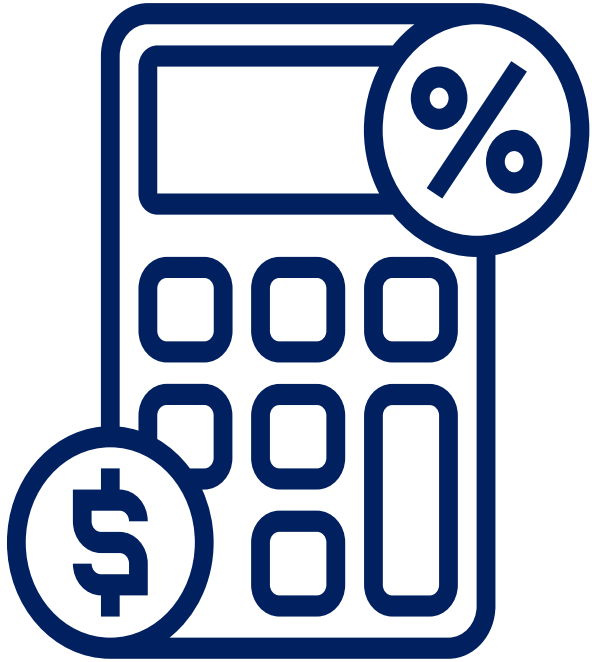
(FFY 2010 - 2017)

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



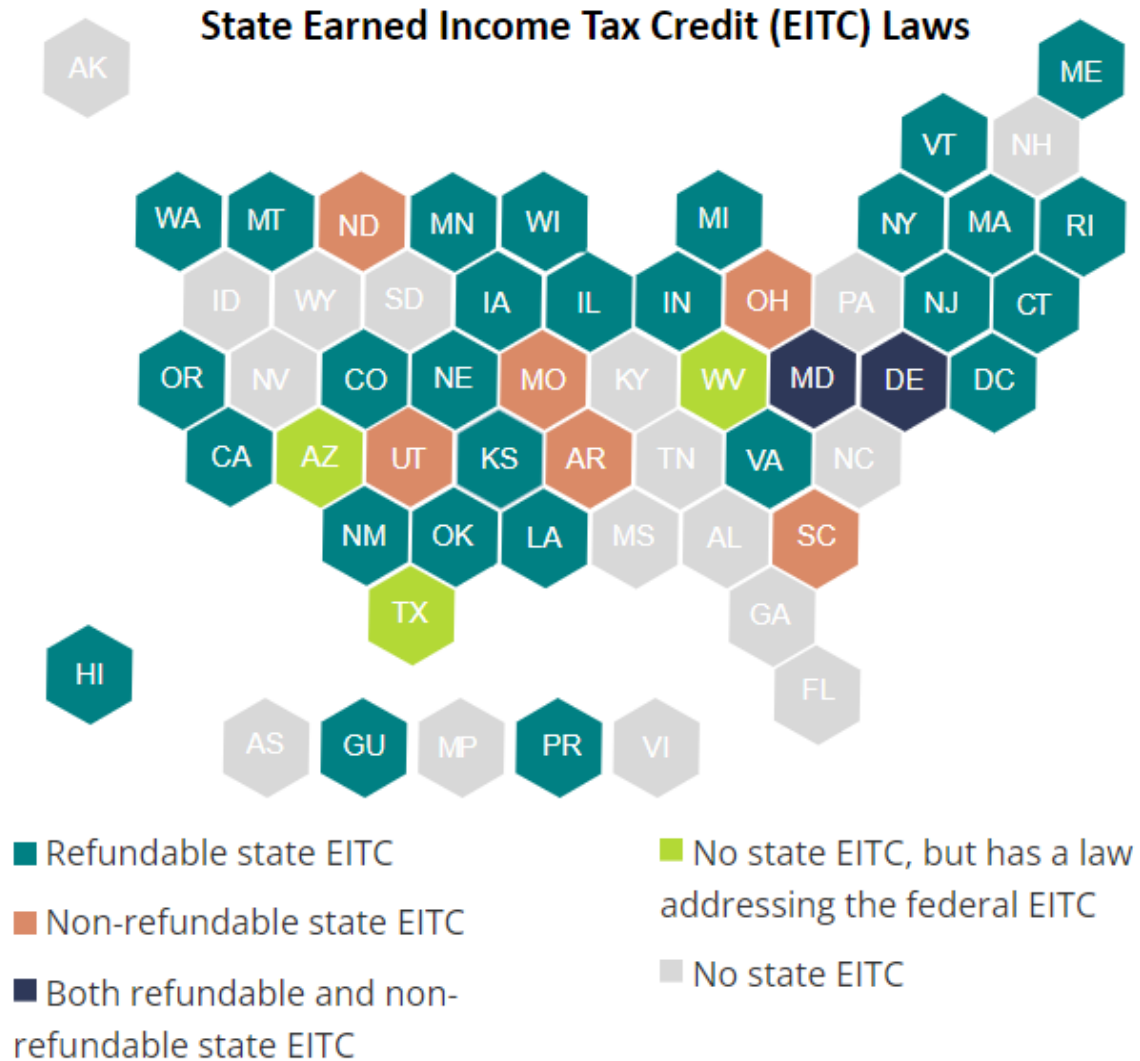
- EITC and CTC payments are associated with **immediate reductions** in state-level child maltreatment reports
- Each additional \$1,000 in per-child EITC and CTC refunds is associated with a decline in state-level child maltreatment reports of:
 - 2.3% in the week of payment
 - 7.7% in the 4 weeks after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

Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)



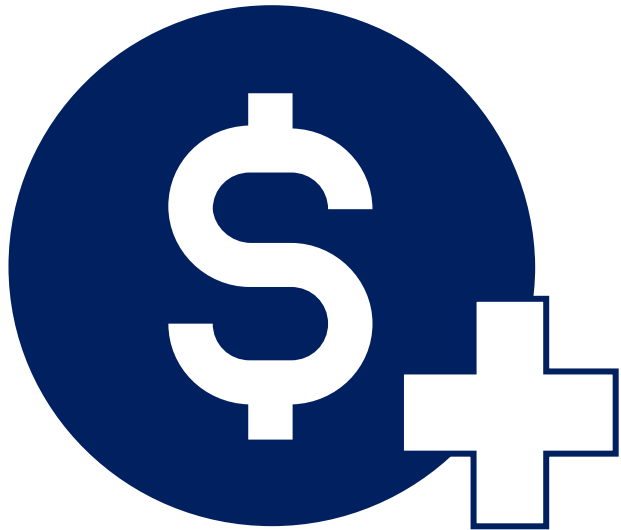
- States with a state-level refundable EITC, compared to those without, are associated with an **11% decrease in foster care entries** *(even after controlling for poverty, race, education & unemployment)*
- Refundable state-level EITC (averaging \$400 per year) is associated with a **13% decrease in 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)

