

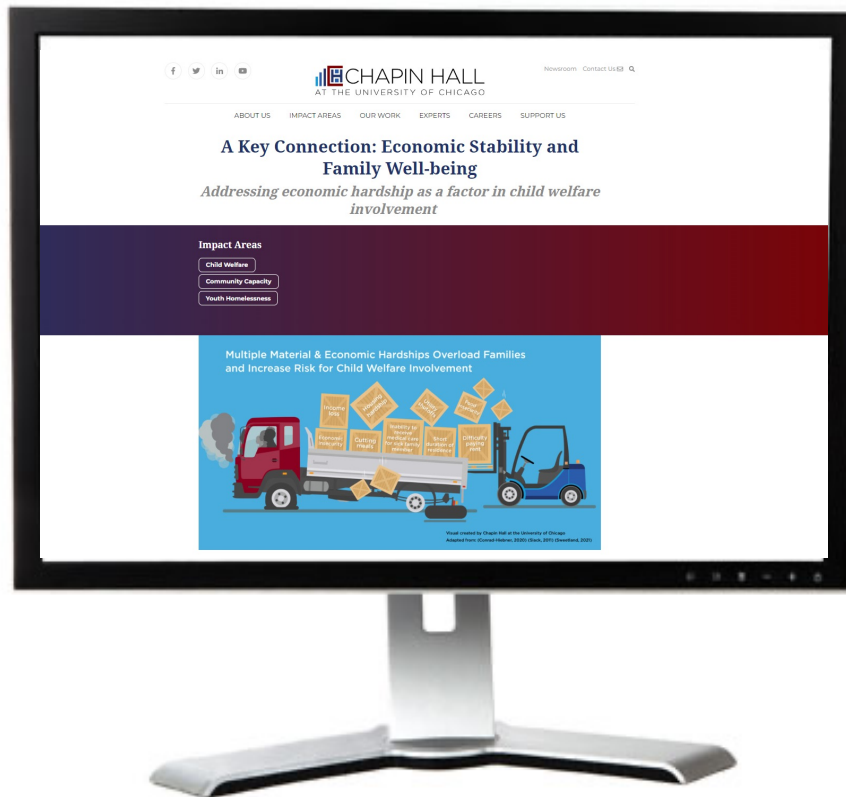
Evidence-based Policy-making: Economic & Concrete Supports Core to Well-being and Reducing Child Welfare Involvement

Clare Anderson, M.S.W., Senior Policy Fellow

California 26th Annual AB 1058 Child Support Training Conference
October 12, 2022



Chapin Hall Resources

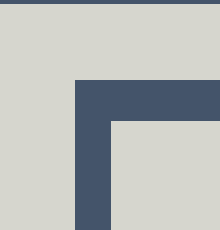


Chapinhall.org/ecsproject

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



Intersection of Child Support & Child Welfare



Income Reductions via Child Support Payments are Associated with Longer Time to Reunify



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

- Their families must **pay the state for the costs of foster care**
- A \$100 increase in monthly child support order is predicted to **increase time to reunification by 6.6 months**

(Cancian, 2017)



Child Support Fiscal Analysis: Orange County, California

- **For every dollar expended, only 41 cents are collected**
- Foster care cases can be more complex and require about 50% more effort to initiate and establish, but 25% less effort to enforce
- No money goes directly to support the child.
- Funds reimburse the federal government for stipends paid to foster parents, and county and federal governments for child welfare costs



CHILD SUPPORT AND FOSTER CARE

ORANGE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES

<https://www.css.ocgov.com/sites/css/files/import/data/files/116568.pdf>



Joint Guidance: Office of Child Support Enforcement & Children's Bureau (ACF)

- Encourages child welfare agencies to implement **across-the-board policies**
- Child support referrals **only in very rare circumstances**
- **Not disrupt the reunification process**
- Cites that collecting child support is **not cost effective**

“It is not in the best interest of any family to be pursued for child support when they have already been **whipsawed by economic insecurity, family instability, and separation.**”



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES
330 C Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20201 | www.acf.hhs.gov

“Many parent(s) of children who receive FCMP are living in poverty and are too often required to pay child support to the state to offset the cost of their child placed in foster care.”



Policy Example: Limiting Practice of Billing Parents for the Cost of Foster Care If They Are Working To Reunify

California – [AB 1686](#) (Amends Fam. Code 17552, eff. 2023)

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

- In reunification, attempts to collect child support are both cost ineffective and have been proven to harm reunification efforts and destabilize families
- Basic purpose of child welfare to strengthen families and return children to safe and stable homes. Requiring parents to pay out-of-home care costs for children they are seeking to reunify with their families are inconsistent with basic purpose

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

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

(Cancian, 2017)
(see also time to reunification slide)



Income Increases via Child Support Payments are Associated with Decreased Screened-in Reports



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) (RCT)



Policy Example: Full Child Support Payment Exploration



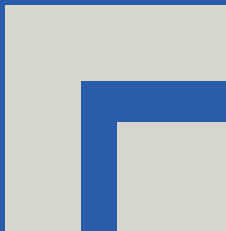
California

[AB 207](#) (Adds Sections 11477.06 and 11477.07 to Welf. & Inst. Code, eff. Sept. 28, 2022)

