

# Strengthening Families Through Economic and Concrete Supports: Actionable Tools and Resources

October 2, 2023 10 AM-11 AM

Provided in Partnership by:



# Objectives:

- Explore the use of an actionable policy tool to review policies and guide expanded availability and access.
- Further explore implications of this research and policy options associated with it for the strengthening family movement in Maine.
- Explore the connection to the Maine Child Safety and Family Well-Being Plan.

# Reminder:

Please use the Questions button (and not the Chat) to submit any questions to the presenters. We will do our best to answer these at the end of the webinar.

# Our Collaboration



Maine Children's Trust was originally created by statute in 1985. In 1994, legislation was enacted that transformed the Trust into a 501(c)3 non-profit governed by a Board of Directors. The Trust provides leadership and coordination of efforts throughout Maine to prevent child abuse and neglect before it occurs. The Trust provides funding and supports for prevention programming, as well as coordinates statewide collaborative initiatives to strengthen families. The Trust is also the state chapter for Prevent Child Abuse America.

The Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child and Family Services contracts with Maine Children's Trust to coordinate the Prevention Councils located in each county in Maine.

**Join the Movement:  
We can all keep  
children safe by  
making families  
strong!!**

## **Child Abuse Prevention Webinar Series**

### **Maine's Child Safety Family Well Being Plan**

**Input into Maine's plan is just the beginning!  
Understanding what role we can play in  
strengthening families across multiple  
strategies is critical for our success in  
reducing child maltreatment and other  
adverse conditions.**

**There is something for everyone in today's  
webinar! Each piece of information is a tool  
for you use and help to understand what role  
you can play in strengthening families in the  
context of economic and concrete supports.**

**While you may not directly engage in policy  
work, policies are influenced by the lives and  
voices of individuals and families in Maine.**

# Child Safety and Family Well-Being Plan



## Maine Child Safety and Family Well-Being Plan

Version 1.0 - May 9, 2023

Prepared by the Maine Department of Health and Human Services  
in Partnership with the Maine Child Welfare Action Network



Focus on **primary and secondary prevention**

**We can all reduce child abuse and neglect and related risk factors by strengthening families.**

**Goal:** A Child and Family Well-Being System

[Maine Child Safety and Family Well-Being Plan - Version 1.0 \(May 2023\)](#)

# Disclaimer

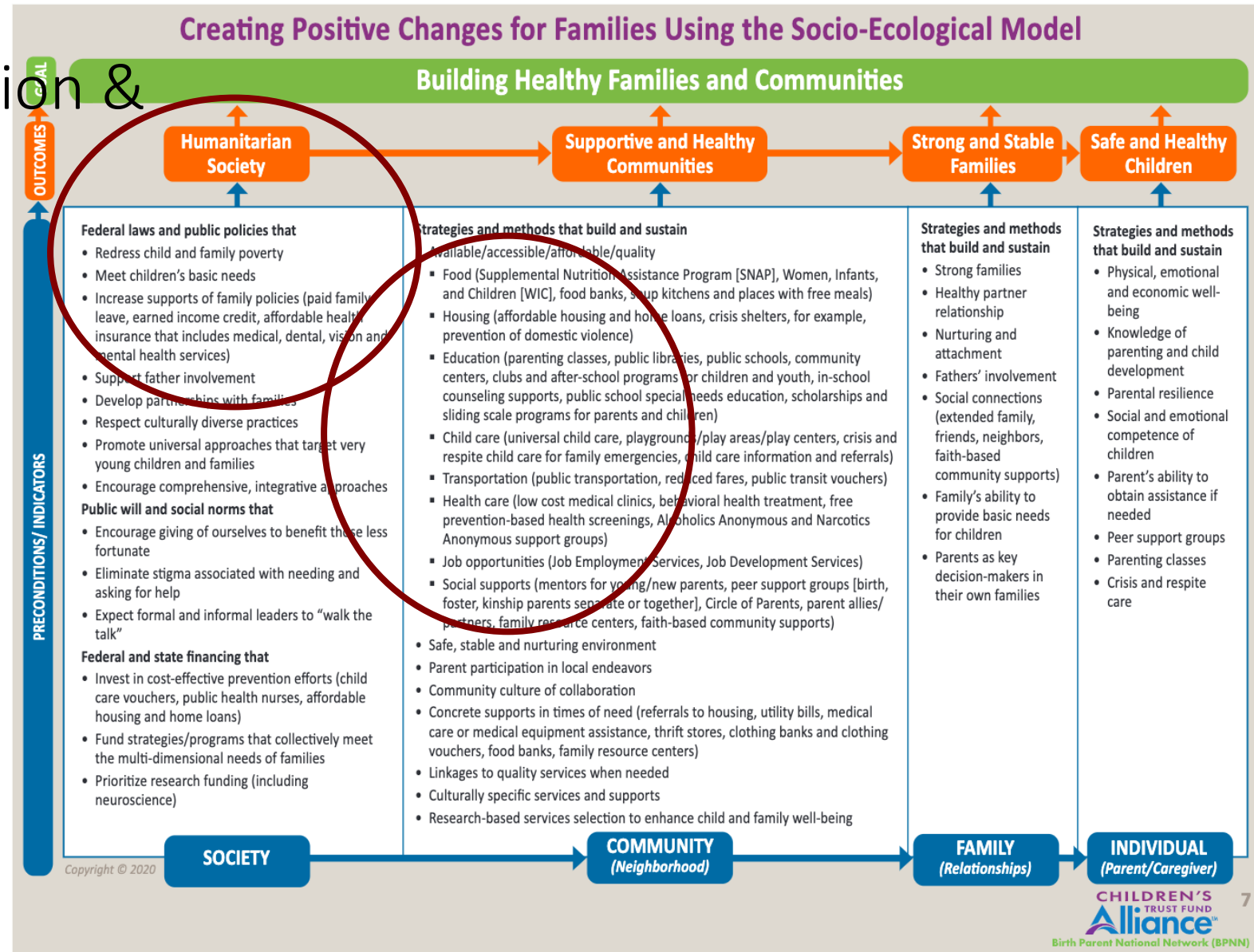
The opinions expressed during this webinar are those of Chapin Hall and not necessarily those of the sponsors of this webinar.