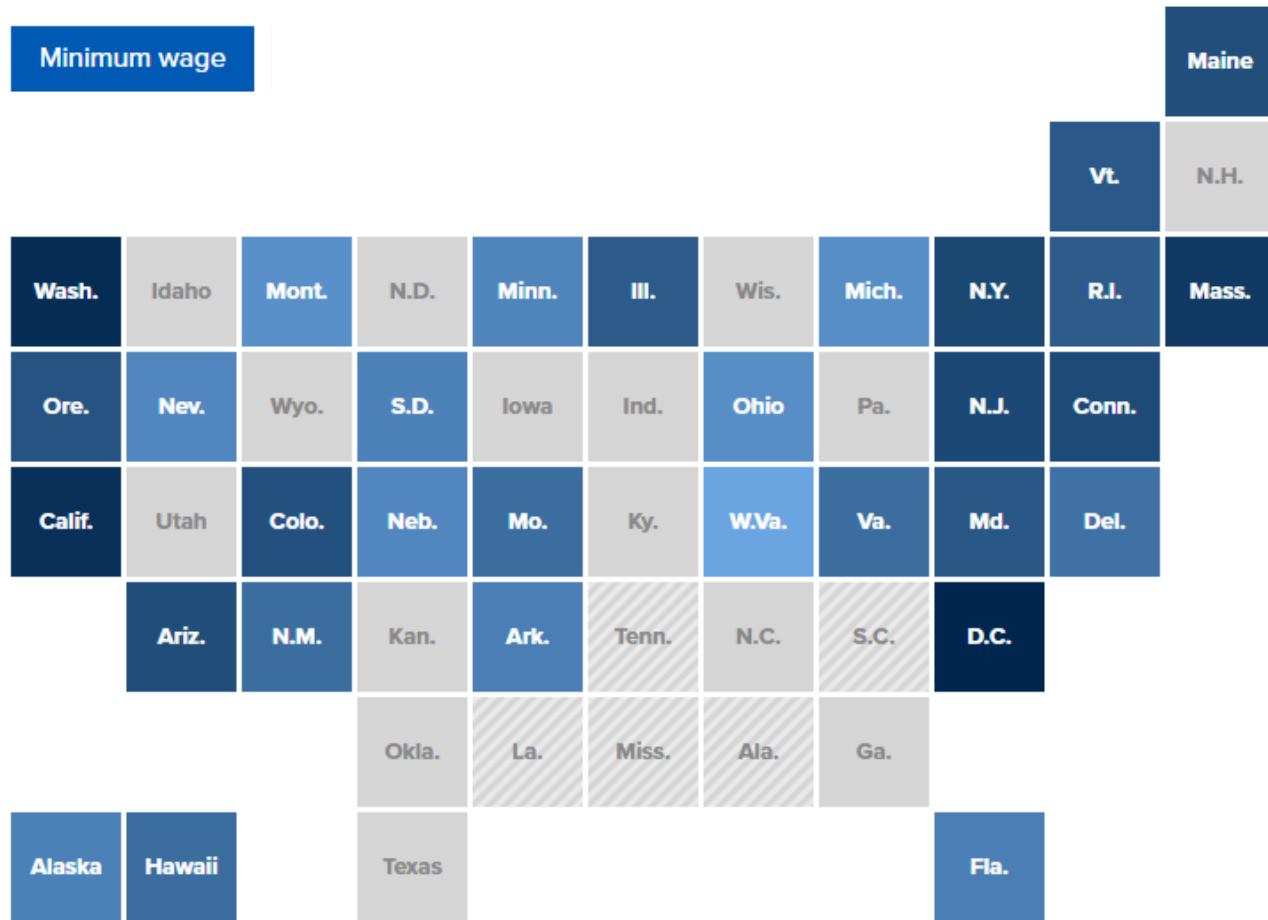
Minimum Wage



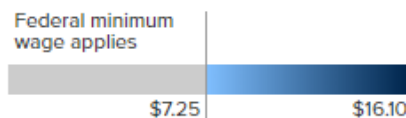
From 2004 to 2013:

- 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*)

State Policy Option: Establish or Increase Minimum Wage

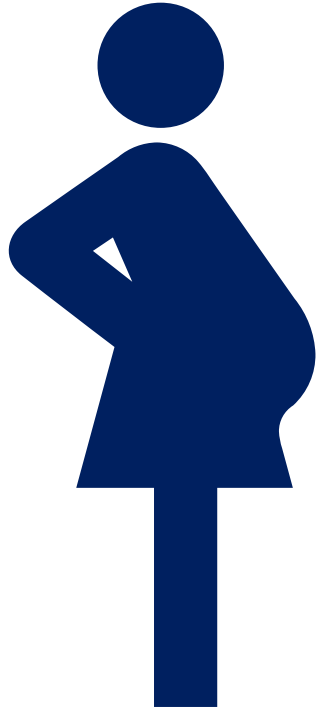


- **18 states + D.C.** have adopted minimum wages of \$12 or higher
- The current federal minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour is now **worth less than at any point since 1956**
- A worker paid the current federal minimum wage earns **40% less** than a minimum wage worker in 1968
(as of January 2023)



([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)

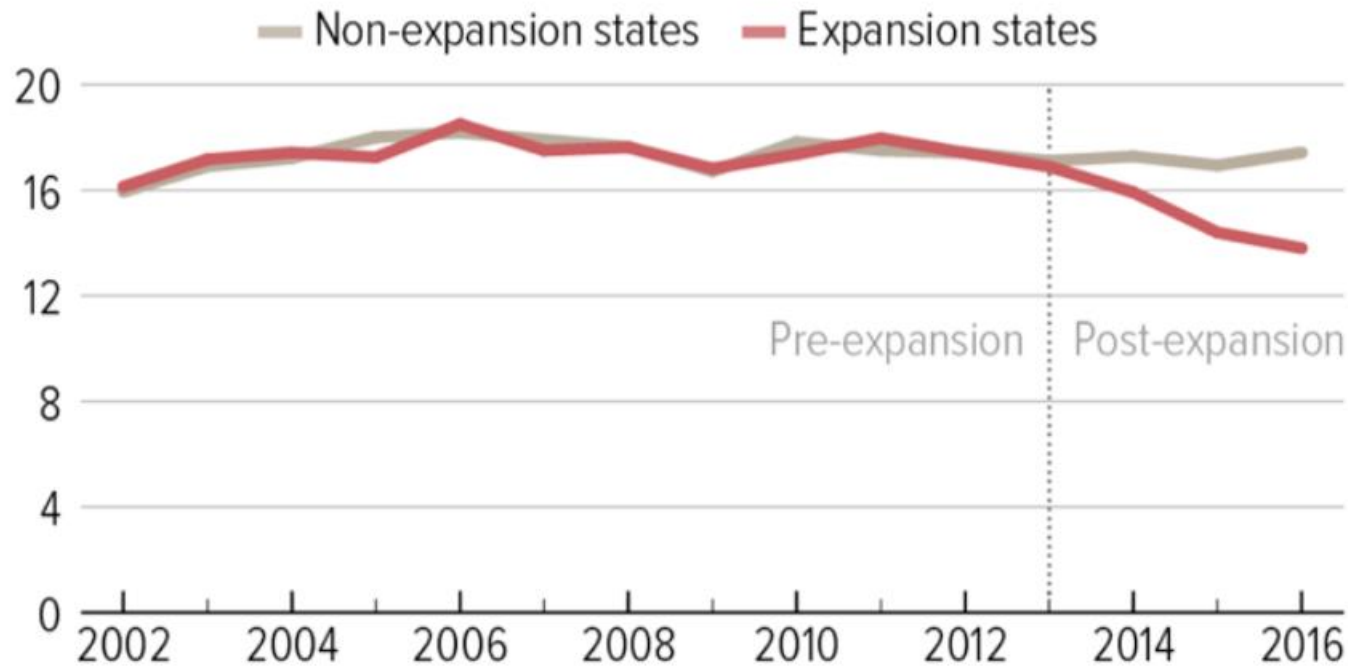
- If non-expansion states had expanded Medicaid, there would have been almost **125,000 fewer screened-in neglect referrals for children < age 6** in the U.S.
(from 2014 through 2016)

