



# CWLA National Conference 2022: Chapin Hall Spotlight Track

Re-Imagining a Prevention-Focused and Equitable  
Child Welfare System for the 21st Century

 **CHAPIN HALL**  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



#CWLA2022

April 27 - 29, 2022



# CWLA: Chapin Hall Spotlight Track

**Flexible Funds in Kentucky to Increase Well-being:  
Operationalizing the Evidence on Economic and Concrete  
Supports (G-1)**

Clare Anderson, Chapin Hall

Christa Bell, Kentucky Department for Community Based Services





# SYSTEM RE-DESIGN

## Levers of Change

The Chapin Hall spotlight track describes four key levers for system redesign.

These levers, taken together, provide a powerful set of tools that participants can use to reimagine and transform their child and family serving systems.



### Economic Supports

Measuring economic risk for child welfare involvement and increasing access to economic and concrete supports



### Technical Innovation

Technical solutions and strategies for expanding prevention services, estimating costs, and tracking referrals



### Community Pathways

Building community pathways to prevention and creating a new service experience for families



### CQI

Engaging stakeholders in CQI processes and ensuring improvement efforts are driven by those most impacted by the results

# SPOTLIGHT TRACK

## Re-Imagining a Prevention-Focused and Equitable Child Welfare System for the 21st Century

---

A6: Re-Imagining a Prevention-Focused and Equitable Child Welfare System for the 21st Century	(Opening Session)
B1: How Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) is Being Used to Transform a Child Welfare System	Wednesday, 3:00 pm – 4:00 pm
C2: Operationalizing a Community Pathway to Prevention: Partnering with Families to Strengthen Communities	Wednesday, 4:15 pm – 5:15 pm
D1: An Analytic Framework to Address Economic-Related Risk Factors in Child Welfare	Thursday, 1:15 pm – 2:15 pm
E1: Evidence Based Program Exploration and Cost Tool for Effective Selection of EBPs in Family First	Thursday, 2:30 pm – 3:30 pm
F1: Service Array Transformation: Leveraging a Service Referral Application to Build Cross-System Collaboration and Improve Outcomes for Communities in Washington, DC	Thursday, 3:45 pm – 4:45 pm
<b>G1: Flexible Funds in Kentucky to Increase Well-being: Operationalizing the Evidence on Economic and Concrete Supports</b>	<b>Friday, 8:30 am – 9:30 am</b>

# PRESENTERS

---



**Clare Anderson**  
Senior Policy Fellow  
*Chapin Hall*



**Christa Bell**  
Executive Advisor  
*KY Department for Community  
Based Services*



# Historical Policy Context

# POLICY MILESTONES: BIFURCATION OF CONCRETE & SOCIAL SUPPORTS

## Mother's Pensions

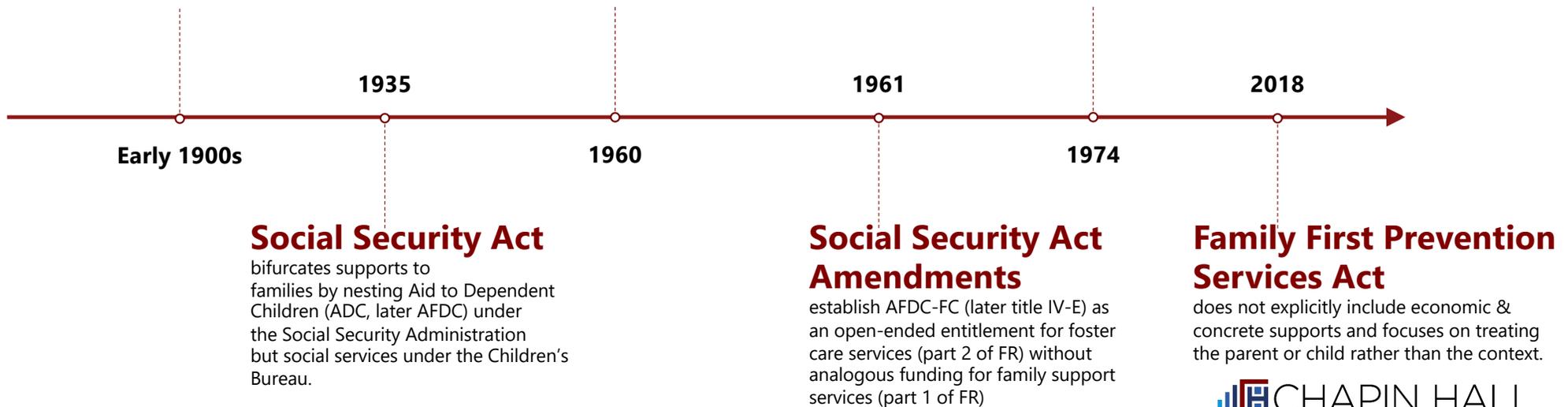
for poor single mothers recognized the importance of financial supports to address economic hardship & promote family stability. However, these supports were largely limited to white, widowed mothers.

