



EVIDENCE TO IMPACT: STATE POLICY OPTIONS TO INCREASE ACCESS TO ECONOMIC & CONCRETE SUPPORTS AS A CHILD WELFARE PREVENTION STRATEGY

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Overview and Introduction

The goal of the “Evidence to Impact” tool is to provide users with an overview of peer-reviewed research related to reducing risk for child maltreatment and child welfare involvement aligned with policy options that jurisdictions can leverage to increase access and impact of economic and concrete supports (ECS). Economic insecurity and material hardship are known contributors to child welfare system involvement. Reports of neglect account for most reported child maltreatment concerns, and 60% of substantiated cases are for neglect only. Many more unsubstantiated reports are made to child welfare hotlines for concerns that are related to financial need or instability. An estimated 85% of families investigated by child welfare agencies earn below 200% of the federal poverty line. This unnecessary activation of the system disproportionately affects families and communities of color due to systemic racism and historic inequities.

The tool provides examples of state policy options aligned with peer-reviewed research, organized by the policy levers at agencies’ disposal, including macroeconomic supports (Earned Income Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, minimum wage, paid family leave, employment and job creation), concrete supports (child care, housing, health care, flexible funds, direct cash transfers), and public assistance programs (TANF, SNAP, WIC).

Used in concert with meaningful policy and practice improvement efforts, this policy tool allows jurisdictions to assess their current policy landscape and consider future opportunities to expand access to ECS as a primary prevention strategy. Ultimately, this tool can provide compelling rationale for evidence-based systems change at the structural level.

Recognizing the substantial role that ECS play in child and family well-being, the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA), with generous support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the Doris Duke Foundation, launched the Advancing Family and Economic Mobility (AFEM) initiative in 2021. The initiative brings together human services agency leaders from across the country to participate in regional and national learning communities to share strategies and innovations that remove systemic barriers to sustainable family economic mobility and well-being. APHSA partnered with Chapin Hall to provide technical assistance, guidance on strategic planning, and subject matter expertise to four states—Missouri, New York, Ohio, and Oregon—in a learning community focused on increasing access to ECS as primary prevention of child welfare system involvement. This tool is a result of the strategic decision-making of those four states as well as national, cross-sector engagements with key contributors including those with lived expertise, service providers, community impact organizations, and the APHSA membership base of state and local human services leaders.

For more information on the peer-reviewed research included in this tool and additional ECS resources, please visit [this](#) website.



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Policy	State Policy Options to Promote Access and Flexible Use	<u>Peer-Reviewed Research Related to Reducing Risk for Child Welfare Involvement</u>
Macroeconomic Supports		
<p>Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)</p>	<p>Establish refundable state-level EITC (allows tax filer to receive credit even if taxes are not owed)</p> <p>Expand access to & amount of state-level EITC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase state EITC % of federal credit • Extend EITC to immigrants who file taxes with an Individual Tax Identification Number (ITIN) & reduce barriers to securing ITINs • End diversion of refundable tax credits to cover debts & government costs <p>(CBPP, 2022)</p> <p>Implement measures & appropriate funding to increase EITC uptake, especially for families who are low-income:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplify tax filing or EITC claiming process for non-filers • Provide free tax preparation assistance to EITC-eligible families. • Fund family navigators to support EITC-eligible families • Require beneficiaries of public assistance programs to be informed of the benefits of EITC • Send automated, targeted text message reminders to 	<p>States with refundable state-level EITC, compared to those without, have 11% fewer entries into foster care (<i>Rostad, 2020</i>)</p> <p>A 10% increase in the amount of refundable state-level EITC benefits is associated with a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5% decline in rates of reported maltreatment • 9% decline in rates of reported neglect <p>(<i>Kovski, 2021</i>)</p> <p>Refundable state-level EITC is associated with a decrease in hospital admissions for abusive head trauma for child <2 years (<i>Klevens, 2017</i>)</p> <p>Expansion of EITC 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) (<i>Biehl, 2018</i>)</p> <p>Each additional \$1000 in per-child EITC and Child Tax Credit refunds is associated with a decline in state-level maltreatment reports of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.3% in the week of payment • 7.7% in the 4 weeks after payment <p>(<i>Kovski, 2022</i>)</p>