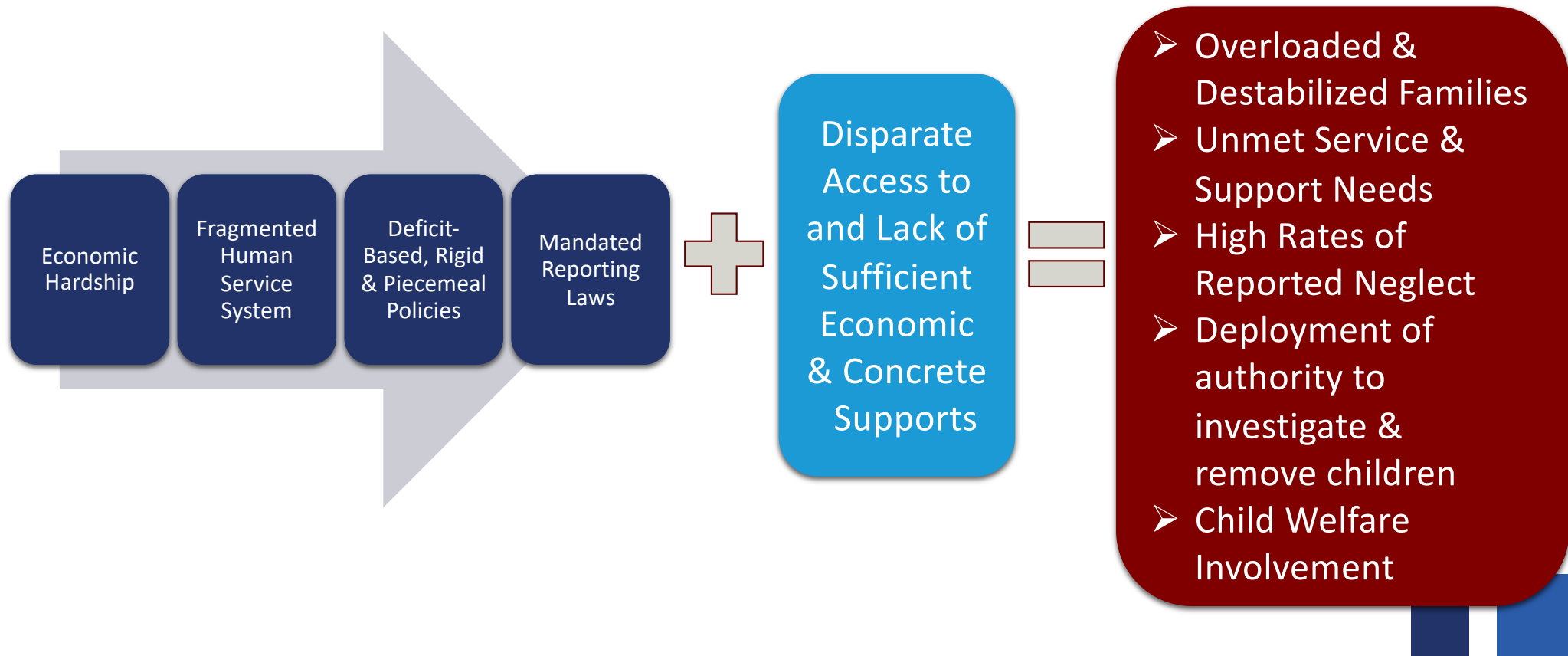
- Intent is to move away from the longstanding practice of keeping child support payments as reimbursement for cash aid
- Conducting study to assess impact of single parents who receive cash assistance through CalWORKs/TANF receiving **full child support payments** beginning in 2025

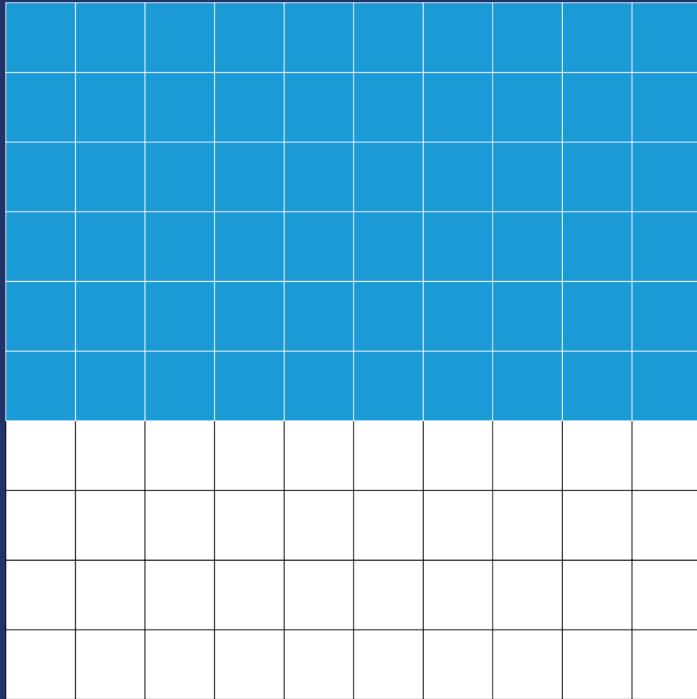


Economic & Concrete Supports: evidence-based policy making



Impact of Historical Policy Choices

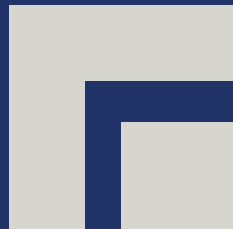




60%+

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 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)

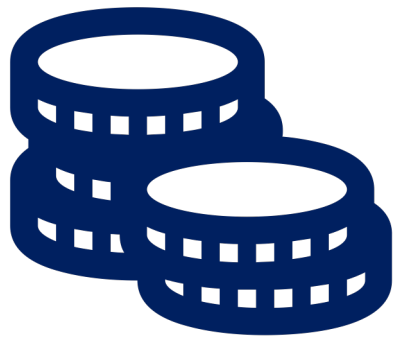
- ~4x higher likelihood of CPS investigation
- ~7x higher likelihood physical abuse investigation

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

(Yang, 2015)