## 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.

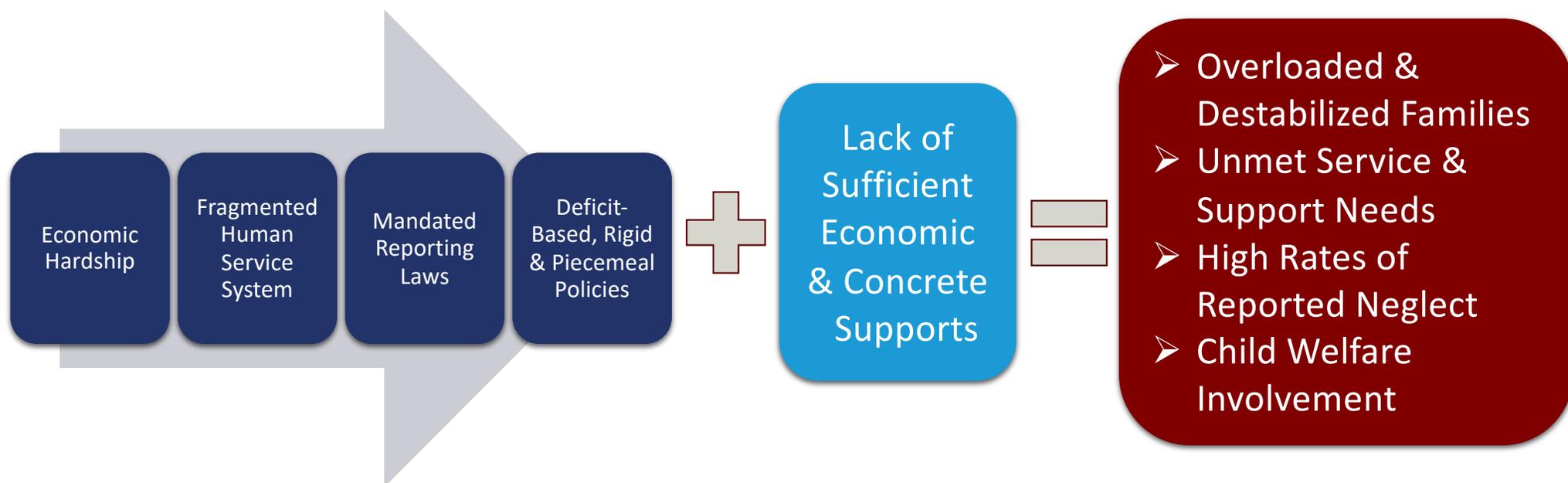
## CAPTA

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.



(Anderson, in press) (Thomas, in press)(Feely, 2020)(Weiner, 2021) (Lawrence-Webb, 2017)

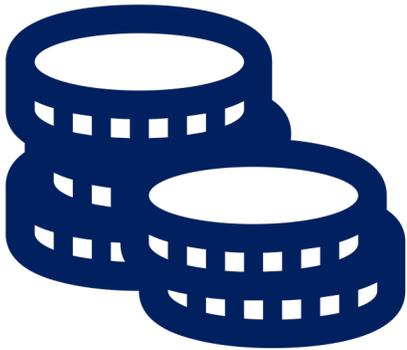
# IMPACT OF HISTORICAL POLICY CHOICES





# Intersection of Family Economic Insecurity, Income & Child Welfare Involvement

## FAMILY ECONOMIC INSECURITY IS ASSOCIATED WITH CHILD WELFARE INVOLVEMENT



- Children in economically insecure households are:
  - **5x** more likely to experience maltreatment
  - **7x** more likely to experience neglect  
*(compared to other children)*
- Nearly **85% of families investigated by CPS** earn below 200% of the federal poverty line  
*(\$43,920 for a family of 3 in 2021)*
- Families living below the poverty line are **3x more likely** to be substantiated for child maltreatment

(Dolan, 2011) (Drake, 2014) (Sedlak, 2010)

## EXPERIENCING MATERIAL HARDSHIP IS STRONGLY ASSOCIATED WITH INCREASED RISK FOR CHILD WELFARE INVOLVEMENT

If families experience at least one material hardship

- Likelihood of being investigated for neglect increases nearly 3x
- Likelihood of being investigated for physical abuse increases nearly 4x

If families experience multiple types of hardship *(after experiencing no hardships)*

- Likelihood of being involved in a CPS investigation increases 4x
- Likelihood of being investigated for physical abuse increases 7x

(Yang, 2015) (Shook, 1999)