	<p>EITC-eligible families (NCSL, 2022)</p>	<p>A \$1000 increase in income via EITC is associated with an 8-10% reduction in self-reported CPS involvement for single-parent households that are low income (<i>Berger, 2017</i>)</p>
<p>Child Tax Credit (CTC)</p>	<p>Establish refundable state-level CTC</p> <p>Expand access to & amount of state-level CTC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Remove restrictions for qualifying children ● Increase credit amount or state CTC % of federal credit ● End diversion of refundable tax credits to cover debts & government costs <p>(NCSL, 2022) (CBPP, 2022)</p>	<p>EITC and CTC payments are associated with immediate reductions in state-level maltreatment reports (<i>Kovski, 2022</i>)</p> <p>Each additional \$1000 in per-child EITC and CTC refunds is associated with a decline in state-level maltreatment reports of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2.3% in the week of payment ● 7.7% in the 4 weeks after payment <p>(<i>Kovski, 2022</i>)</p> <p>Expanded monthly CTC payments in 2021 improved risk factors for child welfare involvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reduced month-to-month volatility in poverty ● Increased families' abilities to meet their basic needs ● Strongly reduced food insecurity <p>(<i>Shafer, 2022</i>) (<i>Parolin, 2022</i>)</p>
<p>Minimum Wage</p>	<p>Establish or increase state minimum wage (EPI, 2022)</p>	<p>States that increased the minimum wage beyond \$7.25 per hour experienced a reduction in maltreatment reports (<i>Raissian, 2017</i>)</p> <p>For every \$1 increase in the minimum wage, there was a 9.6% reduction in neglect reports (<i>Raissian, 2017</i>)</p> <p>Increasing a city's minimum wage is associated with reductions in self-reported physical & psychological aggression by parents towards their children (compared to cities that do not change minimum wage)</p> <p>(<i>Schneider, 2021</i>)</p>
<p>Paid Family Leave (PFL)</p>	<p>Implement state PFL program</p> <p>Expand PFL access, amount & duration</p>	<p>Compared to states with no PFL policy, the implementation of California's 2004 PFL policy (up to 12 weeks of partially paid leave) was</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase wage replacement rate for low wage workers <p>(PN3, 2022)</p>	<p>associated with a decrease in hospital admissions for abusive head trauma among children <1 year old and < 2 years old</p> <p>(<i>Klevens, 2016</i>)</p>
<p>Employment & Job Creation</p>	<p>Leverage funding opportunities to support well-paying, stable employment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act • Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) <p>Increase coverage, duration & amount of unemployment benefits (CBPP, 2022)</p> <p>Redesign TANF work programs to focus on helping parents find higher-paying jobs (CBPP, 2022)</p> <p>Expand & improve SNAP Employment & Training programs (APHSA, 2022)</p>	<p>States that extended the duration of unemployment benefits at the onset of the recession (2007-2009) saw smaller increases in substantiated neglect reports (compared to states that didn't extend unemployment benefits)</p> <p>(<i>Brown, 2020</i>)</p> <p>A 1% increase in the county unemployment rate is associated with a 20% increase in substantiated neglect reports (<i>Brown, 2020</i>)</p> <p>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)</p> <p>(<i>Weiner, 2020</i>)</p> <p>During the recession (2007–2009), the rate of abusive head trauma for children < 5 years old was considerably higher than during the period immediately before (<i>Berger, 2011</i>)</p> <p>At the county level, higher income inequality—independent of child poverty rates—is associated with higher rates of substantiated child maltreatment (<i>Eckenrode, 2014</i>) (<i>Zhang, 2021</i>)</p> <p>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 & poverty rates)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 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 <p>(<i>Bullinger, 2022</i>)</p>