# Families Describe Child Safety & Family Well-Being, Child Welfare Transformation & Prevention

We share our lived experiences and perspectives with national, state and community leaders to transform the child welfare system and to raise awareness about the need for increased prevention strategies and resources for families before serious problems occur.

- **Birth Parent National Network & Casey Family Programs Birth Parent Advisory Committee**



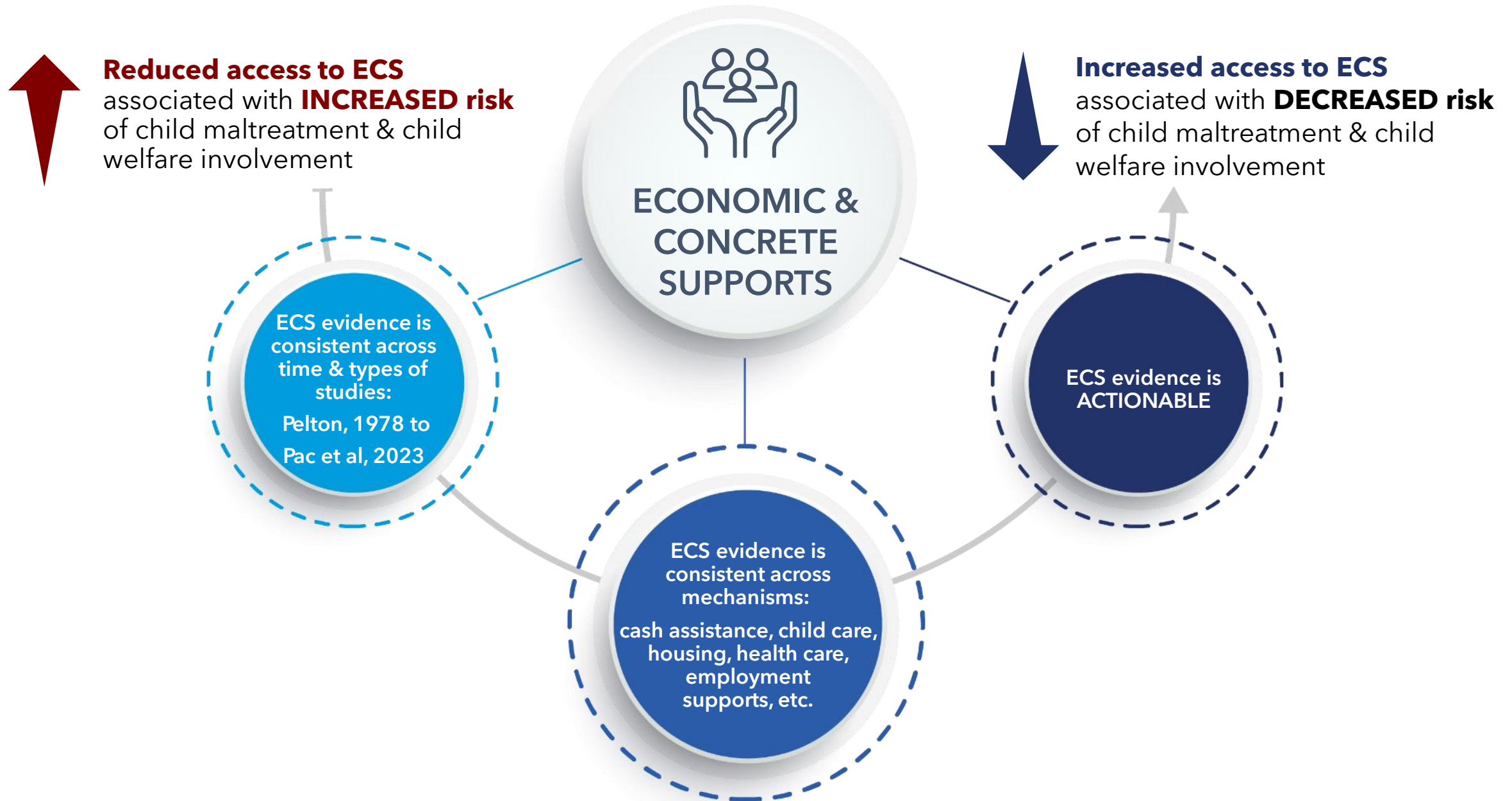
# Protective Factors

The **conditions or attributes** of individuals, families, communities, or the larger society that **reduce risk** and **promote healthy development and well-being** of children and families, today and in the future.