# FAMILY ECONOMIC INSECURITY & CHILD WELFARE INVOLVEMENT

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



(Conrad-Hiebner, 2020)

## Strongest predictors of investigated neglect reports



(Slack, 2011)

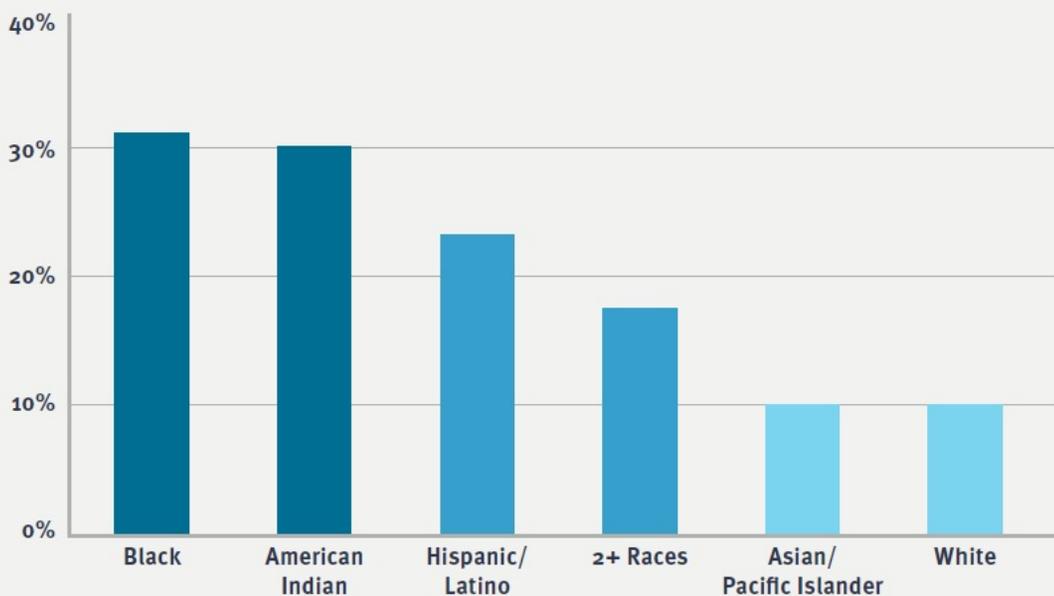


# **Racial Economic Disparities May Contribute to Disproportionate Child Welfare System Involvement**

# CHILDREN IN FAMILIES OF COLOR ARE MORE LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE POVERTY

## US Children in Poverty by Racial Category

The 2019 share of children under age 18 who live in families with incomes below the federal poverty threshold (e.g., \$25,926 per year for a family of 4).



Source: KIDS COUNT Data Cent. 2020. Children in poverty by race and ethnicity in the United States. Data from U.S. Census Bureau, Am. Community Survey 2019, Annie E. Casey Found. KIDS COUNT Data Cent., Baltimore, MD.

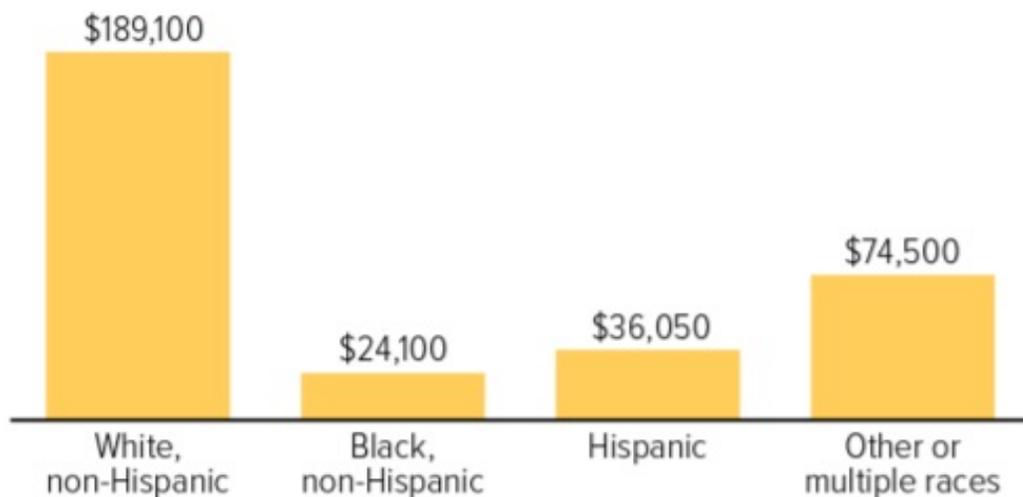
While **14%** of U.S. children are Black, they make up **27%** of children living below the poverty line

(Kids Count, 2020)  
(Census Bureau, 2020)  
(Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, 2021)