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

Medicaid Expansion & Housing Stability

Evictions Fell Sharply in Medicaid Expansion States

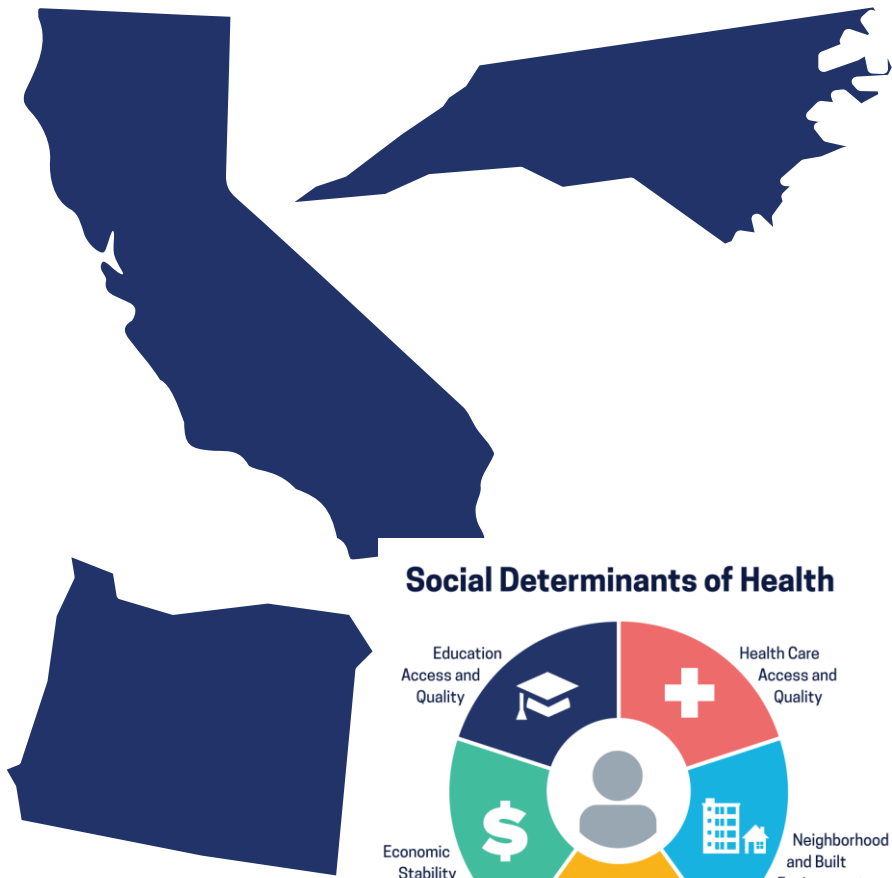
Evictions per 1,000 renter-occupied households



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



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

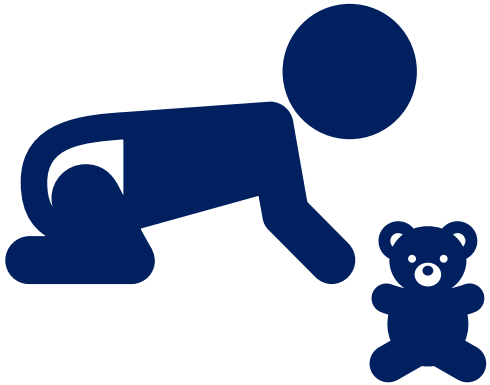
- **6.4% reduction** in CPS investigations
- **6% reduction** in substantiated child maltreatment
- **3.1% reduction** in foster care placements
- **11.6% reduction** in child fatalities due to maltreatment