Policy	State Policy Options to Promote Access and Flexible Use	Peer-Reviewed Research Related to Reducing Risk for Child Welfare Involvement
Concrete Supports		
<p>Child Care</p>	<p>Increase investment & expand child care assistance</p> <p>Establish priority for child care assistance receipt to child-welfare involved families or families at risk of child welfare involvement</p> <p>Eliminate or reduce copays, fees & costs for families who receive child care assistance</p> <p>Implement Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) program policies that increase access & reduce administrative burdens:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expand income eligibility ● Extend continuity of eligibility to 24 months, regardless of changes in income ● Waive work requirements or expand definition of approved activities to qualify for child care subsidies (ie, training, education, job search time) ● Provide graduated phase-out period for families with income increases ● Establish automatic/categorical eligibility for families already enrolled in SNAP, WIC, Medicaid or Head Start ● Implement shortened wait times for subsidy approval ● Create family-friendly child care assistance applications <p>(PN3, 2022) (OCC, 2023)</p>	<p>Child care investments included in Build Back Better (proposed 2020-2021) would be associated with a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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 <p>(<i>Puls, 2022</i>)</p> <p>Waitlists to access subsidized child care are associated with an increase in maltreatment investigations (<i>Klevens, 2015</i>)</p> <p>States with CCDF program policies that make child care subsidies more accessible to child welfare-supervised children (in terms of eligibility, priority lists, copays & activity requirements) are associated with lower child removal rates (compared to other states) (<i>Meloy, 2015</i>)</p> <p>For every additional child care concern reported by families receiving TANF, the risk of supervisory neglect increases by 20% (<i>Yang, 2016</i>)</p> <p>Each additional month that mothers who are low-income receive a child care subsidy is associated with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 16% decrease in the odds of a neglect report ● 14% decrease in the odds of a physical abuse report (in the following 12 months) (<i>Yang, 2019</i>) <p>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)</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Difficulty finding child care was a stronger predictor of neglect than almost any other factor measured in this study, including mental health & severity of drug use <p>(Cash, 2003)</p> <p>For working mothers who are low income:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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) (Ha, 2019)
<p>Housing</p>	<p>Expand supportive housing programs</p> <p>Provide housing funds to families at risk of child welfare involvement due to housing instability</p> <p>Leverage TANF funds to promote housing stability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase access to cash assistance ● Increase cash assistance benefit levels ● Provide non-recurrent short-term (NRST) benefits to cover housing costs ● Redesign TANF work programs to focus on helping parents find higher-paying jobs ● Provide housing supplements to TANF families <p>(CBPP, 2022) (Abt, 2022)</p> <p>Maximize housing resources & funding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Emergency Rental Assistance ● Rapid Rehousing ● Foster to Youth Independence ● The Family Unification Program 	<p>Randomized controlled trial of children of child welfare-involved families who face housing instability & receive a supportive housing program found that they experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fewer removals ● Lower prevalence of substantiated maltreatment ● Increased reunification <p>(compared to the business-as-usual control group)</p> <p>(Farrell, 2018)</p> <p>Randomized controlled trial of homeless families referred for permanent housing subsidies found that they self-reported at the 20-month follow-up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 50% fewer foster care placements ● Less intimate partner violence ● Lower rates of psychological distress ● Greater housing stability & food security <p>(compared to the business-as-usual control group)</p> <p>(Gubits, 2015)</p> <p>Self-reported housing instability is associated with increased risk for</p>

- [HUD's Family Self-Sufficiency Program \(FSS\)](#).
- [Low Income Household Energy Assistance Program \(LIHEAP\)](#).
- [Low Income Household Water Assistance Program \(LIHWAP\)](#).