# RACIAL WEALTH GAP EXACERBATES CONSEQUENCES OF 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, Pacifica 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)

## RACIAL DISPARITIES AT DECISION POINTS ACROSS CHILD WELFARE CONTINUUM

### Children investigated for abuse and neglect

- **28%** of all white children by age 18
- **53%** of all Black children by age 18

### Children determined to be “victims” of maltreatment

- American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN) and Black children are determined to be “victims” of maltreatment at **almost twice** the rate of white children

(Kim, 2017) (Child Maltreatment 2019)



# RACIAL DISPARITIES AT DECISION POINTS ACROSS CHILD WELFARE CONTINUUM

## Children placed in foster care

- Black children: 14% of general child population but 23% of children in foster care
- AIAN children: 1% of general child population but 2% of children in foster care

## Children who experience termination of parental rights

- Compared to white children, AIAN children are **2.7 times** more likely and Black children are **2.4 times** more likely to experience termination of both parents' rights

(Child Maltreatment 2019) (Wildeman, 2020)



# ECONOMIC & CONCRETE SUPPORTS AS A RACE EQUITY STRATEGY

## **Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2021):** [Moving Upstream: Confronting Racism to Open Up Children's Potential](#)

To reduce persistent racial health disparities at a **population level**, there must be:

- **An intentional, upstream focus on a broad range of socioeconomic conditions**
  - These include more equitable access to assets and opportunities in **education, employment, housing, health-promoting environments & wealth creation**
- **Strengthened policies that provide economic support to families**

*"The scientific evidence is clear and growing. Structural, cultural, and interpersonal racism impose unique and substantial stressors on the daily lives of families raising young children of color."*



**Evidence:**

**Economic & Concrete Supports,  
Child Maltreatment, CPS  
Involvement,  
and Child and Family Well-being**

# 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?



Research designed to detect the impact of a specific strategy through randomized controlled trials



Observations using decades of administrative data aligned with policy shifts



Natural experiments to assess public benefit programs



Theoretical models and studies that illustrate the processes by which material hardship leads to child maltreatment

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.

# DECREASED ACCESS TO ECONOMIC & CONCRETE SUPPORTS IS ASSOCIATED WITH INCREASED CHILD WELFARE INVOLVEMENT



**Reduced  
TANF  
benefits**



**Reduced  
employment**



**Increased risk  
for child  
welfare  
involvement**



**Lack of  
child care**



**Increased  
gas prices**



**Lack of  
stable  
housing**



**Reduced income &  
negative earnings shocks**

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

## **Child Welfare Interventions Augmented with Economic & Concrete Supports**

- **Differential Response**
- **Family Preservation**

### **Concrete Supports**

- **Medicaid**
- **Supportive Housing**
- **Paid Family Leave**
- **Child Care**
- **SNAP & WIC**

### **Economic Supports**

- **Minimum Wage Increase**
- **Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)**
- **Public Benefits (TANF)**
- **Child Support Payments**
- **Unemployment Benefits**



# ECONOMIC & CONCRETE SUPPORTS AS A 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:**

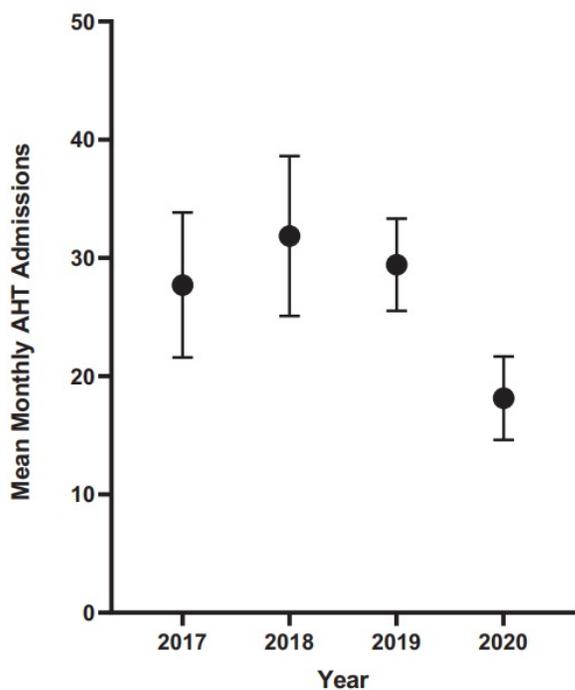
- 4.3% reduction in child maltreatment reports
- 4% reduction in substantiated child maltreatment
- 2.1% reduction in foster care placements
- 7.7% reduction in child fatalities due to maltreatment

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

## **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)

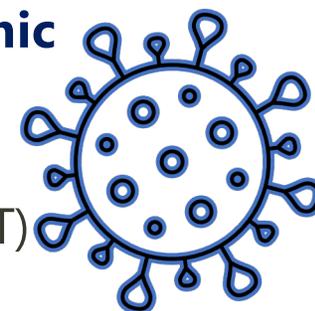
# IMPACT OF ENHANCED GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE DURING THE COVID PANDEMIC