# Economic and Concrete Supports (ECS): An Overview



# Chapin Hall & APHSA: ECS Policy Analysis Tool



Policy	State Policy Options to Promote Access and Flexible Use	Peer-Reviewed Research Related to Reducing Risk for Child Welfare Involvement
<b>Concrete Supports</b>		
<b>Child Care</b>	<p>Increase investment &amp; 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 &amp; costs for families who receive child care assistance</p> <p>Implement Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) program policies that increase access &amp; reduce administrative burdens:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand income eligibility</li> <li>• Extend continuity of eligibility to 24 months, regardless of changes in income</li> <li>• Waive work requirements or expand definition of approved activities to qualify for child care subsidies (ie, training, education, job search time)</li> <li>• Provide graduated phase-out period for families with income increases</li> <li>• Establish automatic/categorical eligibility for families already enrolled in SNAP, WIC, Medicaid or Head Start</li> <li>• Implement shortened wait times for subsidy approval</li> <li>• Create family-friendly child care assistance applications</li> </ul> <p>(PN3, 2022) (QCC, 2023)</p>	<p>Child care investments included in <a href="#">Build Back Better</a> (proposed 2020-2021) would be associated with a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6.4% reduction in CPS investigations</li> <li>• 6% reduction in substantiated child maltreatment</li> <li>• 3.1% reduction in foster care placements</li> <li>• 11.6% reduction in child fatalities due to maltreatment</li> </ul> <p>(Puls, 2022)</p> <p>Waitlists to access subsidized child care are associated with an increase in maltreatment investigations (Klevens, 2015)</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 &amp; activity requirements) are associated with lower child removal rates (compared to other states) (Meloy, 2015)</p> <p>For every additional child care concern reported by families receiving TANF, the risk of supervisory neglect increases by 20% (Yang, 2016)</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"> <li>• 16% decrease in the odds of a neglect report</li> <li>• 14% decrease in the odds of a physical abuse report (in the following 12 months) (Yang, 2019)</li> </ul> <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>

# Community Engagement

## **Themes generated from community partner feedback:**

### **Challenges**

- Meeting basic needs
- Waitlists
- Navigation of benefits “edges” and “cliffs”

### **A vision for service structure and delivery**

- Accessible to families
- Offered in a non-stigmatizing way
- Incorporate people with lived experience
- Need for care coordination
- Build and sustain the prevention workforce
- Expand peer supports
- Understand who to reach out to when families need help
- Community centers and hubs to access services
- Leverage community collaboratives to support family well-being

# Economic & Concrete Supports to Prevent Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

“ **Strengthening economic supports for families is a multi-generation strategy.**

**Policies that strengthen household financial security** (e.g., *tax credits, child care subsidies, temporary assistance & livable wages*) and family-friendly work policies (e.g., *paid leave & flexible and consistent work schedules*) **can prevent ACEs** by:

- Increasing economic stability & family income
- Increasing maternal employment
- Improving parents' ability to meet children's basic needs & obtain high-quality child care
- Reducing parental stress & depression
- Protecting families from losing income to care for a sick child or family member

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) (2019).

*Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs): Leveraging the Best Available Evidence*

”

# Reducing Intergenerational Poverty & Child Maltreatment (NASEM)

*Conclusion:* Causal evidence on factors leading to maltreatment and child welfare involvement is limited, although **most evidence points to household economic hardship as elevating the risk of child welfare involvement and to income support and income-support policies reducing risk for child welfare involvement.**

...This leads us to consider the following promising prevention approaches as indirect approaches to reducing intergenerational poverty:

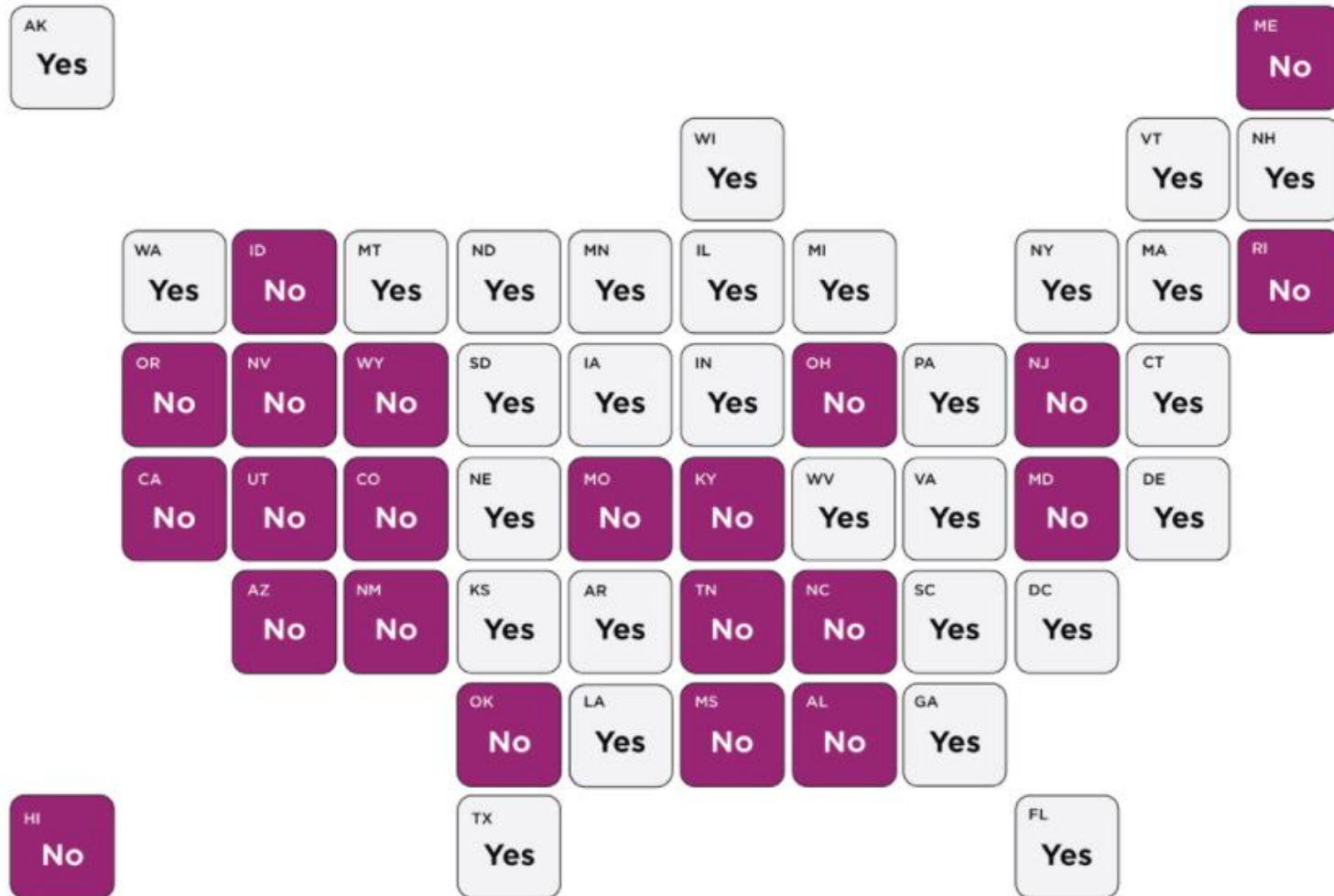
- The **most consistent evidence of causal effects on reduced child maltreatment is for direct income transfers to low-income families.**
- Consistent evidence of reductions in child maltreatment is also found in strong studies of the impacts of the **recent Medicaid expansions** occasioned by the Affordable Care Act.
- Expansions of eligibility and benefit levels in **food and nutrition programs** such as SNAP and WIC have also been linked with reductions in child maltreatment.
- Some **community-level interventions** such as the Positive Parenting Program (Triple P) appear to be promising approaches for reducing child maltreatment.





# *^State Policy Option:* Exempt Families' Financial Inability to Provide From Definition of Neglect

States that do not have exemptions for financial inability to provide for a child



- Inclusion of income-related factors in definitions of neglect without any exemptions **may be funneling families into the child welfare system**
- However, poverty exemptions in neglect statutes do not guarantee sharp reductions in neglect cases without **strategic practices, preponderance of evidence standard** for substantiation & assessing neglect through a **harm specification lens**

([Child Trends](#), 2022 – graphic)

(DeGuerre, 2021)



# *State Policy Option:* Tighten Legal Standards for Removal

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

- Removal standard narrowed to only when necessary to prevent **imminent physical harm** to child due to abuse or neglect
- Existence of **community or family poverty, inadequate housing, mental illness or substance use** does not by itself constitute imminent physical harm



## **Kentucky** – [Senate Bill 8](#) (2022)

Narrows definition of neglect to situations where child's welfare is harmed or threatened with harm by parent due to inadequate care, supervision, food, clothing, shelter, education or medical care necessary for the child's well-being **when financially able to do so or offered financial or other means to do so**

# Increased Access to 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)
- Home visiting with ECS
- Child care & pre-K
- Housing



## Public Benefits

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



## Child Welfare Interventions with ECS

- Differential response
- Family preservation

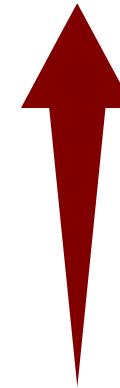
## Strategy #3

Improve the economic security of parents and caregivers to provide safety and stability for their children



- Identify **benefit cliffs and edges**
- Consider **community-based flexible funds**
- Reform **General Assistance**