Expand Medicaid ([CBPP, 2022](#))

neglect ([Warren, 2015](#))

Each additional eviction filing (per 100 occupied units in a block group) is associated with a 2% increase in maltreatment reports ([Bullinger, 2021](#))

Households experiencing a foreclosure filing in the next 6-12 months are at 70% greater risk of CPS investigation (compared to households that will not) ([Berger, 2015](#))

Increases in current & prior-year mortgage foreclosure rates are associated with increases in investigated & substantiated maltreatment

- A 1% increase in the prior-year foreclosure rates is associated with a 7.3% increase in substantiations

([Frioux, 2014](#))

Increases in mortgage delinquency & foreclosure rates are associated with increases in hospital admissions for physical abuse of children < 6 years old & for traumatic brain injury for infants < 1 year old

([Wood, 2012](#))

Expansion of Medicaid coverage is associated with reduced risk of home eviction:

- Evictions fell by 20% in states that expanded Medicaid compared to non-expansion states

([Zewde, 2019](#))

**Health Care
Medicaid
Children's
Health
Insurance
Program
(CHIP)**

Expand Medicaid ([PN3, 2022](#))

Increase income eligibility for Medicaid (up to 138% of FPL) & CHIP ([CCF, 2022](#))

Eliminate monthly premiums for Medicaid & CHIP ([KFE, 2021](#))

Expand Medicaid & CHIP coverage for immigrants

Pursue Medicaid Section 1115 waivers with social determinants of health approach & continuous coverage ([KFE, 2022](#))

Rate of screened-in neglect reports for children < age 6 decreased in states that expanded Medicaid, but increased in states that did not (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) ([Brown, 2019](#))

States that newly expanded Medicaid in 2014 were associated with the

Establish continuous eligibility for Medicaid & CHIP regardless of changes in household income:

- 12-month continuous coverage for children (*will become mandatory in 2024–CCF, 2022*)
- 12-month postpartum coverage (*KFF, 2022*) (*CCF, 2022*)

End waiting periods for Medicaid & CHIP coverage/adopt presumptive eligibility to provide temporary coverage until formal eligibility determination is made

Reduce administrative burdens & increase access:

- Allow applications & verification documents to be submitted via mobile application
- Reduce verification requests
- Maximize available data to verify eligibility & automatically renew coverage
- Use SNAP participation data to expedite Medicaid enrollment
- Eliminate periodic data checks
- Reduce use of post mail for communications & maximize email, text messaging & phone calls
- Simplify forms & notices and increase language access (*CLASP, 2022*)

following reductions in the average rate of neglect reports per state-year:

- 13% reduction ages 0-5
- 15% reduction ages 6-12
- 16% reduction ages 13-17 (*McGinty, 2022*)

States with policies that facilitate continuity of eligibility for Medicaid/CHIP are associated with lower maltreatment investigation rates (compared to states without continuous eligibility) (*Klevens, 2015*)

Flexible Funds

Provide flexible funds to families at risk of child welfare involvement potentially via state funding allocations

Families with open child welfare cases 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) (*Rostad, 2017*)

Low-income families who receive Differential Response (DR) with concrete supports are less likely to experience a subsequent maltreatment report (compared to low-income families who receive DR without any concrete supports) (*Loman, 2012*)

For families who report difficulty paying bills prior to receiving a home-based services program with concrete supports:

- Provision of clothing/furniture/supplies or housing assistance is associated with a reduced likelihood of subsequent substantiated maltreatment
- Provision of cash assistance or clothing/furniture/ supplies is associated with a reduced likelihood of subsequent foster care placement (*Ryan, 2004*)

Families with indicated allegations of inadequate food, shelter, clothing or environmental neglect who received cash assistance through Illinois' family preservation program were less likely to have their children enter foster care over the subsequent 15-month period (compared to families with similar indicated allegations who did not receive cash assistance) (*Shook, 1997*)

Families who received Kentucky's family preservation program (FPP), which includes short-term interventions and flexible funds, were less likely to have their children enter foster care than the comparison group of families who did not receive FPP, although the families who received FPP had higher risk factors overall (*Huebner, 2008*)

Direct Cash Transfers (DCT)

Establish direct cash transfer programs

Address benefits cliff issues:

- Establish that DCT payments will not be considered income via state legislation
- Structure DCT payment as a gift
- Establish [ABLE](#) accounts
- Pursue federal waivers
- Use private funding for DCT program
- Where option is available, exempt DCT payments from counting as income for public benefit eligibility (TANF, Medicaid, SNAP, child care subsidies, housing vouchers, LIHEAP)

Evaluations of unconditional DCT programs (meaning there are no work requirements or restrictions on how recipients can use the funds) demonstrate recipients experience improvements in risk factors for child welfare involvement:

Randomized controlled trial of the Stockton, CA Guaranteed Income Program, which provided \$500 monthly income supplements for 24 months to 125 low-income residents, found that, after 1 year, recipients experienced improved financial stability & mental health (compared to the control group).

- Recipients also experienced improved employment: while 28%

- Use flexibility for local options available for project-based public housing
- Maximize adjunctive eligibility
- Offer benefits counseling to recipients & ensure informed consent
- Utilize [Guaranteed Income Dashboard](#) & [CLIFF Tool](#) (APHSA, 2021) (Chapin Hall, 2022)

of recipients had full-time jobs at the start of the program; one year later, 40% had full-time jobs (West, 2021)

Randomized controlled trial of the Baby's First Years program, which provides \$333 monthly income supplements to 1,000 low-income mothers with newborns, found that 1-year-olds whose mothers received the monthly income supplements had brain activity associated with higher cognitive functioning (compared to infants in the control group) (Troller-Renfree, 2022)

Tribal children whose families received an annual income supplement of ~\$5,000 from casino profits have improved mental health, physical health & financial well-being as adults and improved educational attainment (compared to nontribal adults in the same community)

- Annual income supplement has a cumulative effect: At age 30, children whose families had received the supplement for the longest duration & for the largest amounts reported:
 - Lowest levels of psychiatric symptoms
 - Highest levels of physical health & financial well-being (Copeland, 2022) (Akee, 2010)

Policy	State Policy Options to Promote Access and Flexible Use	Peer-Reviewed Research Related to Reducing Risk for Child Welfare Involvement
Public Assistance Programs		
Public Assistance Program	<p>Increase spending on public assistance programs</p> <p>Maximize state flexibility to expand amount of & access to public assistance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase assistance levels ● Raise income eligibility thresholds ● Eliminate asset tests/asset limits & expand asset exemptions (NCCP, 2022) 	<p>Each additional \$1,000 that states spend annually on public benefit programs* per person living in poverty is associated with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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 (Puls, 2021)

	<p>Develop people-centered programs, integrated data systems & automation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establish mobile-friendly single application process ● Mandate data alignment & data sharing between programs ● Automate application & recertification ● Prefill application forms ● Automate income documentation & benefits calculation ● Automate referrals for those likely eligible for support (i.e., automate application for SNAP when low-wage worker files for unemployment benefits) (APHSA, 2021) (EPIC, 2022) <p>Reduce administrative burdens & streamline access (where federal flexibility allows):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide automatic/categorical eligibility & enrollment ● Simplify applications, reduce in-person interview requirements & reduce verification requirements ● Establish & extend continuous eligibility, regardless of changes in income ● Expand & align recertification intervals across programs and implement automatic renewals ● Reduce requirements for reporting changes in household circumstances <p>Fund outreach & enrollment assistance to increase uptake:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase communication to families & communities including targeted, automated text messaging ● Fund family navigators to help families access & enroll 	<p><i>*Public benefit programs included in analysis:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cash, housing & in-kind assistance ● Child care assistance ● Refundable EITC ● Medical assistance programs (including Medicaid + CHIP) ● Low-income housing infrastructure development <p>Analysis simulating the effects of increased household income under three National Academy of Sciences (NAS) 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)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Analysis suggests implementation would substantially reduce racial disproportionality in CPS involvement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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 (<i>Pac, 2023</i>) (NAS, 2019)
<p>Temporary Assistance for Needy</p>	<p>Assess & right size spending across categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reshape state allocation formula to increase spending 	<p>A 10% increase in state public benefit levels (ACDF/TANF + the value of food stamps) for a family of 4 is predicted to reduce foster care</p>