Income Instability Significantly Increases Risk for Child Welfare Involvement



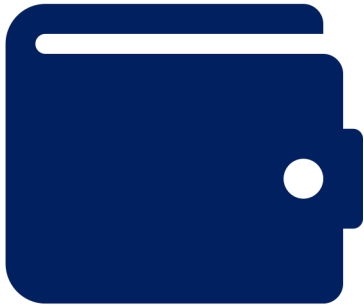
Low-income families at risk for child welfare involvement who experience **income instability** (*changes in income in the past year, including both earnings and public benefits*) are at **significantly increased risk for CPS investigations**, even after controlling for household income level

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



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

For low-income families with recently closed CPS investigations:



About 10% of low-income adults with children have experienced an economic 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

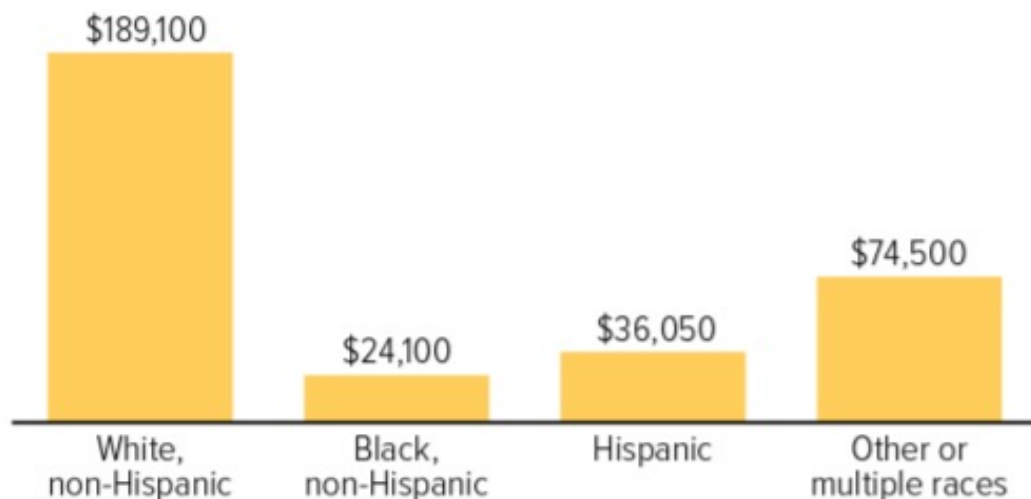
(Cai, 2021)



Macro-Economic 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, Pacific 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.

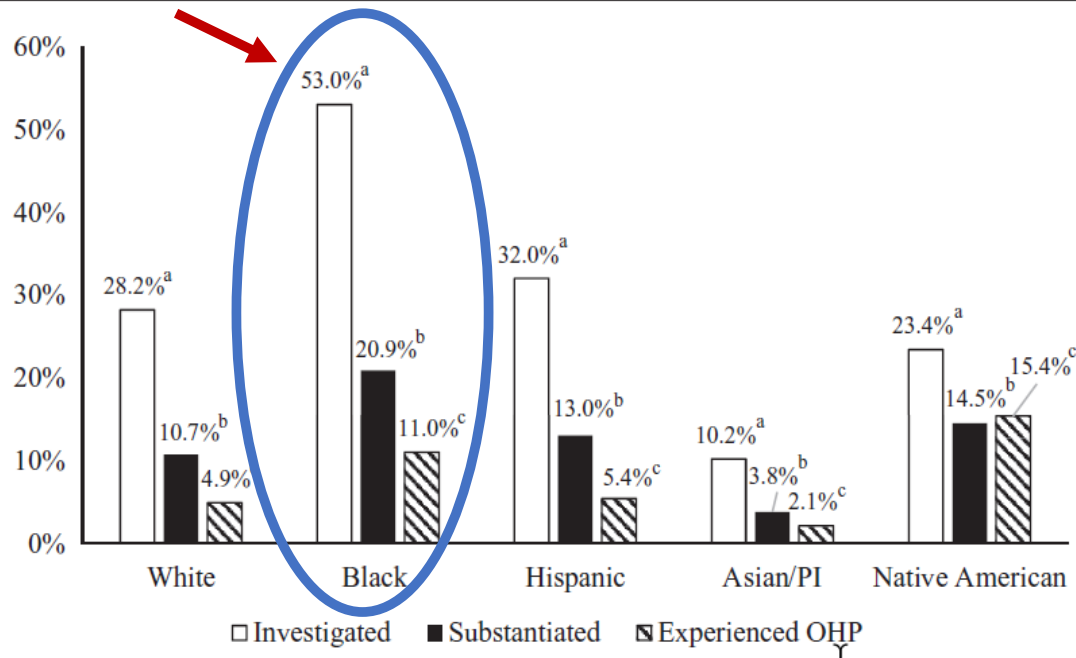
- Black Americans represent **13%** of the U.S. population, but possess **only 4%** of the nation's household wealth
- The median wealth of young Black families is **\$600**
- Nearly **1 in 5** Black households has **zero or negative net worth**
- Native American households own **\$0.09** for every dollar 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** experience a CPS investigation each year (FFY 2019)
- An estimated **1 in every 100** children experience a termination of parental rights

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



The Intersection of Family Economic Insecurity & Child Welfare Involvement

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

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

(Conrad-Hiebner, 2020)

Strongest predictors of **investigated neglect reports**

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


(Slack, 2011)