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

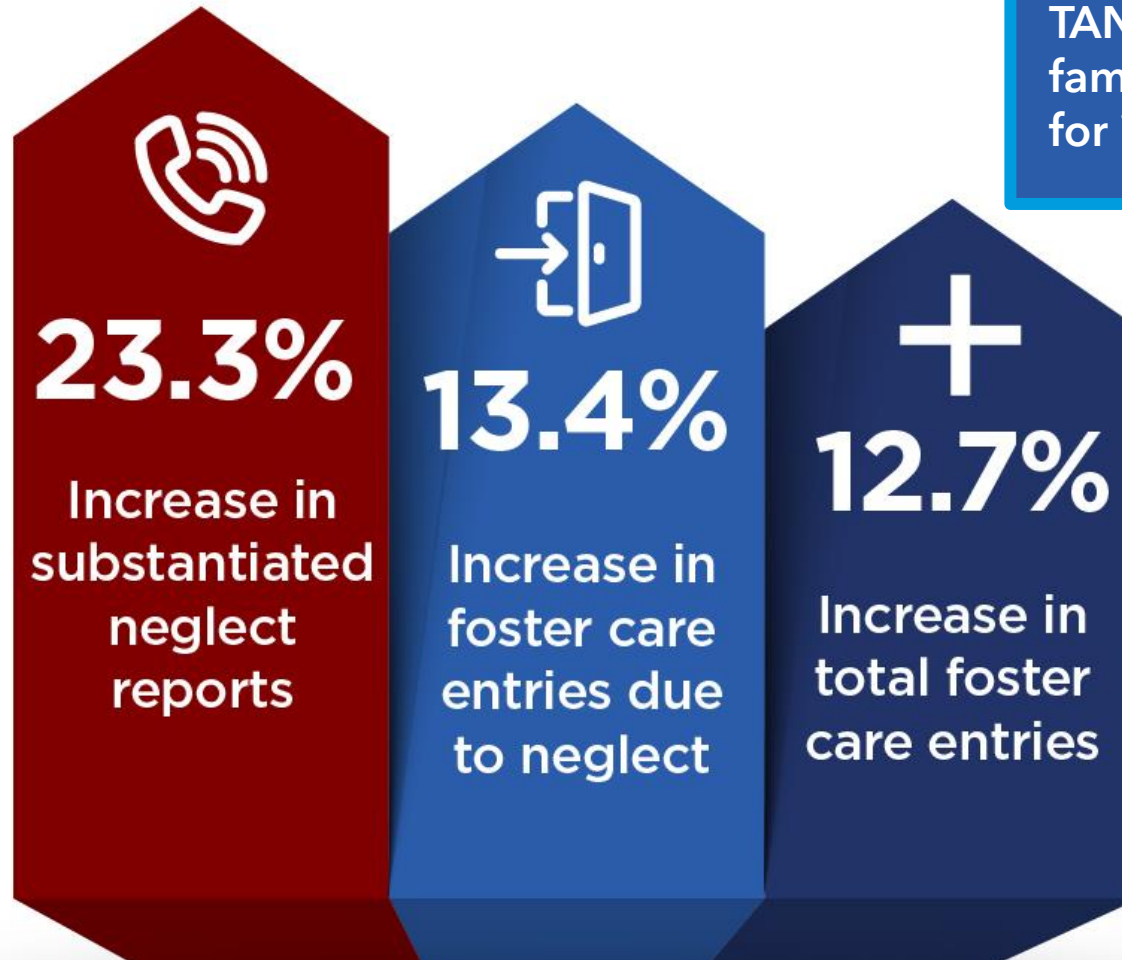


**Increased risk  
for child welfare  
involvement**

(Ginther, 2017) (Ginther, 2022) (Paxson, 2003) (Yang, 2016) (Cash, 2003)  
(Klevens, 2015) (Brown, 2020) (Berger, 2011) (Warren, 2015) (Cai, 2021)  
(Weiner, 2020) (McLaughlin, 2017) (Bullinger, 2021) (Berger, 2015)  
(Frioux, 2014) (Wood, 2012)

