Poverty, TANF, & Parenting: Understanding the Connection

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Presentation Overview

- Recessions and kids
- Families and economic vulnerability
- Recessions and families
- Recessions and maltreatment
- Poverty and child welfare
- Implications
Parenting in “Hard Times?”
Trends in U.S. Unemployment
Trends in CA Unemployment
Where are we Today?

Unemployment

U.S. CA

0 2 4 6 8 10 12 14

Unemployment
Work-Related “Hardships” During the Great Recession

Reduction in work hours

Unemployment

Pay Cut

Involuntary move to part-time employment
Changes in the American Family Related to Economic Vulnerability
Factors Contributing to Family Economic Vulnerability

# Adults Available
To support children
Factors Contributing to Family Economic Vulnerability

# Adults Available
To support children

Number of children
In the family to support
Factors Contributing to Family Economic Vulnerability

# Adults Available
To support children

Parent’s work
And wages

Number of children
In the family to support
Factors Contributing to Family Economic Vulnerability

# Adults Available
To support children
# Adults Available to Support Children

- **Single-parent families**
  - 41% of U.S. children born to single-parents
  - Most of these non-marital relationships are neither binding nor lasting.
  - Even among married-parent families, many end in divorce
“The majority of American children will live at least some part of their childhood in a family that does not include both biological parents.”

Maria Cancian, Daniel R. Meyer, & Deborah Reed
Grandparent-headed families

- 2.4 million grandparent-headed families in the U.S.
- 7% of all families with children
- Average annual income of grandmother-only households: $19,750
Grandparents and the Recession

Sharp Increase in Children with Grandparent Caregivers Since 2007

Note: Includes children who live with a grandparent responsible for most of their daily needs.
Source: Pew Research Center calculations of Decennial Census and American Community Survey Data
Recessions and Families

- Recessions can affect the structure of the family
- The structure of the family can exacerbate the effects of a recession.
Factors Contributing to Family Economic Vulnerability

# Adults Available
To support children

Number of children
In the family to support
Single-mother Household Family Size

- Average family size: 3.18
- Birthrate today is the lowest in a century
Factors Contributing to Family Economic Vulnerability

# Adults Available
To support children

Parent’s work
And wages

Number of children
In the family to support
Factors Contributing to Family Economic Vulnerability

- # Adults Available
  To support children

- Gender

- Parent’s work
  And wages

- Number of children
  In the family to support
Mothers and Work

- Declining percentages of children have stay-at-home parents
  - >2/3 of married women with preschool-age children work.
Factors Contributing to Family Economic Vulnerability

- Number of children in the family to support
- Parent’s work and wages
- Race/Ethnicity
- # Adults Available to support children
Factors Contributing to Family Economic Vulnerability

- Child Age
- Number of children in the family to support
- Parent’s work and wages
- # Adults Available to support children
The Macro-Economy Affects the Micro-Family
The Structure of Work and Work-related policies Affect the Family
The Structure of Work and Work-related policies Affect the Family

- Child Care subsidies
- Family-friendly workplaces
- EITC
The Macro-Economy Affects the Micro-Family
The Great Recession and Family Well-Being

Fear
Stress
Anxiety
Depression
Boomerang
Children's Behavior Change
Kids
Strained Relationships
Hunger
Homelessness
Change
Tough Economic Times are Tough on Families
The Great Recession and Family Well-Being

- Fear
- Anxiety
- Hunger
- Boomerang Kids
- Children’s Behavior Change
- Strained Relationships
- Stress
- Depression
- Homelessness

Child Welfare Service Involvement?
Periods of National Recession

Figure 1 - Rates of National Unemployment


- Annual National Unemployment Rate (%)
- Unemployment Rate in January (%)
Recessions and Poverty

Figure 3 - Poverty Rates for Children and Adults

- Rate of Poverty for Children (0-17) (in %)
- Rate of Poverty for 18-64 (in %)

Indicates Recession
What are the Effects of The Great Recession on Child Welfare Involvement?
Trends in Maltreatment Reporting

Figure 4 - Rate of all referrals

- Indicates Recession


Rate of all referrals (per 1000)
Trends in CA Reporting

Indicates Recession

Referrals

'98 '99 '00 '01 '02 '03 '04 '05 '06 '07 '08 '09
Trends in Substantiation

Figure 5 - Rate of Victimization

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<td>10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Indicates Recession

Victimization Rate (substantiated plus indicated plus alt resp victim-per1000)
Trends in CA Substantiation

Indicates Recession

Substantiations
Type of Maltreatment

Figure 7 - Rate of Maltreatment by Type

Indicates Recession

- Rate of Physical (per1000)
- Rate of Neglect (per1000)
- Rate of Medical Neglect (per1000)
- Rate of Sexual Abuse (per1000)
- Rate of Psychological Maltreatment (per1000)
- Rate of Other (per1000)
Types of Maltreatment - CA

- Sexual abuse
- Physical abuse
- Neglect
- Other

Indicates Recession
Types of Maltreatment by Age - CA

Indicates Recession

- Sexual Abuse
- Physical Abuse
- Neglect
- Other
Increases in head trauma
Children’s Hospital Pittsburg

- Abuse-related head trauma
- 6 pediatric cases per month < 12/31/07
- 9.3 per month > 1/1/08
Are low-income Parents “Bad Parents?”
Are low-income Parents "Bad Parents?"
Children, Children in Poverty, Child Victims of Maltreatment

All Children

Children in Poverty

Child welfare population
Poverty is the single most powerful predictor of child maltreatment
Unemployment & Maltreatment

- Children living with unemployed parents or parents unattached to the labor force are 2x more likely to be abused and 3x more likely to be neglected
Poverty and Maltreatment

- Children in families with <$15,000 annual income are 3x – 7x more likely to be maltreated.
Why is it so hard to Parent in Poverty?

- Poverty-related stress
- Daily hassles
- Inadequate coping skills
- Caregiver overload
- Residence in communities with few formal supports
- High environmental stressors (e.g., crime)
- Parental mental health/depression
- Social Support
- Substance abuse
- Subjective experience of poverty
- Assaults to the caregiving system
Explaining the Difference between Low-Income families reported for maltreatment vs. Low-income families not reported for maltreatment

- Reported for maltreatment:
  - Mental health tx
  - Substance abuse
  - Adult disability
  - Lower income

- Not reported for maltreatment
Characteristics Associated with Increased Odds of Child Welfare Events

- Young children
- Single parent family
- Larger families
- Born with low birth weight
- Late or no prenatal care
- Increased time on aid
- Breaks in aid receipt
Characteristics Associated with Increased Odds of Child Welfare Events (con’t)

- More hardships
- Deeper poverty
- Homelessness
- Substance abuse
- Parental stress
- Prior child welfare contact
Implications for Child Welfare

- Social workers must attend to family material well-being if they hope to witness significant changes in parenting practices.
Implications for CalWORKs

- Thoughtful practice that recognizes the challenges associated with parenting in poverty can reduce stress, hassles, and other associated difficulties that elevate risk.
Collaboration, Communication, and Cooperation between CalWORKs and Child Welfare can Improve Opportunities to Benefit Children and Families
References


References (con’t)

Acknowledgements

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