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



Visual created by Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago

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



Reduced
TANF
benefits



Reduced
employment



Lack of
child care



Increased
gas prices



Lack of
stable
housing



Reduced income
& negative
earnings shocks



**Increased risk
for child welfare
involvement**

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



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

23.3%

Increase in substantiated neglect reports

13.4%

Increase in foster care entries due to neglect

12.7%

Increase in total foster care entries

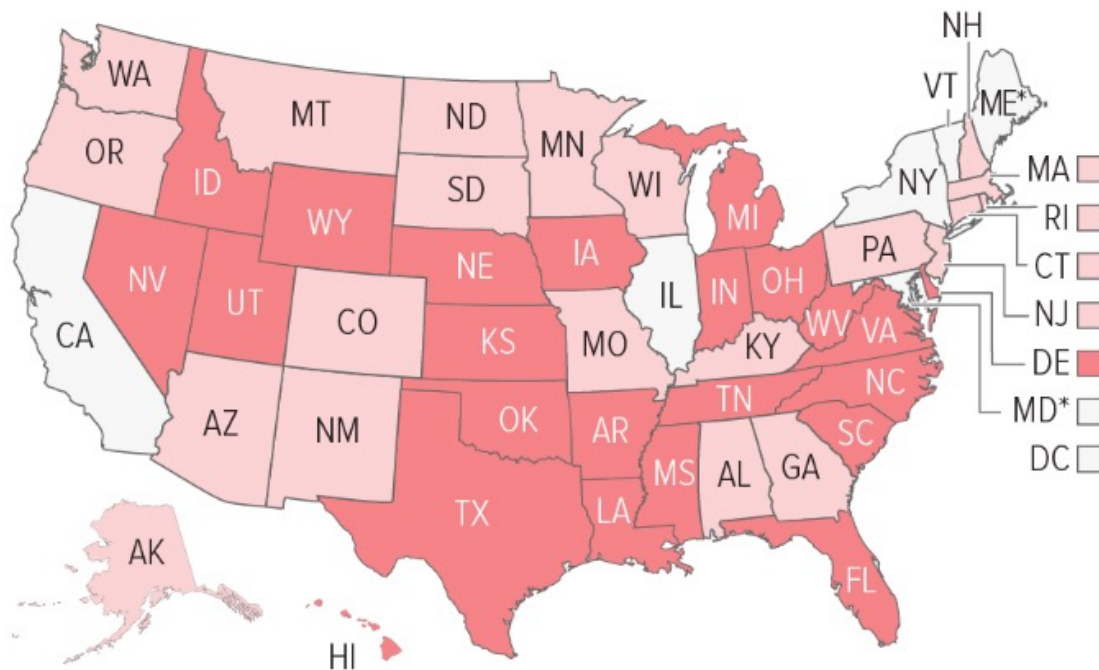
(Ginther, 2017)

(Increases observed from 2004 to 2015)



Policy Example: No Full-Family Sanctions for Non-Compliance With TANF Work Requirements

■ As initial sanction (23)
 ■ As most severe sanction only (11)
 ■ No full-family sanctions (7*)



- California does not impose Full-Family Sanctions
- As of 2021, **nearly half of states** took away TANF benefits from the entire family (“full-family sanctions”) as the initial punishment if a parent did not meet work requirements
- States with higher concentrations of Black residents had a **higher likelihood** of imposing full-family sanctions

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

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



Evidence: Income Reductions are Associated with Longer Time to Reunify



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

- 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%)

(Wells, 2006)



Policy Example: Continuation of Cash Assistance for Families Working to Reunify



California – [AB 135](#) (Amended, repealed, and added Welf. & Inst. Code 11203, eff. July 16, 2021.)

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

(Wells, 2006)

(*see also* time to reunification slide)



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

Macro-Economic Supports

- Minimum wage increase
- Tax Credits (EITC & CTC)
- Paid family leave
- Unemployment benefits

Concrete Supports

- Healthcare/Medicaid
- Child care & pre-k
- Housing

Public Benefits & Other

- Overall state spending on benefits
- TANF
- SNAP & WIC
- Child support payments

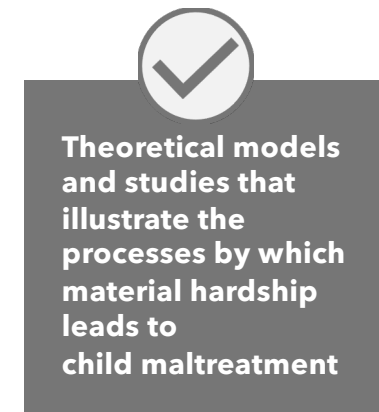
Child Welfare Interventions with ECS

- Differential response & family preservation



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?



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



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

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

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

(independent of federal spending)

