

## RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS: DIFFERENCES IN STATE CHILDCARE SUBSIDY POLICIES AND CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT.

In this brief, we highlight key findings from our studies  
published in *Children* and *Child Maltreatment*.



### WHAT WE KNOW

Experiencing child abuse and neglect (CAN) are common. Childcare subsidies may prevent CAN by reducing family stress.<sup>1</sup>

In the U.S., childcare subsidies help low-income families offset the high cost of childcare. States vary in how they shape childcare subsidy policy and define who qualifies. Some childcare subsidy policy differences we explored include:

- the income limit to qualify for a subsidy,
- the required work hours to maintain the subsidy, and
- how much families must pay monthly for childcare.

We studied how these differences in state policies affect rates of CAN across the U.S.



### WHAT WE FOUND

We explored how income limits affect families. The income limit is also known as “income eligibility.” In states where families can earn more money but still qualify for childcare subsidies see a:

- **3% decrease in neglect reports** and
- **4% decrease in physical abuse reports** to child welfare (CW).<sup>2</sup>

States may vary in the number of work hours for families needed to stay in the childcare subsidy. This is also known as “work hour requirements.” What we found is interesting because requiring some work did not affect CW child neglect cases.<sup>3</sup> But, if a **state specified 30 hours of work or more, we found an increase in CW neglect cases.**<sup>3</sup>

States decide the monthly amount families must contribute for childcare. This is known as “childcare copayment.” In our study we did not find a relationship between copayment amount and CAN CW cases.<sup>3</sup>



### WHAT THIS MEANS

States vary in how they design childcare subsidy policy and define who qualifies. Expansive policies may lead to fewer CAN reports and cases to child welfare.<sup>2,3</sup> Examples of expansive policies include higher income limits and lower work requirements.<sup>2,3</sup>

Suggested Citations: Klika, J. B., Maguire-Jack, K., Feely, M., Schneider, W., Pace, G. T., Rostad, W., , Murphy, C. A., & Merrick, M. T. (2023). Childcare subsidy enrollment income generosity and child maltreatment. *Children (Basel)*, 10(1), 64. <https://doi.org/10.3390/children10010064>

Maguire-Jack, K., Park, Y., Feely, M., Schneider, W., Pace, G. T., Klika, J. B., & Thibodeau, E. (2023). Childcare subsidy employment and copayment requirements and child maltreatment. *Child Maltreatment*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10775595231218174>

#### References

1. Fortson, B. L., Klevens, J., Merrick, M. T., Gilbert, L. K., & Alexander, S.P. (2016). *Child abuse and neglect prevention resource for action: A compilation of the best available evidence*. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
2. Klika, J. B., Maguire-Jack, K., Feely, M., Schneider, W., Pace, G. T., Rostad, W., Murphy, C. A., & Merrick, M. T. (2023). Childcare subsidy enrollment income generosity and child maltreatment. *Children (Basel)*, 10(1), 64. <https://doi.org/10.3390/children10010064>
3. Maguire-Jack, K., Park, Y., Feely, M., Schneider, W., Pace, G. T., Klika, J. B., & Thibodeau, E. (2023). Childcare subsidy employment and copayment requirements and child maltreatment. *Child Maltreatment*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10775595231218174>

This publication is supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (R01CE003178) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$977,977 with 100 percent funded by CDC/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by CDC/HHS, or the U.S. Government.