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)



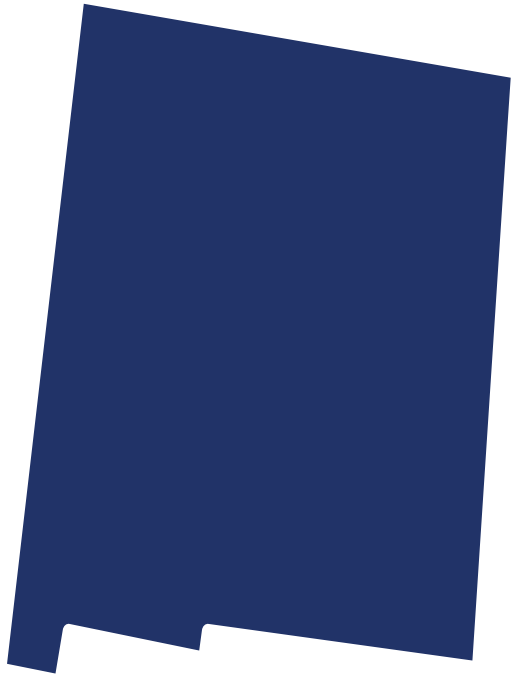
Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 included a **30% increase** in funding for the Child Care & Development Block Grant (CCDBG)

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



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*)

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

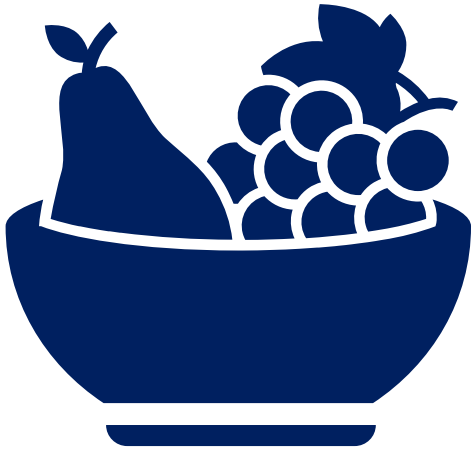
Wisconsin – [Family Keys Pilot Program](#) (2022)

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*)



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**

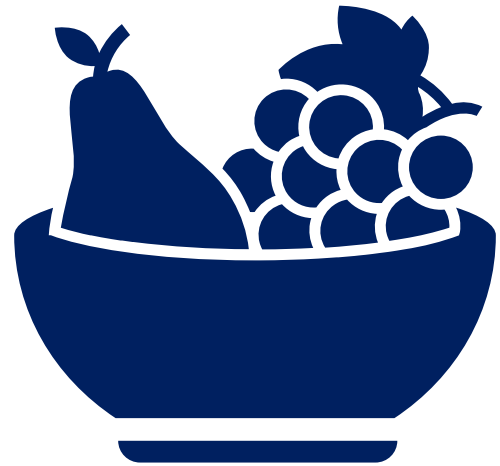
were associated with **decreases in the number of CPS-investigated reports**

(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:

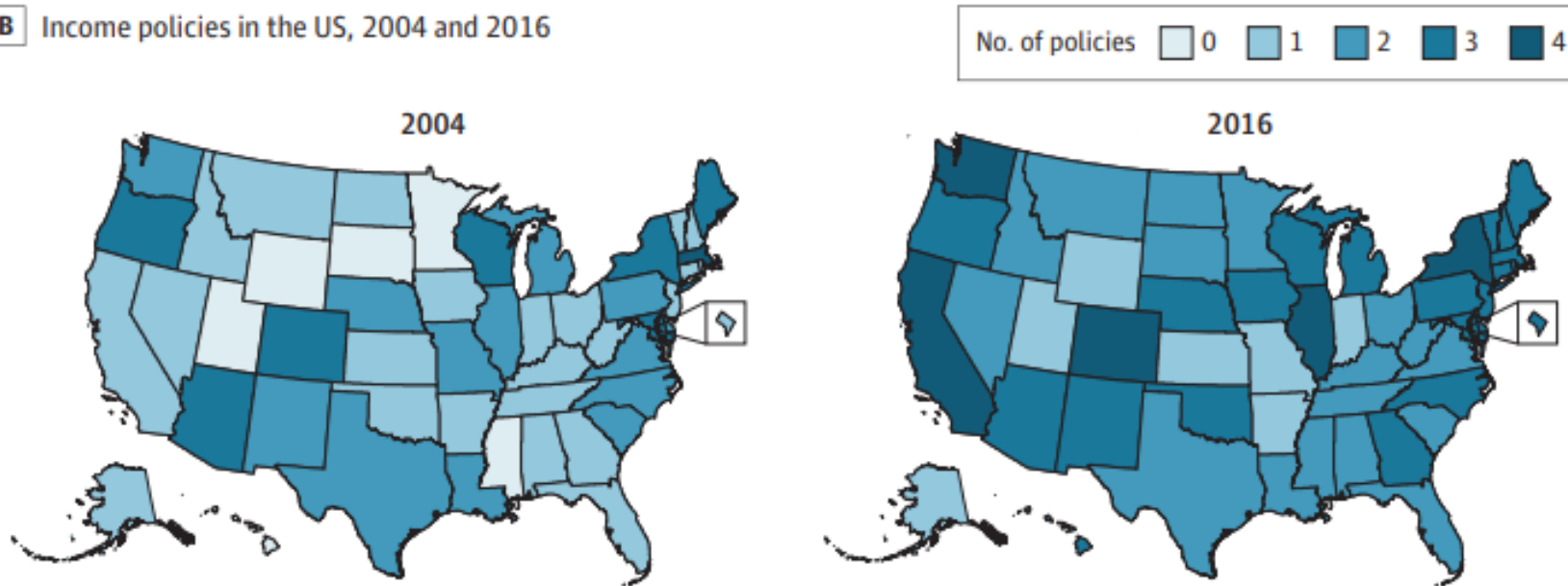
- Large reductions in CPS reports
(reduction of 352 reports per 100,000 children)*
- Fewer substantiated reports, particularly for neglect
- Fewer foster care placements

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

State Policy Option: Implement More Generous SNAP Policies

Adoption of More Generous SNAP Policies Over Time

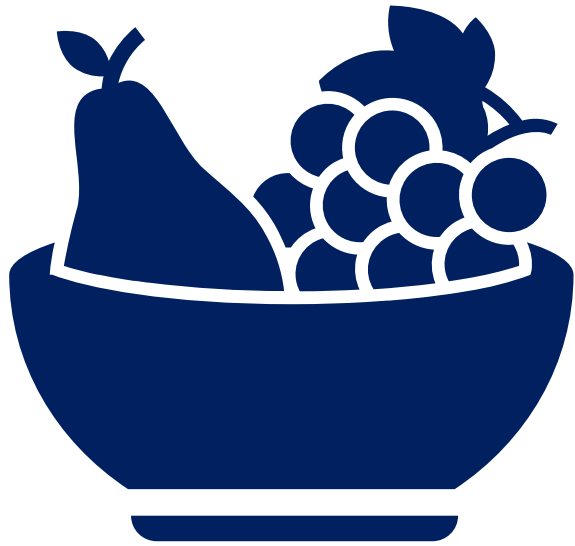
B Income policies in the US, 2004 and 2016



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) & 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

Family Preservation with Concrete Supports



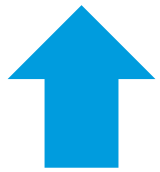
Families with open child welfare cases (mostly neglect) who receive a home-based services program with concrete supports are **17% less likely to experience a subsequent child maltreatment report** (during the first year)

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

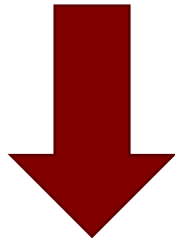
State Policy Option: Provide Concrete Supports through Family Preservation Program



From 2019 to 2023



Prevention
investment
of **\$11.4 million**



Out-of-home care
costs reduced
by **\$79.1 million**

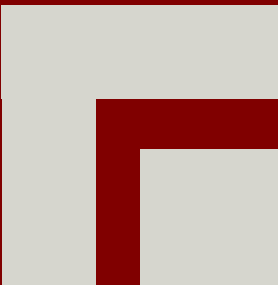
(decline in out-of-home costs includes significant decrease in number of children in foster care & reductions in congregate care placements)

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

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

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)

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*)

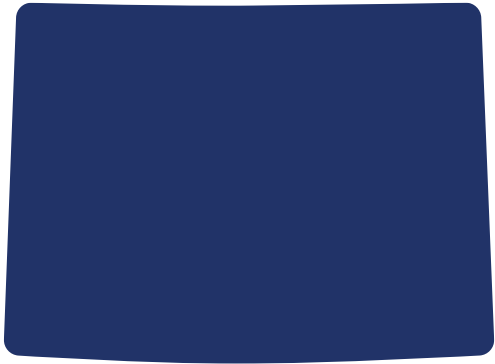
Proportion of federal and state/local expenditures on categories of services