(Child Maltreatment 2020) (Sege, 2021)  
(Maassel, 2021 - graphic) (CDC, 2020)

## Child maltreatment declined during pandemic

- **Emergency room visits** for suspected child maltreatment substantially declined
- **Hospitalizations** for abusive head trauma (AHT) decreased
- Child **fatalities** due to maltreatment decreased 4.4% (FY19 to FY20) (*though Black child fatalities increased 17%*)



## Government assistance to families in financial distress may be protective

- Although surveys show that household finances worsened for 40% of American families during the pandemic, increased government assistance **buffered financial distress**

## DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE WITH CONCRETE SUPPORTS



Families with screened-in reports who are assigned to a Differential Response (DR) track and tend to receive more concrete supports, as compared to families assigned to the traditional track with fewer concrete supports provided, experience a lower risk of:

- **Subsequent accepted maltreatment reports**
- **Subsequent child removals & placements**

(Loman, 2012) (RCT)

# 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)*

- Providing any concrete support (vs. no support) **reduces the risk of a subsequent maltreatment report by almost 17%**



(Rostad, 2017)

# CROSS-SYSTEMS RECOMMENDATIONS TO STRENGTHEN ECONOMIC & CONCRETE SUPPORTS TO FAMILIES

## American Academy of Pediatrics

**(AAP)** - [Reimagining Child Welfare: Recommendations for Public Policy Change](#) (2021)

Build on goals of Family First by expanding the scope of services eligible for federal reimbursement to include:

- Time-limited cash assistance to help low-income families meet concrete needs and minimize poverty-related neglect cases
- Services that address behavioral health, housing instability and domestic violence

## Centers for Disease Control and

**Prevention (CDC)** - [Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect: A Technical Package for Policy, Norm, and Programmatic Activities](#) (2016)

- Evidence-based strategies to help prevent child abuse and neglect must include strengthening economic supports to families
- Policies that improve the socioeconomic conditions of families have the largest impacts on health



## FAMILY PRESERVATION PROGRAM (FPP)

KENTUCKY'S  
PREVENTION JOURNEY  
BEGINS



## HISTORY OF FPP IN KENTUCKY

- FPP services in Kentucky have included flexible funding for families for more than 25 years
- Statutorily mandated since 1990 (KRS 200.575)
- Array of short-term crisis interventions and support services provided in the family home
- To qualify for FPP services, families must be at risk of entry into care or have a child in care returning home
- Prior to Family First, FPP was funded with Title IV-B Promoting Safe and Stable Families, TANF and state general funds



# FORMAL EVALUATION OF FPP IN KENTUCKY



- Formal comparative evaluation of FPP services conducted in 2006 and 2007
- Better outcomes for FPP group than comparison group
- Every \$1 spent on FPP services saved \$2.85 in out of home care costs
- 94% effective in avoiding entry into out of home care
- Recommendations included expansion of services to address unmet need and **expansion of flexible funding**
- Dr. Ruth Huebner published the evaluation and presented at CWLA conference in 2008.



## WHAT IS FLEXIBLE FUNDING?

- “Available moneys to be spent at the caseworker’s discretion to enhance the success of the intervention”
- Concrete support rather than an economic support because it is not cash assistance directly to the family
- Historically budgeted at \$500 per family



# FAMILY FIRST PREVENTION SERVICES ACT (FFPSA) + FPP = OPPORTUNITY



- FFPSA created opportunity to leverage additional funding to expand services to match need for first time ever
- Homebuilders and Motivational Interviewing were already part of FPP services
- Added other EBPs and increased total investment in prevention services each year
- **Flexible funding** is a component of all FFPSA services in Kentucky



# TOTAL IMPACT OF FAMILY FIRST PREVENTION SERVICES

Programs utilizing Family First evidence-based practices and flexible funding:

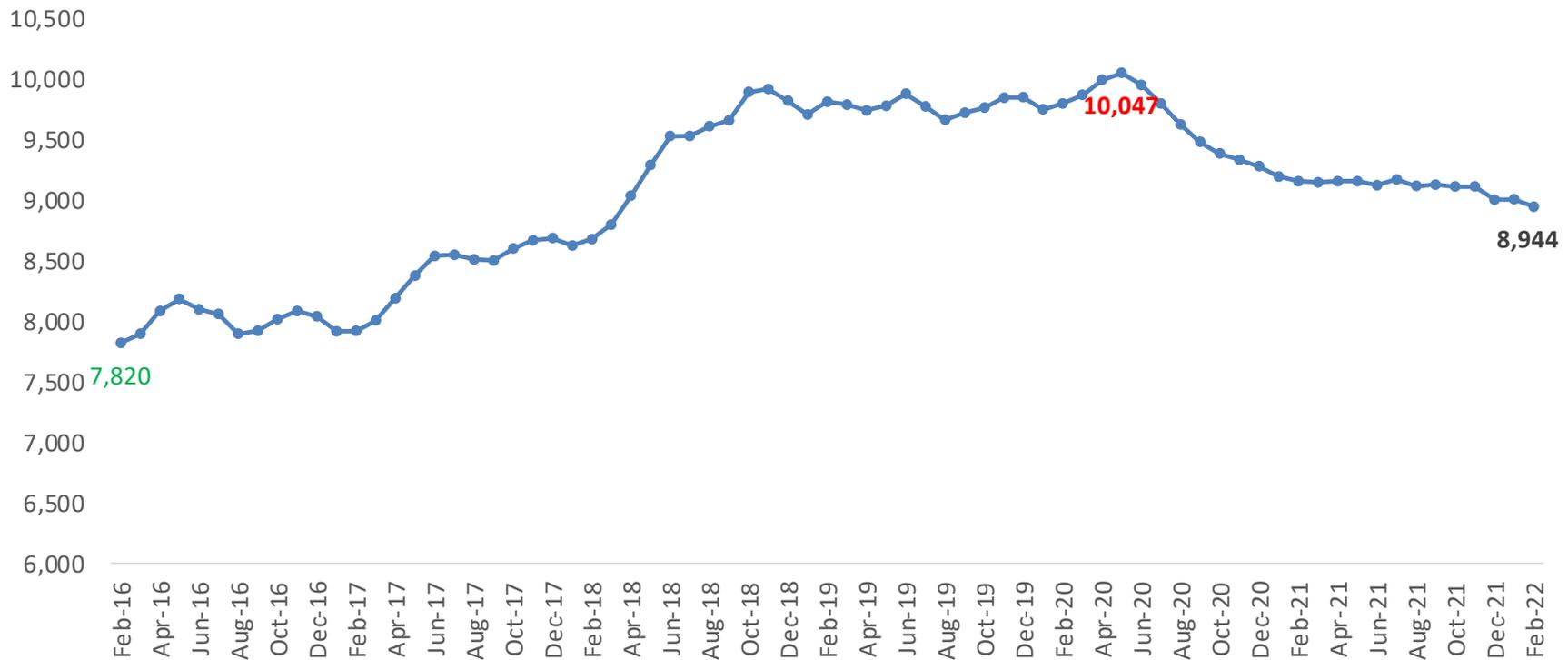
- Family Preservation Programs (FPP)
- Kentucky Strengthening Ties and Empowering Parents (KSTEP)
- Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Teams (START)

Statewide numbers served for all FFPSA services in SFY 2021:

- Total families served: 3,357 (FPP 2,674)
- Total children served: 6,484 (FPP 5,240)
- At risk of removal: 6,040 (FPP 4,796)
- Children remaining in the home at closure: 5,584 (FPP 4,486)
- Percentage of children remaining in the home at closure: 92% (FPP 94%)