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

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

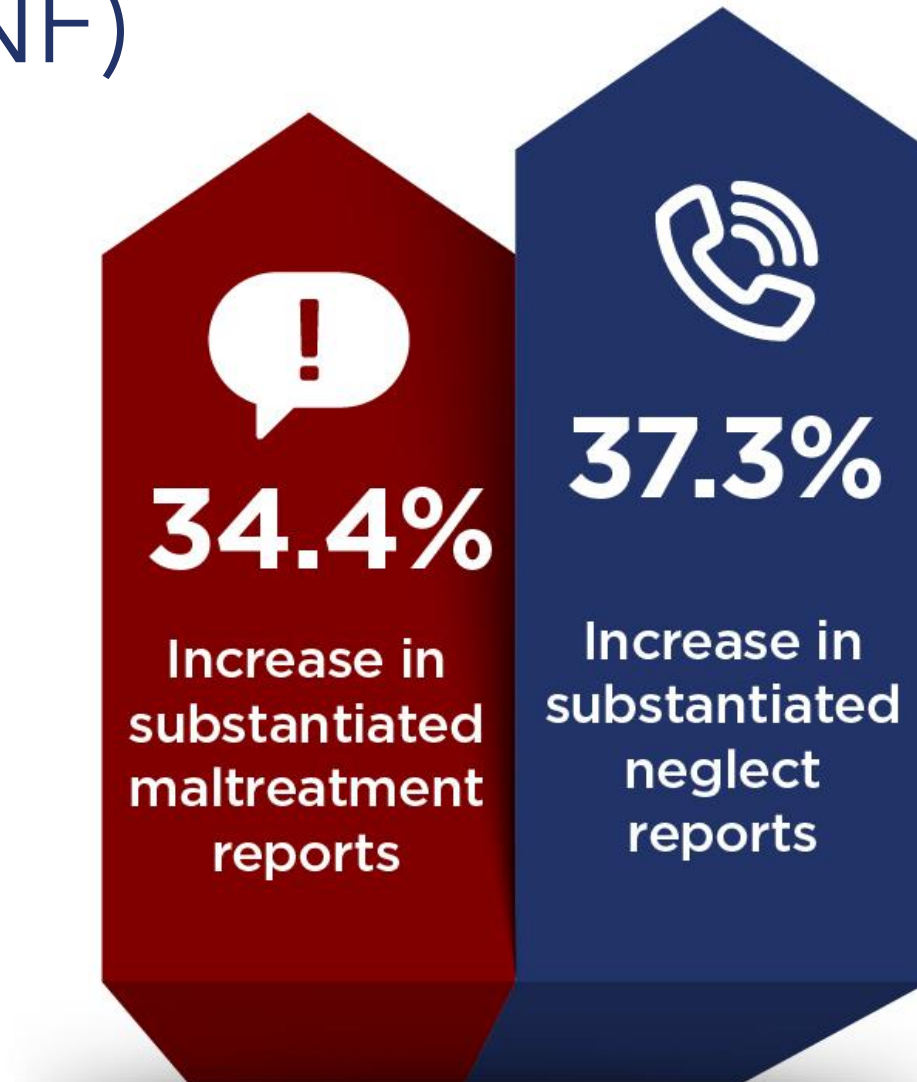


*Reminder:* The first statutory goal of TANF is to provide assistance to needy families so that children can be cared for in their own homes or with relatives

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

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

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





## *State Policy Option:*

# Extend TANF Time Limits to 60 Months

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### **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 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)

# *State Policy Option:* Economic Diversion System to Address Poverty-Related Neglect

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## 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)

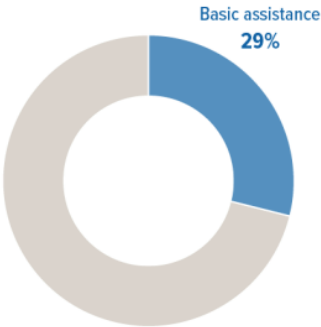
(Feely, 2020)

([Child Maltreatment 2019](#))

# Maine TANF Spending

Federal and State TANF Spending by Category, 2021

	Maine Millions of dollars	Maine Share of spending	National Share of U.S. spending
Basic Assistance	\$40	29%	23%
Work Activities	\$14	10%	8%
Work Supports and Supportive Services	\$4	3%	2%
Child Care	\$21	15%	16%
Administration and Systems	\$6	5%	11%
Tax Credits	\$16	11%	9%
Pre-K	\$0.5	0.4%	10%
Child Welfare	\$11	8%	9%
Other Services	\$26	18%	14%
Total	\$131	100%	100%



## Maine TANF Spending



As of 2021, Maine has accumulated \$92 million in unspent TANF block grant funds, equal to 118 percent of its block grant.

Federal and State TANF Spending on Select Activities (millions of dollars)

	2006	2011	2016	2018	2021
Basic Assistance	\$65	\$81	\$30	\$30	\$40
Work Activities	\$2	\$12	\$2	\$12	\$14
Child Care	\$29	\$13	\$9	\$16	\$21

## Strategy #4

Provide services and resources to help parents and caregivers ensure the safety, health, and nurturing care of their children



- Increase **child care** availability
- Expand **primary prevention of SUD**
- Implement **Maine's Child Behavioral Health Plan**
- Expand **affordable housing**

# Lack of Access to Child Care

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- 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



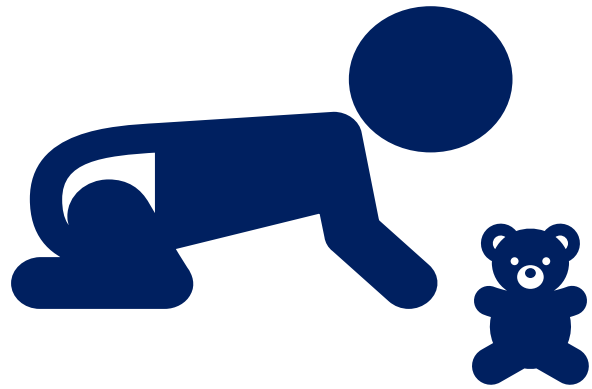
(Yang, 2016)

(Cash, 2003)



# Child Care Subsidies

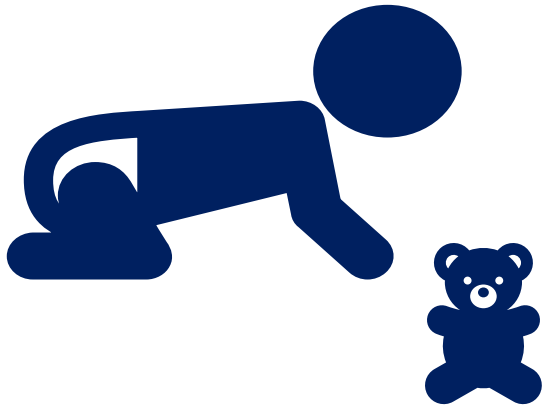
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States with Child Care & Development Fund (CCDF) program policies that make child care subsidies more accessible to child welfare-supervised families are associated with **lower child removal rates** *(compared to other states)*

# Child Care Subsidies

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States with more **generous income eligibility** policies for child care subsidies have **lower physical abuse & neglect investigation rates** among children < age 5