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

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**

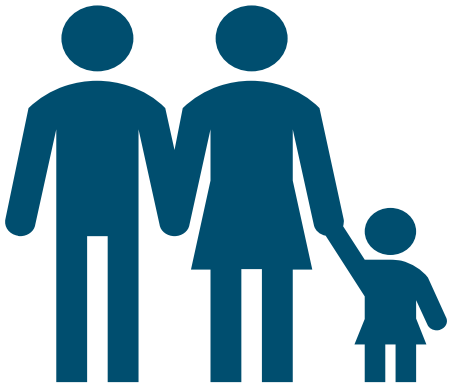
- After a formal partnership between child welfare & FRC was established, Teller County saw a **63% reduction in its child maltreatment rate & saved an estimated \$2.5 million** (*in 2018*)

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

(OMNI, 2021)

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**

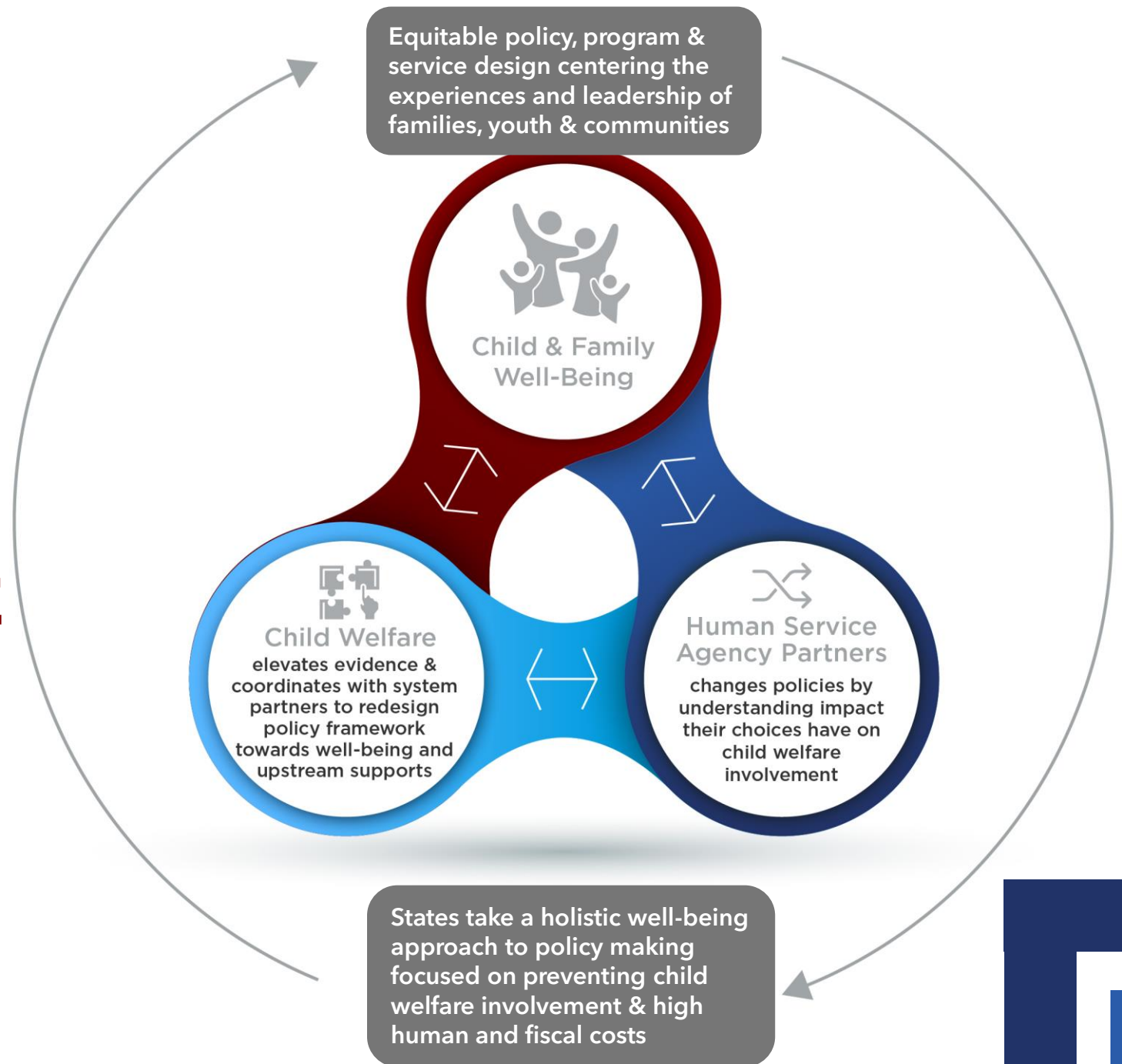
(Nielsen, 2019)