# CHILDREN IN THE CUSTODY OF THE CABINET FOR HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES



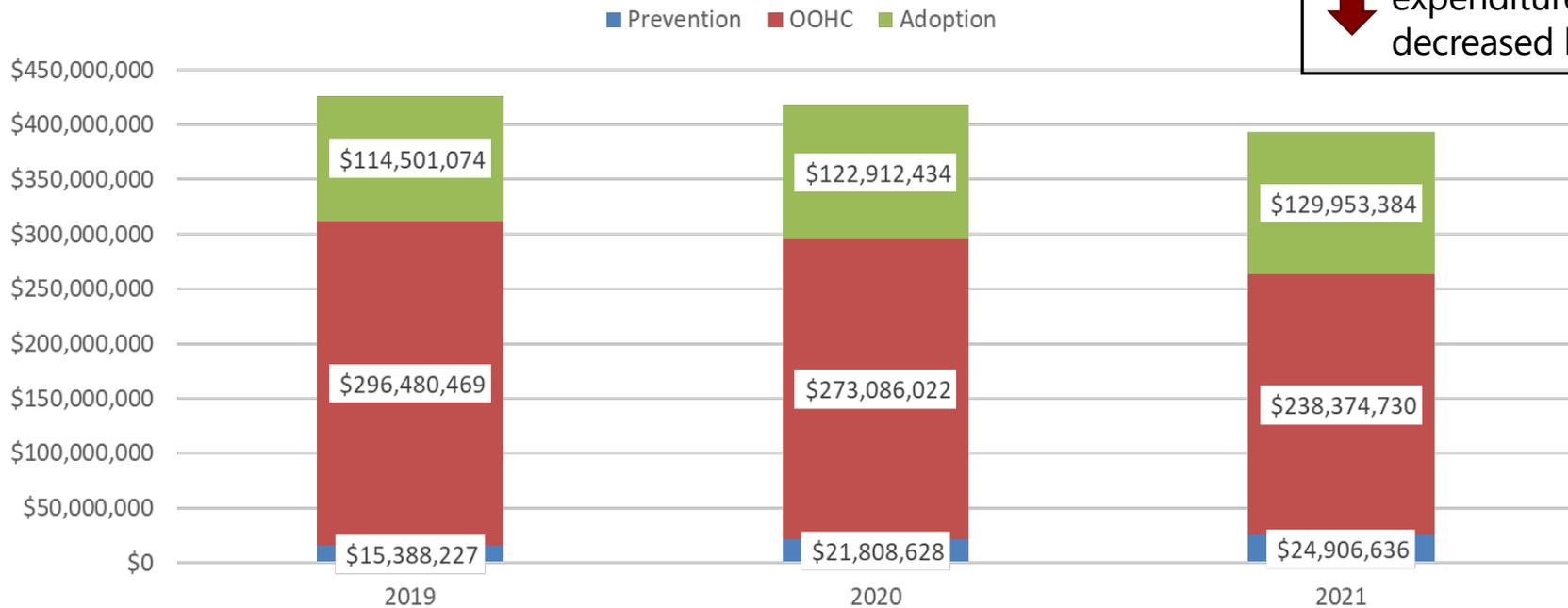
Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services



CHAPIN HALL  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

# PREVENTION, OUT OF HOME CARE (OOHC), AND ADOPTION EXPENDITURES

SFY Expenditures 2019, 2020, and 2021



 **Prevention** expenditures increased by \$9.6m  
 **Out of Home** expenditures decreased by \$58.1m



# LEVERAGING PROGRESS FOR GREATER INVESTMENT

- Demonstrated impacts of prevention services led to additional \$20 million appropriation of state general funds for this state fiscal year
- Increased FPP contracts by 25% and increased flex funds to \$1000 per family
- Added client assistance funds to our Community Collaborations for Children program for families not involved with the child welfare agency



Copyright © Pegasus Vertex, Inc



IN KENTUCKY WE WAITED ANXIOUSLY TO SEE IF THE PREDICTIONS WOULD BE TRUE IN OUR STATE...



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY](#)

**“Experts fear child abuse will rise as stressors related to coronavirus pandemic increase”**

**“Children more at risk for abuse and neglect amid coronavirus pandemic, experts say”**

**“Pandemic has masked child abuse, neglect cases”**

**“Child Abuse reports expected to rise with school returning”**

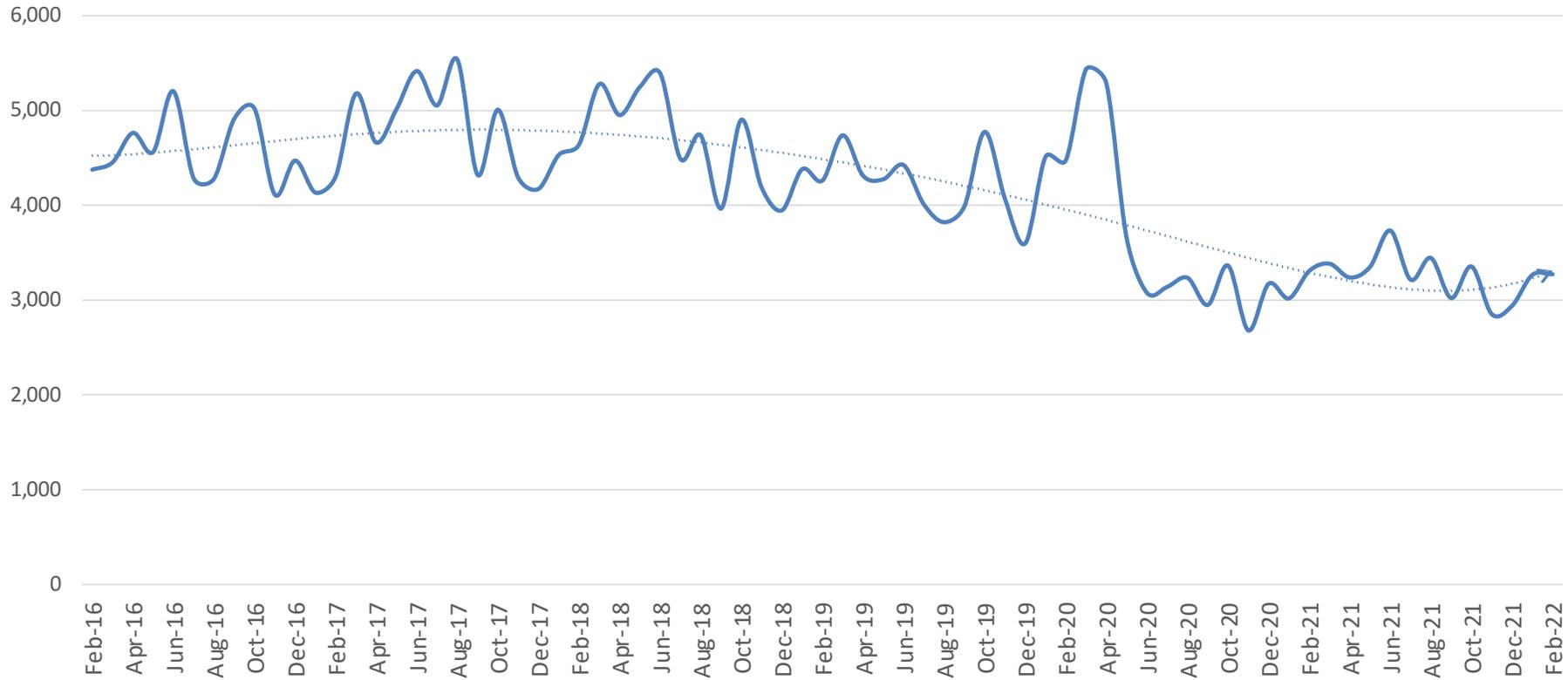
Kentucky Cabinet for Health  
and Family Services