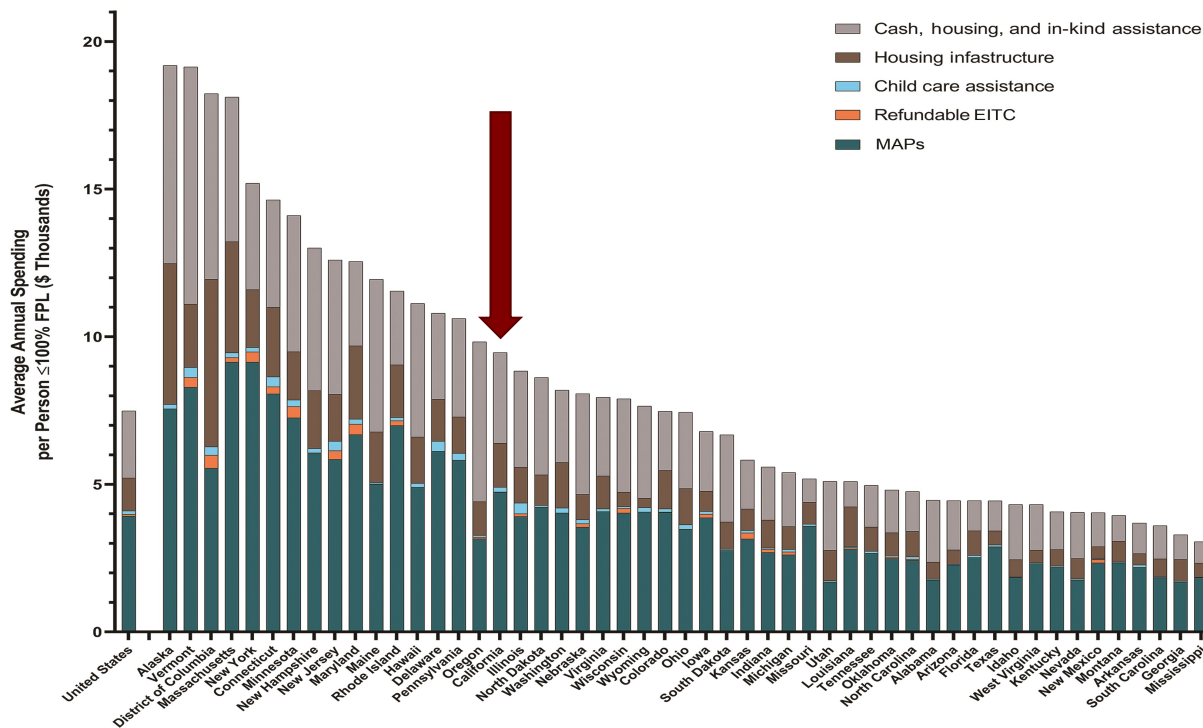
Public benefit programs included in this analysis:

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

(Puls, 2021, state-level data FFY 2010–2017)



Policy Example: California State Spending on Benefits per Person in Poverty



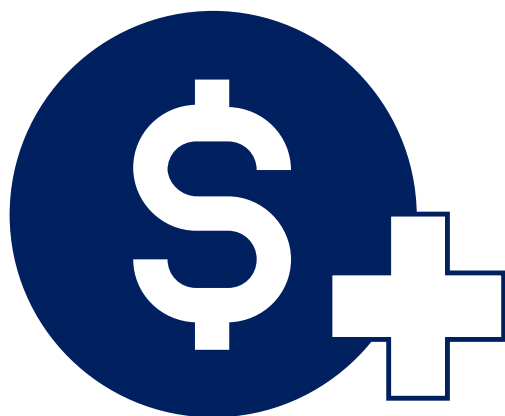
- California spends more than the national average
- California ranks 17th

States' total annualized spending on public benefit programs from 2010 through 2017 federal fiscal years.

(Puls, 2021, state-level data FFY 2010–2017)



Evidence: 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*)

(Raissian, 2017)



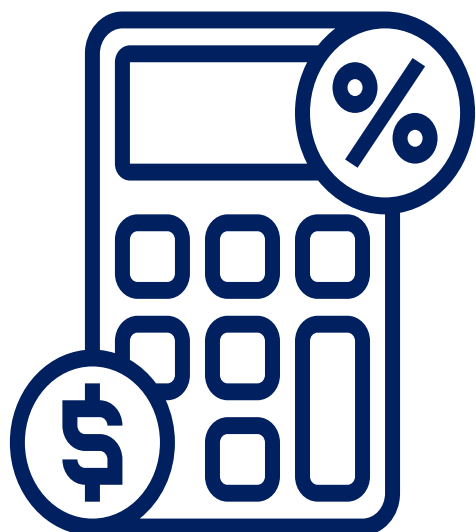
Policy Example: California Minimum Wage



- \$15 per hour for employers with 26 or more employees
- \$14 per hour for employers with 25 or fewer employees
- \$16 per hour in some localities



