

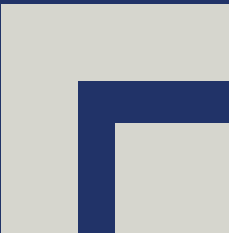
# Building Resilience for the Future through Policy

Bryan Samuels, Executive Director  
Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago

Forum for Children's Well-Being Virtual Workshop  
The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine  
October 20, 2022



“Major changes are needed at all system levels in order to provide support and nurturance for **young children growing up in poverty** with chronic risk factors including abuse and neglect, severe maternal depression, parental substance abuse, harsh parenting, and family and community violence as well as greater exposure to physical risks, including substandard housing, lack of access to resources, and environmental toxins.”



# Policy Milestones: Bifurcation of Concrete & Social Supports

## Mother's Pensions

for poor single mothers recognized the importance of financial supports to address economic hardship & promote family stability. However, these supports were largely limited to white, widowed mothers.

## Flemming Rule (FR)

implemented in response to states denying ADC benefits to families, mostly Black, because their homes were deemed "unsuitable." It required states to either 1) provide supports to these families OR 2) remove the children and place them in foster care.

## CAPTA

requires state mandated reporting laws but does not include standard guidelines, training, or opportunities for reporters to explore alternative family support options. This has resulted in high reporting rates by teachers, the majority of which are unsubstantiated.



Early 1900s

1935

1960

1961

1974

2018

## Social Security Act

**bifurcates supports** to families by nesting Aid to Dependent Children (ADC, later AFDC) under the **Social Security Administration** but **social services under the Children's Bureau**.

## Social Security Act Amendments

established **Title IV-E as an open-ended entitlement** for foster care services (part 2 of FR) **without analogous funding for family support services** (part 1 of FR)

## Family First Prevention Services Act

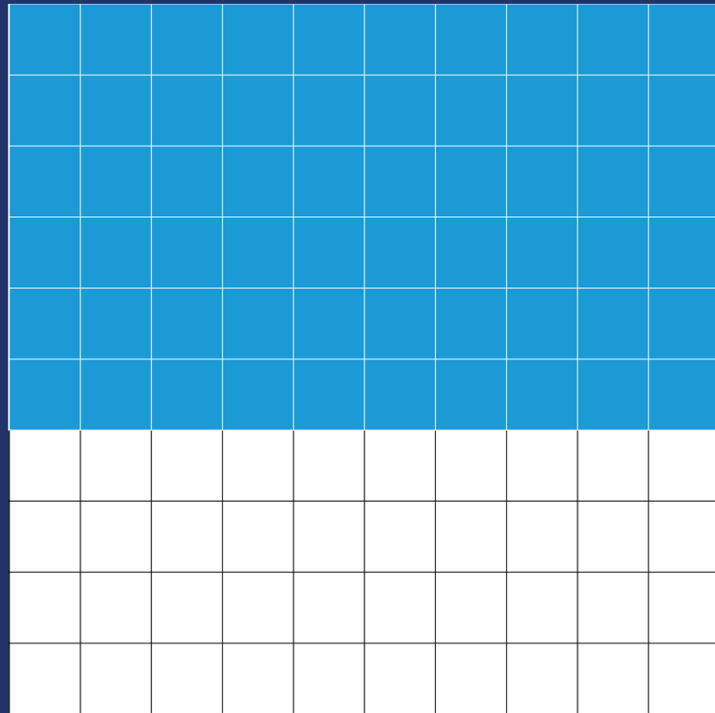
**does not explicitly include economic & concrete supports** and **focuses on treating the parent or child** rather than the context.

## Child Welfare Systems

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

(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

- 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)

# 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

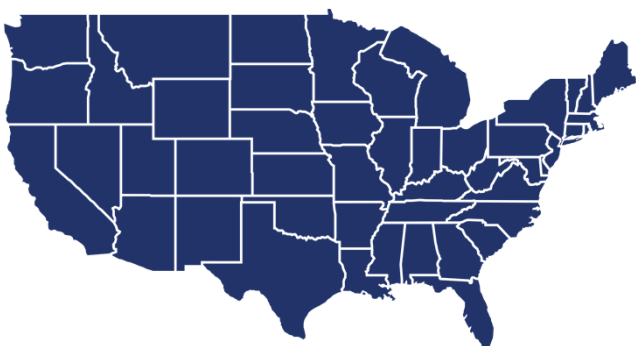
- Overall state spending on benefits
- TANF
- SNAP & WIC
- Child support payments

## Child Welfare Interventions with ECS

- Differential response & family preservation

# Policy Example: National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition, & Health Proposal

---



**Biden Administration proposes policy that includes:**

- extending permanently expanded, refundable Child Tax Credit;
- extending expanded Earned Income Tax Credit;
- raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour;
- closing the Medicaid coverage gap;
- investing in affordable, high-quality child care; and
- expanding Housing Choice Voucher program



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