 **CHAPIN HALL**  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

# REPORTS THAT MET ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA FOR CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT ASSESSMENT

FEBRUARY 2016 - FEBRUARY 2022



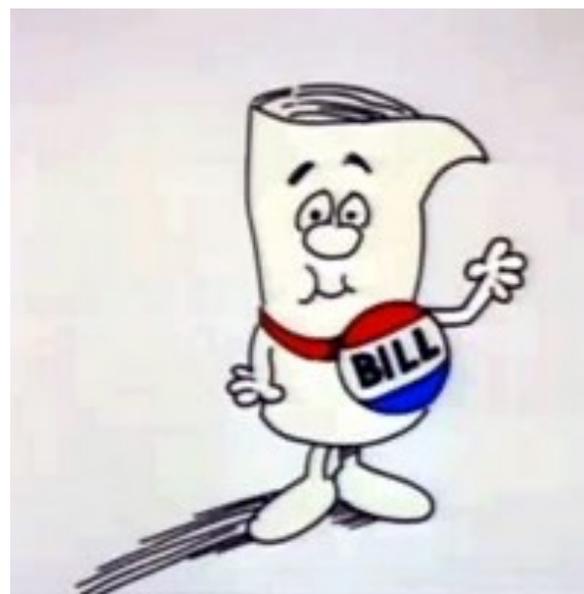
Kentucky Cabinet for Health  
and Family Services



CHAPIN HALL  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

# KENTUCKY SENATE BILL 8

- In March the state legislature passed Senate Bill 8, a comprehensive child welfare bill
- Creates State Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board
- Expands use of trust fund money for prevention
- Amends neglect definition to differentiate from poverty
- Expands definition of fictive kin
- Requires Medicaid or managed care organizations to pay for cost of medical exams by Children's Advocacy Centers
- Extends age to recommit to foster care to age 20



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND](#)



## NEXT STEPS

- Kentucky considers this a journey and will continue to push upstream to focus on primary and secondary prevention, recognizing the impact of economic and concrete supports
- Budget requests for next biennium include higher flex funds in all prevention programs
- Leveraging collaboration with community partners and those with lived experience to inform efforts and impact policy
- Continuously monitoring, improving & innovating



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY](#)





# Questions & Answers

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What are your thoughts and reactions?
- How are economic and concrete supports used in your jurisdiction to prevent child welfare involvement?
- What are the opportunities and barriers you see for integrating economic and concrete supports as core to the service array?
- What partnerships are needed to adequately resource families so that child welfare involvement is averted or time-limited?



[https://www.chapinhall.org/  
research/economic-  
supports-child-welfare/](https://www.chapinhall.org/research/economic-supports-child-welfare/)

YOUR CALL TO ACTION:

***How will you operationalize economic and concrete supports with families in your jurisdiction?***

- Individually
- Organizationally
- In the Field



# Thank you!



And our many partner jurisdictions!!!



## Questions or comments? Please reach out to:

Clare Anderson, Senior Policy Fellow, Chapin Hall  
([canderson@chapinhall.org](mailto:canderson@chapinhall.org))

Christa Bell, Executive Advisor,  
Kentucky Department for Community Based Services  
([christa.bell@ky.gov](mailto:christa.bell@ky.gov))