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

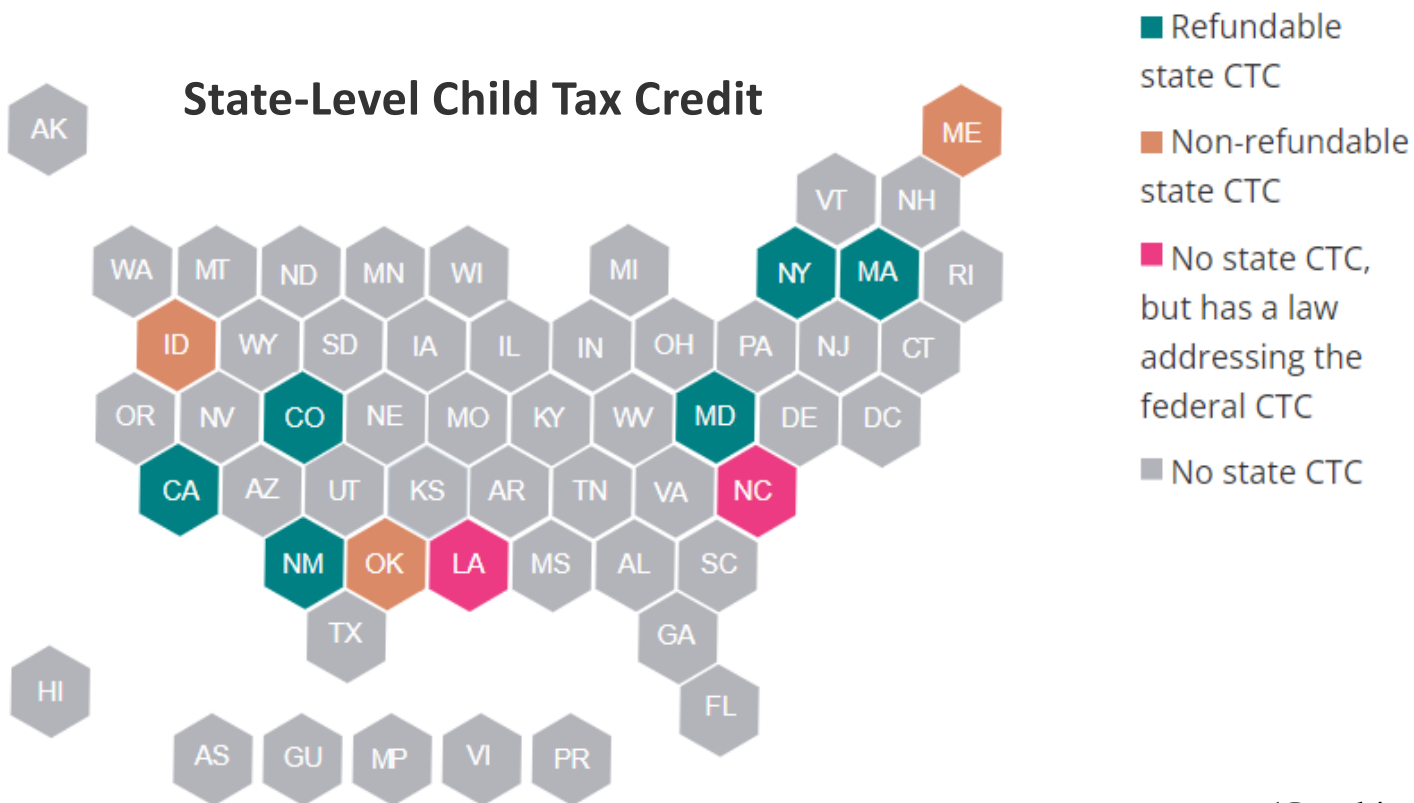


- EITC and CTC payments are associated with **immediate reductions** in state-level child maltreatment reports
- Each additional \$1,000 in per-child EITC and CTC tax refunds is associated with a decline in state-level child maltreatment reports of:
 - 2.3% in the week of payment
 - 7.7% in the 4 weeks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

(Kovski, 2022)



Policy Example: State Child Tax Credit



- Of the 9 states that have enacted a state-level CTC, 6 have a refundable CTC
- 10 additional states have introduced legislation to create a state-level CTC
(as of October 2021)

(Graphic: [NCSL, CTC overview](#))



Evidence: Paid Family Leave



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

(Klevens, 2016)



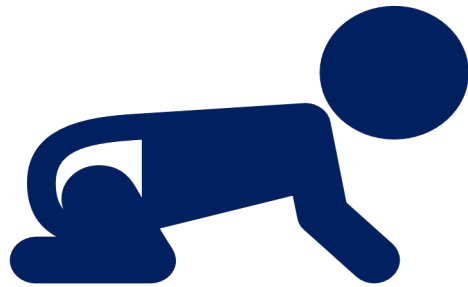
Policy Example: California Celebrates 20 Years of Paid Family Leave



- Provided over \$11 billion in benefits
- Estimated 14.4 million workers currently covered
- SB 951 (Amends Unemp. Ins. Code 3301, eff. 2023.)
 - Expands PFL to 90% of paycheck for low-income workers beginning 2025



Evidence: Child Care Subsidies



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

(Meloy, 2015)



Policy Example: Increasing Access to Child Care

New Mexico

- From 2022 to 2023, **child care will be free for most families** (*family of four earning up to about \$111,000*)
- In 2020, New Mexico created:
 - Early Childhood Education & Care (ECE) Department as a Cabinet-level position
 - Dedicated ECE fund (*which draws on taxes from oil and natural gas production*) projected to be worth **\$4.3 billion** by 2025
- Goal is to develop a **free, universal child care system**
- New Mexico also recently established a **refundable state child tax credit** (House Bill 163, effective 2022)



Policy Example: California Vetoed Capping Child Care Fees for Subsidized Child Care



California – [AB 92](#) (vetoed 2022)

The Affordable Child Care Family Fees Act would have capped how much families who are low income would have to pay for subsidized child care by prohibiting:

- Family fees from exceeding 1% of the family's monthly income
- Families with a monthly income below 75% of the state median from being assessed any family fee



Evidence: Medicaid Expansion & Continuity of Benefits

States that newly **expanded Medicaid** in 2014 were associated with the following **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 years

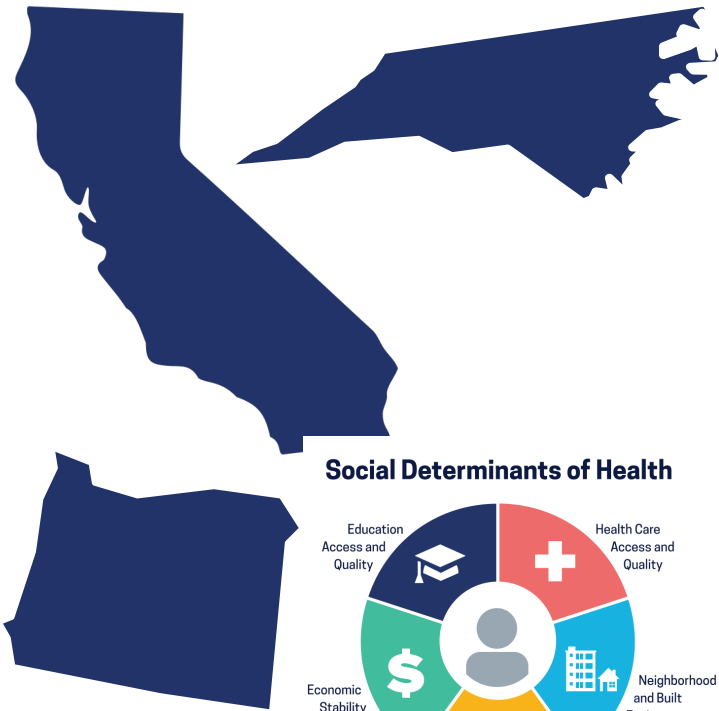
States with **CHIP continuity of benefit** policies are associated with lower maltreatment investigation rates