Families (TANF)

on cash assistance & concrete supports and reduce administration costs

- Spend unobligated TANF funds ([CRS](#), 2022)

Increase cash assistance levels or increase cash assistance levels for families at risk of child welfare involvement ([CBPP](#), 2022)

Maximize broad state discretion to expand eligibility:

- Raise income eligibility thresholds (to maximum allowable % of FPL)
- Eliminate assets limits, including vehicle asset limits
- Extend eligibility to all pregnant people
- Use state funds to provide assistance to immigrants

Provide clothing allowance and/or monthly diaper subsidy to TANF families with young children ([NDBN](#), 2021)

Use targeted outreach to increase awareness of “child-only” assistance for immigrant families

Remove lifetime bans for drug-related felony convictions (through legislation) & eliminate drug testing for participating families ([GCPI](#), 2022)

Extend time limits for receiving cash assistance:

- Allow full 60-month lifetime limit
- Provide hardship extensions beyond 60 months (states can exceed 60-month time limit for up to 20% of families)
- Use state funds to provide assistance beyond 60 months
- No time limit on “child-only” families
- Extend time limits for people who are pregnant or caring for children under 6 months of age ([CBPP](#), 2022)

Eliminate punitive policies:

- Repeal “full-family” sanctions (which take away assistance from the entire family if a parent is found noncompliant)

placements by 8% (from 1990–1998) ([Paxson](#), 2003)

A 10% reduction in the average monthly AFDC/TANF cash benefit amount for a family of 3 is associated with a 2.3% increase in the foster care caseload rate (from 1985–2000) ([Swann](#), 2006)

Lifetime limits on receipt of TANF benefits & sanctions for noncompliance are associated with higher levels of substantiated maltreatment ([Paxson](#), 2003)

Each additional state policy that restricts access to TANF* is associated with an additional:

- 50 children with substantiated neglect reports
- 22 children entering foster care due to abuse
- 21 children entering foster care due to neglect (per 100,000 children) ([Ginther](#), 2022)

*State policies reviewed included:

- Time limits on TANF benefits of less than sixty months
- Severe sanctions for failure to meet work requirements
- Work requirements for mothers of children younger than 1 year old
- Suspicion-based drug testing of applicants

States that implemented TANF time limits of less than 60 months experienced:

- 34.4% increase in substantiated maltreatment reports
- 37.3% increase in substantiated neglect reports (increases observed from 2004 to 2015) ([Ginther](#), 2017)

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

- 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 (increases observed from 2004 to 2015) ([Ginther](#), 2017)

by, for example, assigning greater % of the monthly cash grant to dependent children & preventing sanctions from being applied to that amount

- Minimize use of all sanctions
- Minimize sanction duration
- Reduce amount of assistance taken away if sanctioned
- Use initial sanctions as an opportunity to connect families with wraparound services
- Repeal “family caps” (which deny additional assistance to families who have another child while receiving TANF benefits) ([CBPP, 2021](#)) ([CSSP, 2016](#)) ([GBPI, 2020](#))

Pass through & disregard 100% of child support payments so they do not affect eligibility ([Child Trends, 2023](#))

Allow parents with children in foster care who are actively seeking to reunify to continue to receive TANF cash assistance

Remove upfront application requirements, such as job search requirements

Reform work requirements:

- Exempt single parents with young children from work requirements
- No reduction in assistance for not meeting work requirements
- Establish broad work exemptions
- Create flexible & broad definitions of work
- Do not require participation in work activities until recipients have received assistance for 24 months
- Minimize verification requirements for work activities & hours
- Create a navigation system to support & guide full range of work preparation activities
- Redesign TANF work programs to focus on helping parents find higher-paying jobs ([APHSA, 2021](#)) ([CBPP, 2022](#))

State policies that limit access to TANF benefits*are associated with increases in mothers’ self-reports of physical child maltreatment ([Spencer, 2021](#))

*State policies reviewed:

- Decreasing the maximum allowable cash benefit amount
- Implementing stricter time limits on receipt of benefit
- Lower TANF to poverty ratios (number of families who receive TANF for every 100 families in poverty)

Randomized controlled trial found mothers who participant 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) ([Cancian, 2013](#))

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

Expand eligibility:

- Implement broad-based categorical eligibility (BBCE) to raise gross income limits (to maximum % of FPL) & eliminate asset tests
- Exclude legally obligated child support payments from total income
- Remove restrictions for drug-related felony convictions
- Ensure children whose parents are subject to the 5-year immigrant bar receive SNAP
- Do not make SNAP E&T programs mandatory
- Disregard income of participants in SNAP E&T and WIOA work-based learning
- Adopt simplified approach for calculating self-employment expenses ([USDA, 2022](#)) ([CLASP, 2022](#))

Maximize flexibility in SNAP work requirements

Provide transitional SNAP assistance to families leaving TANF

Reduce administrative burdens & increase access:

- Waive in-person interview requirements
- Provide online services (initial application, change reporting & renewal)
- Reduce documentation requirements
- Waive biometric/fingerprint requirements
- Reduce requirements for reporting changes in household circumstances
- Simplify income reporting (i.e., participants only report their income if it increases above the eligibility threshold, as an alternative to monthly reporting)
- Expand to 12-month recertification interval
- Modernize EBT online & mobile technology
- Opt into summer EBT program ([PN3, 2022](#))

States that adopted both of these policies to expand SNAP eligibility under broad-based categorical eligibility (BBCE):

- Increasing the income limit for eligibility
- Eliminating the asset test

were associated with decreases in the number of CPS-investigated reports (from 2006 – 2019) ([Austin, 2023](#))

Every 5% increase in the number of families receiving SNAP benefits is associated with a 7.6% to 14.3% reduction in CPS & foster care caseloads ([Johnson-Motoyama, 2022](#))

States with more generous SNAP policies* experienced:

- Large reductions in CPS reports
- Fewer substantiated reports
- Fewer foster care placements

(from 2004 – 2016, compared to states with less generous SNAP policies) ([Johnson-Motoyama, 2022](#))

*State policies reviewed:

- Increasing income limits under 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

The implementation of multiple more generous SNAP policies is associated with larger reductions in child welfare involvement ([Johnson-Motoyama, 2022](#))

There are particularly large estimated reductions in CPS reports & substantiations among states offering transitional SNAP benefits to families leaving TANF ([Johnson-Motoyama, 2022](#))

Children from low-income families who participate in SNAP have a lower risk of substantiated maltreatment reports (compared to children from

		<p>low-income families who don't participate) (<i>Lee, 2007</i>)</p> <p>The presence of each additional store accepting SNAP benefits (in the least densely populated areas of a northeastern state) is associated with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 11.3% decrease in substantiated maltreatment cases ● 4.4% reduction in maltreatment reports ● 6% reduction in neglect reports (<i>Bullinger, 2021</i>)
<p>Woman, Infants, & Children (WIC)</p>	<p>Reduce administrative burdens & increase access:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Allow use of SNAP, TANF or Medicaid eligibility for WIC enrollment (adjunctive eligibility) ● Allow online screening tools, applications & electronic document submission ● Allow virtual appointments ● Simplify certification processes & temporarily certify applicants who don't have all documents at certification appointment ● Allow income-eligible pregnant individuals to be enrolled as presumptively eligible immediately, followed by nutrition assessment within 60 days ● Certify breastfeeding women & children for up to 1 year (rather than 6 months) ● Utilize WIC EBT (CBPP, 2022) (CBPP, 2022) <p>Increase outreach to eligible families, including automated, targeted text messaging (Zero to Three, 2022)</p>	<p>Children from low-income families who participate in WIC have a lower risk of substantiated maltreatment reports (compared to children from low-income families who don't participate) (<i>Lee, 2007</i>)</p>

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[Click here](#) to view the full list of references cited in this tool.

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