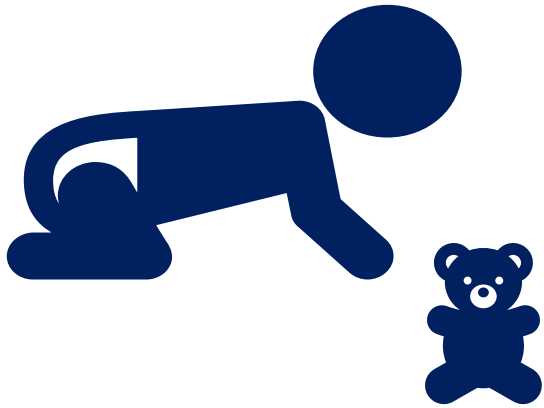
*(compared to states with less generous income eligibility policies)*

- If Michigan increased its maximum monthly enrollment income by \$700 (for a family of 3):
  - 1,220 fewer children < age 5 investigated for neglect
  - 528 fewer children < age 5 investigated for physical abuse

*(over a one-year period)*

# Child Care Subsidies

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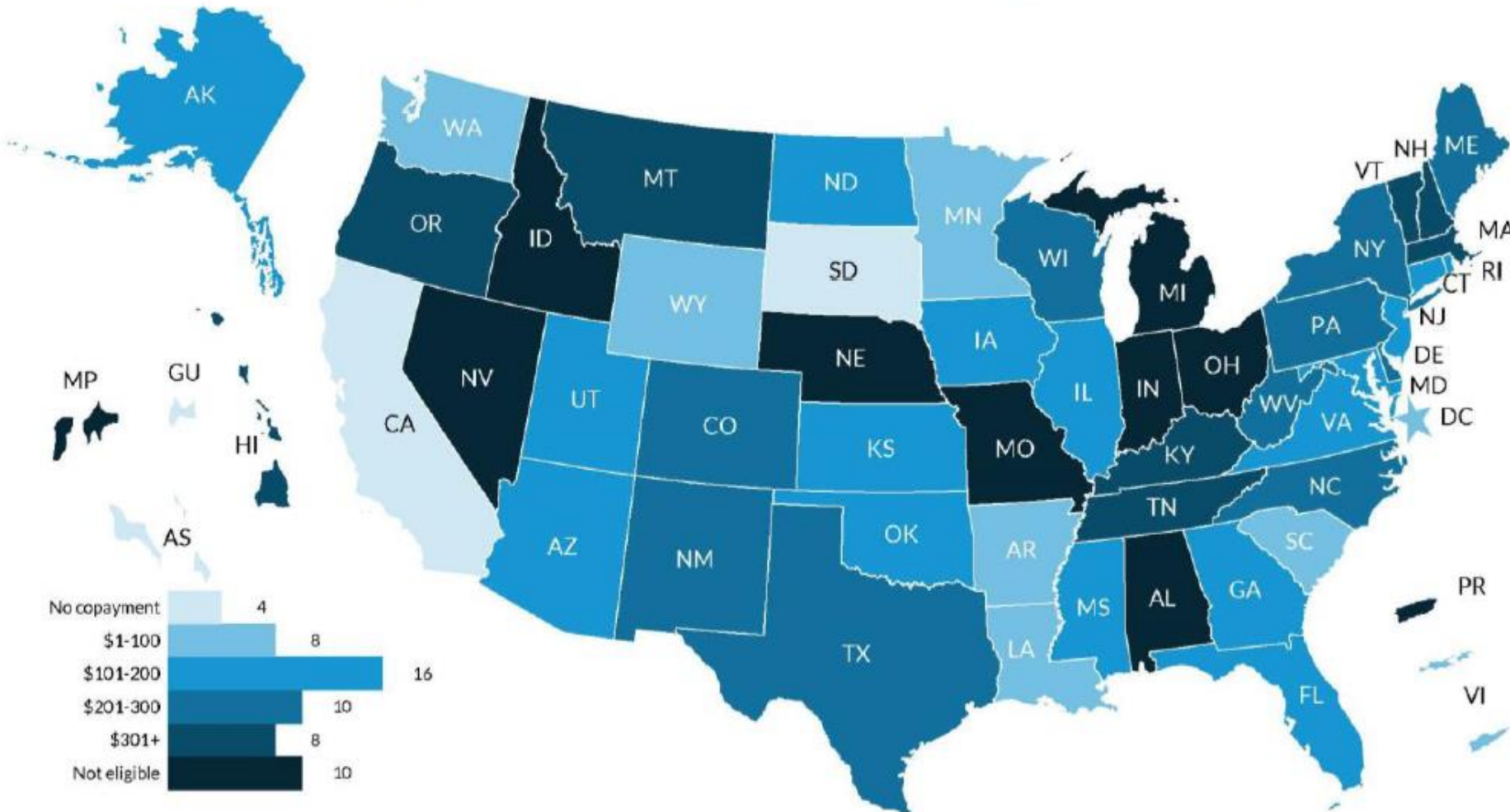
States with more **generous income eligibility** policies for child care subsidies have **lower physical abuse & neglect investigation rates** among children < age 5

*(compared to states with less generous income eligibility policies)*

- If Michigan increased its maximum monthly enrollment income by \$700 (for a family of 3):
    - 1,220 fewer children < age 5 investigated for neglect
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- (over a one-year period)*

# *State Policy Option:* Eliminate Copayments for Families Eligible for Child Care Assistance

**State/Territory Monthly Copayment Policies for a Family of Three Earning \$30,000 Annually (2019)**



For a single parent family with 2 children < age 5 earning \$30,000 annually:

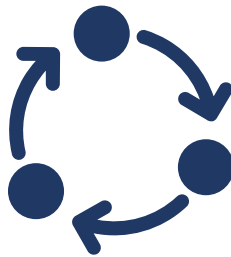
- 34 jurisdictions require copayments >\$100 a month
- In 10 jurisdictions, this family would not even be eligible for subsidized child care

(as of 2019)

(OPRE, 2020)

## Strategy #5

Improve coordination of supports and services for children, youth, and families



- Coordinate **annual needs assessments**
- Modify **mandated reporter training**
- Expand **Wraparound Services care coordination**

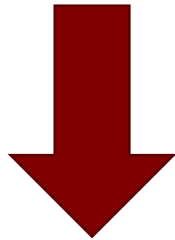
# *State Policy Option:* Provide Flexible Funds to Meet Concrete Needs of Child Welfare-Involved Families



**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**

- **\$1,000 in flexible funds** available (per family) to meet the concrete needs of families participating in Kentucky's family preservation program to prevent entry into foster care
- **\$4,000 in flexible funds** available (per family) through community action agencies to meet the concrete needs of families with active CPS cases, including investigations, alternative response & ongoing cases

([Joint Committee on Health, Welfare & Family Services](#), 2021)  
([CPS Concrete Goods & Services Funding FAQ](#)).

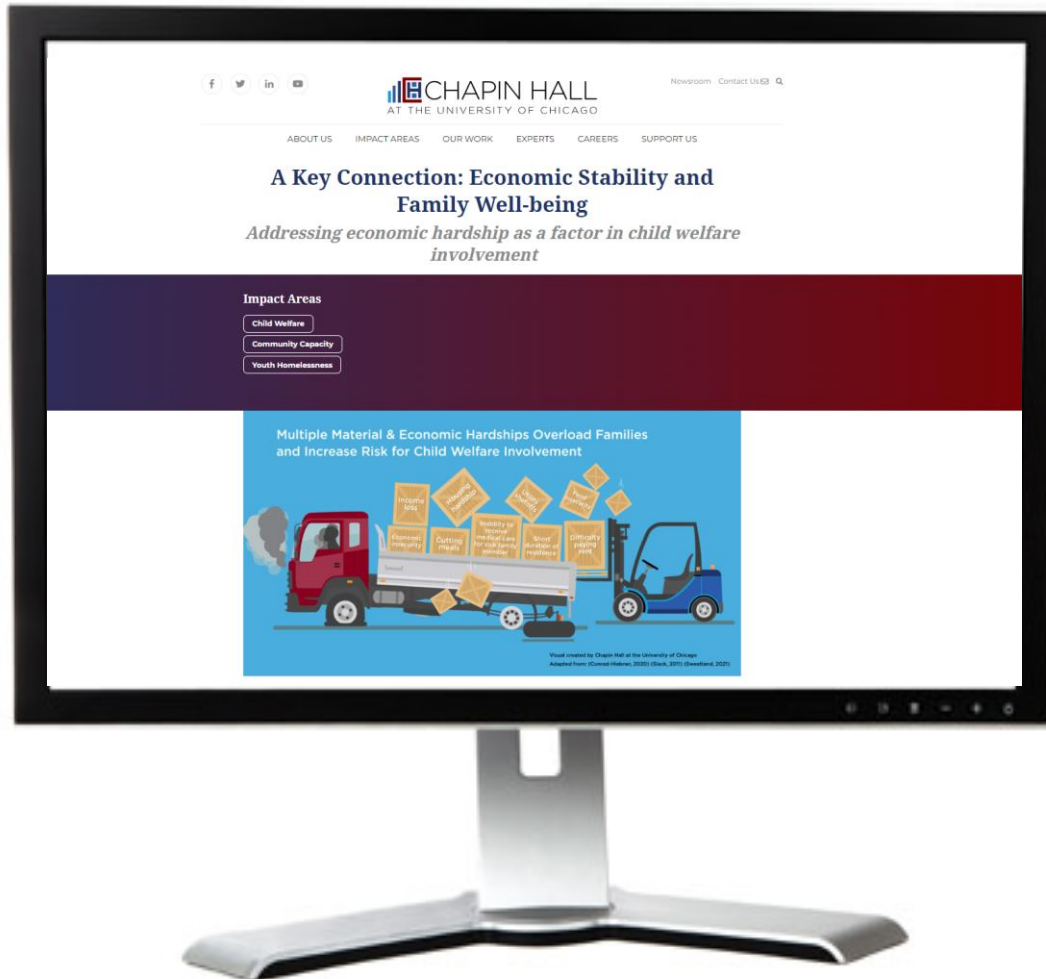


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# Chapin Hall Resources



[Chapinhall.org/ecspjroject](https://Chapinhall.org/ecspjroject)

(Weiner, Anderson & Thomas, 2021)

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

# Reflections

- What are some of the key points you have learned about the importance of concrete and economic supports in preventing maltreatment?
- What are some next steps or action steps you could do as a result of learning this information?
- What can you do as individuals to impact policy and change?



## Maine Child Safety and Family Well-Being Plan

Version 1.0 - May 9, 2023

Prepared by the Maine Department of Health and Human Services  
in Partnership with the Maine Child Welfare Action Network



# Stay Engaged:

- [Read the plan](#)
- [Sign up for plan updates](#)
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# Wrap Up & Thank you!



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