(McGinty, 2022) ([Urban Institute](#), 2021) (Klevens, 2015)

- About **5% of all children** are uninsured
- About 58% of all uninsured children **are eligible** for Medicaid or Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) but uninsured
- 7.6% of children in non-expansion states, compared to 3.8% of children in expansion states, are uninsured
(as of 2019)



Policy Example: Leveraging Medicaid Innovation to Address Social Determinants of Health & Increase Housing Supports



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

California – [CalAIM](#) (2022)

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

Section 1115 waivers shift Medicaid to a population health approach that prioritizes prevention, continuity & addresses social determinants of health

- Provide non-medical supports related to **housing, food & transportation insecurity** for those with complex needs
- Improve individual health outcomes & health of communities
- Cost savings through reduced health care costs



Evidence: Public Benefits (TANF)



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

(Paxson, 2003)



Policy Example: Increased Economic Supports to Families Receiving TANF Benefits



California

[SB 187](#) (Amends Welf. & Inst. Code 11330.7 effective Jun. 30, 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 CalWORKs/TANF home visiting program



Evidence: 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)

(Farrell, 2018) (RCT)



Policy Example: Connecting Head Start Families to Housing Supports

Connecticut

Head Start on Housing Program

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



Evidence: Family Preservation with Concrete Supports



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

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

(Rostad, 2017)



Policy Example: Flexible Funds to Meet 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

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

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

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



Policy Example: Limiting the Definition of Neglect for Mandated Reporters & Juvenile Dependency Petitions

California

[AB 2085](#) (Amends Penal Code 11165.2, eff. 2023)

Limits the definition of **general neglect** for the purposes of mandated reporting requirements:

- Only includes circumstances where child is at **substantial risk of suffering serious physical harm or illness**
- Excludes a parent's **economic disadvantage**

[SB 1085](#) (Amends Welf. & Inst. Code 300 and 300.2, eff. 2023)

Prohibits a child from being found to be a dependent of the juvenile court solely due to **family homelessness or poverty**, including the inability to provide clothing, home repair, or childcare

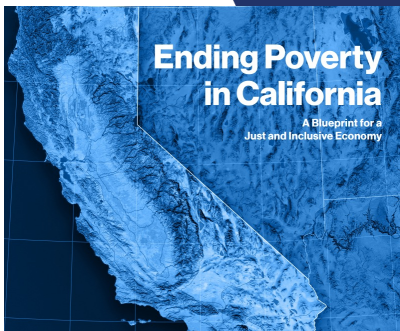


Strengthen Family Economic Stability Through Public Benefit System Transformation

California – [Blueprint to Ending Poverty](#) (2022)

Recommendations to reduce poverty, expand access to the public benefit system & address racial inequities:

- **Develop unified & integrated public benefit system**
 - Coordinate program requirements & provide automatic referrals between programs
 - Implement data integration across programs & automation
 - *Reminder: states already have well-developed systems that match data across state & federal agencies to detect ineligible claims & collect child support payments*
- **Eliminate “make work” program requirements** to the extent possible while still meeting federal mandates
- **Remove financial barriers** to accessing support



LAO Report: Racial Disproportionalities & Disparities in California's Child Welfare System (March 9, 2022)

Key Finding & Questions

Linking Vulnerable Families to Economic Supports

- Research finds that poverty & economic stressors create conditions in which child maltreatment is more likely to occur
- Research also has found a relationship between increased state spending on public benefit programs & decreased child maltreatment
- *Considering overall spending on poverty alleviation & prevention could be a component of reducing child maltreatment*

➤ How can the Legislature help ensure poverty alleviation programs & child welfare supports are complementary?