(Wildeman, 2014)

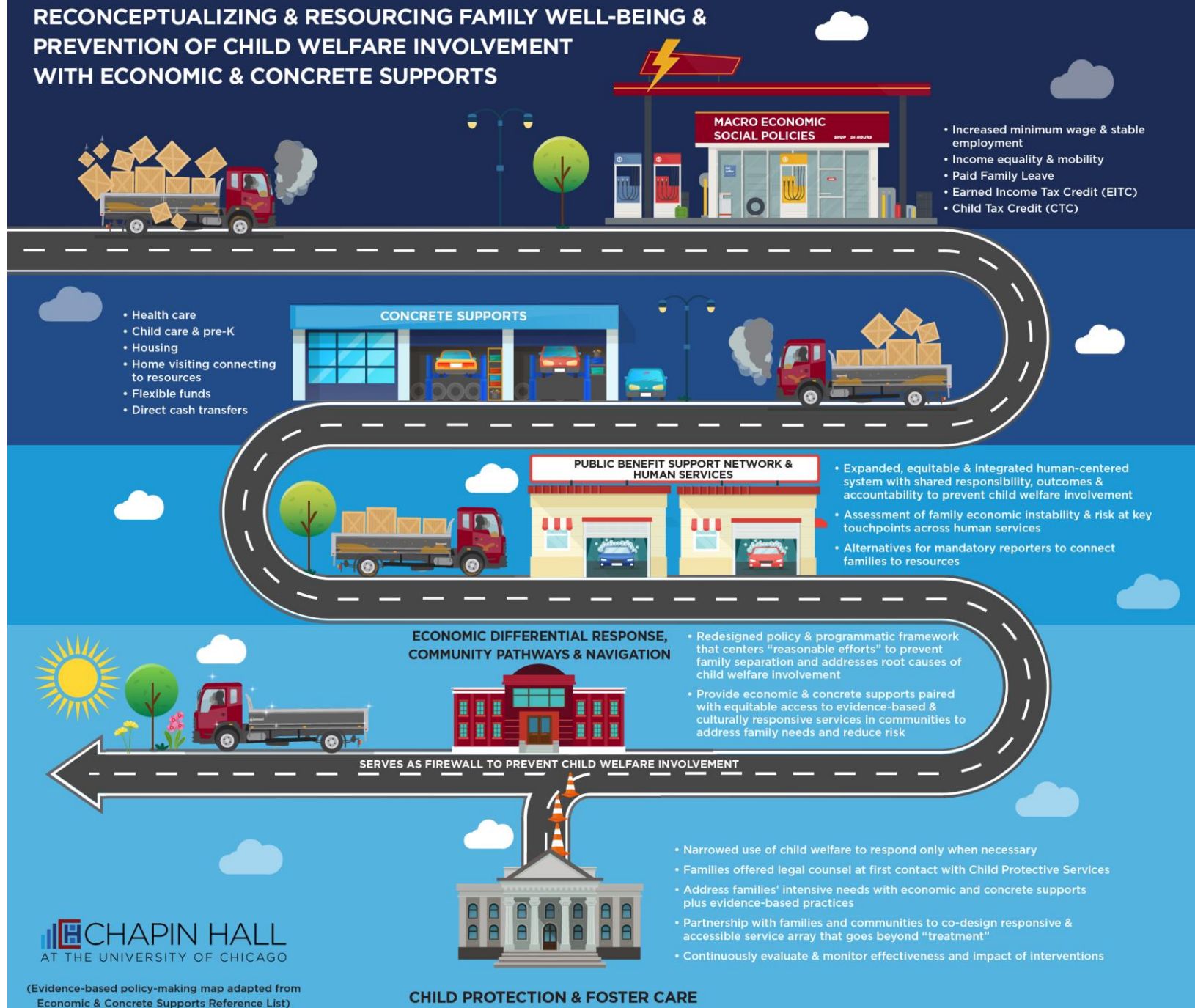
(Doyle, 2007) (Sariaslan, 2022)

(Hobbs, 2021)

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



Reference List

CHAPIN HALL
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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

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

Main slide deck available at:
Chapinhall.org/ecspjroject