MARCH 9, 2022

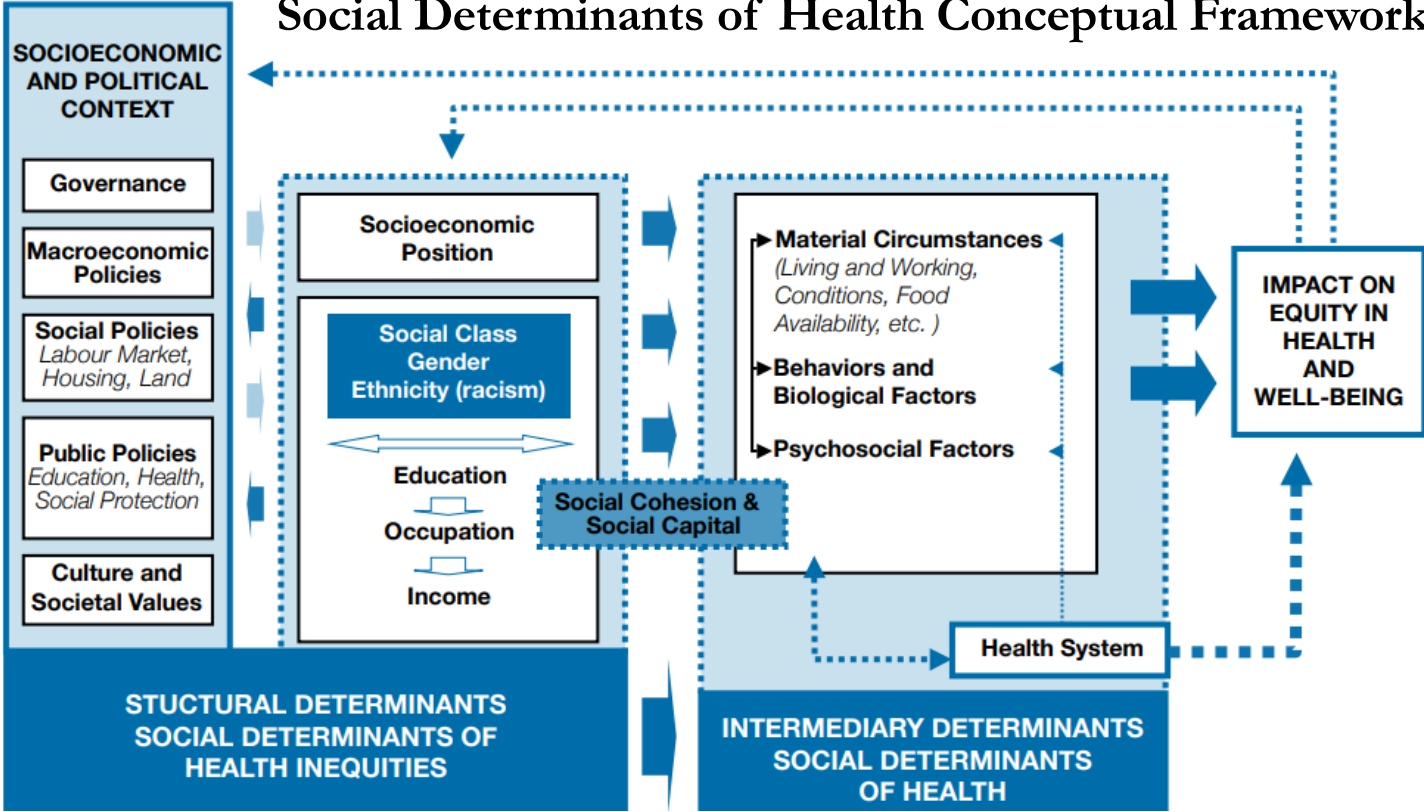
Initial Analysis and Key Questions:
Racial Disproportionalities and Disparities
in California's Child Welfare System

PRESENTED TO: Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1
On Health and Human Services
Hon. Joaquin Arambula, Chair



Context Matters: Social Determinants Framework

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)



Family Context & Economic Factors Matter



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

(Yang, 2015) (Escaravage, 2014) (Slack, 2011)



Higher Income Inequality Is Associated with Higher Child Maltreatment Rates



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

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

Who lives in high poverty neighborhoods?

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

- 24% of *all* Native American children

(Eckenrode, 2014) (Zhang, 2021)
(Drake, 2014) (Generations United, 2021)



Higher Intergenerational Income Mobility Is Associated with Lower Child Maltreatment Reports



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

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

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

(Bullinger, 2021) (Chetty, 2019)



Economic Burden of Child Maltreatment & Child Welfare Spending in California

- **\$284 billion** = estimated total annual economic burden of child maltreatment to California
- **\$4.9 billion** = total annual public expenditures by California on its child welfare system (SFY 2018)

Of its federal expenditures, California spends:

- ❑ **57% on out-of-home placements**
- ❑ 22% on adoption & guardianship
- ❑ 11% on child protective services
- ❑ <1% on services and assistance for older youth
- **Only 11% on prevention services**



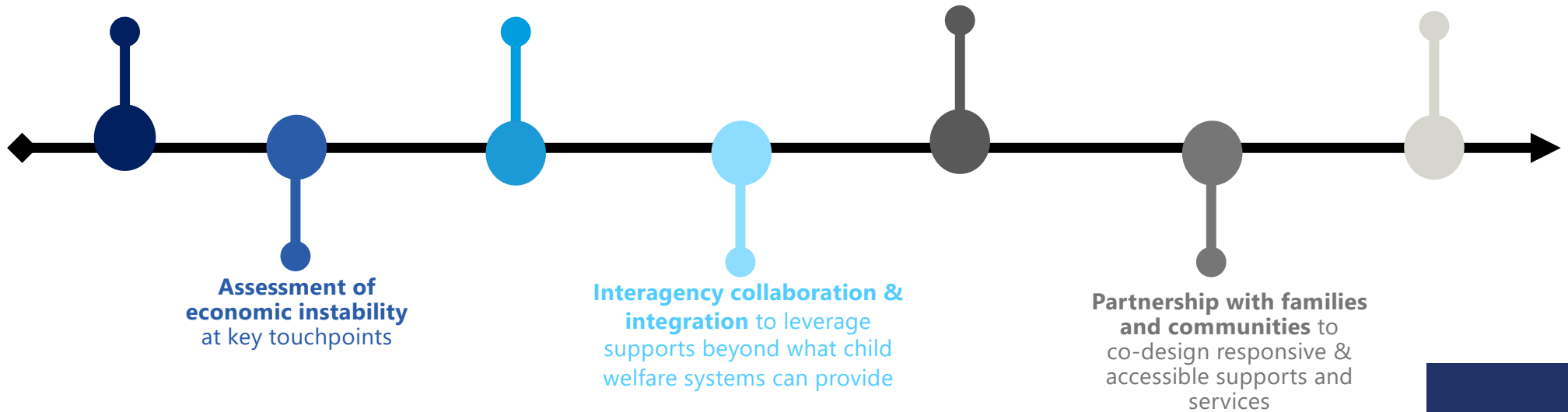
Child and Family Well-being System: Continuum of Economic & Concrete Supports Alongside Broad Array of Supports

Continuum of supports for families **upstream of system involvement**

Reorientation of public benefits administered explicitly to reduce government interventions that interrupt familial bonds

Broad array of supports includes economic & concrete supports plus evidence-based practices as needed

Evaluation and monitoring of the effectiveness & impact of interventions and fine-tune approach



Contact

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Main slide deck available at:

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