

Child Care Policy Research Grants: 2007 Grantees

Child Care Choices of Low-Income Families with Vulnerabilities

Principal Investigator:
Ajay Chaudry

Co-Principal Investigators:
Gina Adams and Jenny Macomber

Institutional Grantee:
The Urban Institute

Project Funding Years:
2007-2010

Project Abstract:

This project explores the ways in which low-income, vulnerable families choose child care. The goal is to identify the family characteristics and contextual factors that expand or limit child care choices. The three-year project will take place in several low-income, urban communities currently participating in the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Making Connections initiative. The proposed sites for the *Child Care Choices of Low-Income Families with Vulnerabilities* project are Oakland, Providence, Seattle, and Denver. A focus will be on vulnerable families, including families who have children with special needs, parents who are English language learners or immigrants, parents receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and children at risk of maltreatment. The research includes a family study and a community study. For the family study, two rounds of field-based, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with parents regarding their decision-making processes related to child care. For the community study, which will take place between the two rounds of family interviews, key community members will be interviewed regarding the community and policy contexts that affect child care choices.

The following research questions will be addressed:

1. What factors influence choice of care among low-income working families in a diverse set of urban neighborhoods? How do different families with particular vulnerabilities make child care choices?
2. How do child care choice processes of parents overall, and particularly families who have special vulnerabilities, interact with

several key contextual factors (e.g., job options, local policies and programs)?

3. What family characteristics or contextual factors seem to particularly expand or constrain the child care choices of low-income families overall, and the lives of vulnerable families in particular? Which of these seem amenable to policy strategies to support choices for low-income working families, and what should these strategies be?

Subsidy Policies, Preferences and Perceptions of Quality, Child Care Outcomes: A Study of Families in NYC

Principal Investigator:

Jeanne Brooks-Gunn

Co-Principal Investigator:

Anne Martin

Institutional Grantee:

Teachers College, Columbia University

Project Funding Years:

2007-2010

Project Abstract:

The goal of this project is to examine the relations among subsidy policies, parental preferences and perceptions of child care quality, and three child care outcomes: duration of subsidy use, continuity of care, and the type of care selected. There will be a particular focus on low-income working parents in New York City. The study will involve an examination of administrative data, supplemented by telephone surveys with parents regarding their child care preferences and needs and their experiences with the subsidy program. The administrative data will provide information regarding all families assisted through the subsidy program in New York City. The telephone surveys will be conducted with a representative sample of 2,250 parents of children age six and under receiving subsidies, as well as 250 parents of children who are on the waiting list for subsidies.

The following research questions will be addressed:

1. What are the dynamics and duration of subsidy use? Are there variations across sub-populations by age of child, TANF status, race-ethnicity, immigration status and child disability status?

2. What are parents' preferences for child-care arrangements? Do the child-care choices parents make reflect their preferences? How do parents' experiences with the subsidy administration program affect utilization of formal and informal care? How are parents' perceptions of quality and their work hours associated with subsidy receipt and selection of formal or informal care?
3. How does subsidized child-care affect duration of subsidy use and promote continuity of care in formal and informal settings?

Project Publications and Resources:

<http://researchconnections.org/childcare/resources/13215/related>

Impact of Pre-K Expansion on Child Care for Low-Income Families

Principal Investigator:

Diane Schilder

Co-Principal Investigators:

Stephanie Curenton and Youngok Lim

Institutional Grantee:

Education Development Center

Project Funding Years:

2007-2010

Project Abstract:

The goal of this project is to examine the impact of preK expansion on child care quality and supply for low-income working families. The project consists of two components. The first is a three-year longitudinal investigation to identify changes in child care availability and quality of care for low-income working families across types of providers and for different ages of children. This component will take place in counties in New York (Albany and Erie) and Ohio (Cuyahoga and Franklin) that have contrasting policies regarding preK expansion. The following research questions will be addressed:

1. How do expanded preK programs affect change over time in the overall supply of child care and in the supply of child care for the children of low-income working families? How does this change over time differ based on whether public schools or community-based organizations (CBOs) deliver the preK services?

2. How does the configuration of the child care market change over time as preK programs expand? How does this reconfiguration differ based on whether public schools or CBOs deliver the preK services?
3. How does the expansion of preK programs affect child care subsidy utilization for low-income working families?
4. How is expansion of preK programs related to the quality of child care? How do expanded preK programs affect the quality of child care for low-income working families? How do these effects differ based on whether public schools or CBOs deliver the preK services?
5. Does the expansion of preK programs contribute to a higher turnover rate of early care and education teachers? How does this effect differ based on whether public schools or CBOs deliver the services?

The second component of the project addresses the definition of preK programs and the overlap between preK and child care. The National Institute for Early Education Research's annual national survey of state preK programs will be refined, as will the framework for reporting the survey findings. The following research questions will be addressed:

1. To what extent do state preK policies address the needs of low-income working families?
2. How are funds and resources that support low-income parents' workforce participation being used by states to support preK efforts?

Project Publications and Resources:

<http://researchconnections.org/childcare/resources/13216/related>

Choice of Care Among Low-Income Working Families: A Study of Latino Families in the New South

Principal Investigator:

Dina Castro

Co-Principal Investigator:

Ellen Peisner-Feinburg

Institutional Grantee:

University of North Carolina Chapel Hill

Project Funding Years:
2007-2010

Project Abstract:

This study will examine the relationship between the childcare utilization patterns of low-income Latino families and family characteristics, childcare program characteristics and the extent to which type and quality of care meet the needs of low-income Latino families. Data will be collected from interviews with 450 families in North Carolina who vary in the kind of child care they use (i.e., center based, family home and parent/relative care). In addition, the researchers will examine 120 center-based or family child care home programs where the children will attend as well as conduct 45 in depth ethnographic parent interviews. Findings from this study will contribute to increased understanding of Latino families' child care needs, preferences for types of care and barriers to child care access, utilization patterns and will provide information about what constitutes high quality, culturally responsive child care for this fast growing segment of the country's population.

New Americans: The Child Care Choices of Parents of English Language Learners (ELL)

Principal Investigator:
Helen Ward

Co-Principal Investigator:
Erin Oldham

Institutional Grantee:
University of Southern Maine

Project Funding Years:
2007-2010

Project Abstract:

The goal of this study is to examine the individual, organizational and systemic factors that influence the child care choices of low income immigrant and refugee families of ELL children. This study will examine efforts made and challenges at the provider, community and state level to address the needs of this population. The researchers will collect data across two U.S. cities which include large populations of Mexican immigrants (Denver, CO) and Somalian, Sudanese and Cambodian immigrants (Portland, ME). Specifically, the researchers will conduct focus groups of parents and interviews with the community organizations, community

leaders and service providers who interact with them; they will conduct surveys of child care providers and kindergarten teachers in counties with high concentrations of the study populations; and they will review relevant federal, state and local laws and policies. The researchers plan to disseminate their findings with the goal of increasing the number and quality of culturally competent early childhood education settings for ELL children.

The overarching research question for this study is: What factors influence the child care choices of low-income immigrant and refugee families of English Language Learners?

The Effects of Quality Information and Financial Assistance on Child Care Choices and Employment Outcomes of Low-Income Families in Minnesota

Principal Investigator:
Kathryn Tout

Co-Principal Investigators:
Elizabeth Davis, Caroline Carlin, Amy Susman-Stillman, and Nikki Forry

Institutional Grantee:
Child Trends

Project Funding Years:
2007-2010

Project Abstract:
The study intends to build on an existing evaluation documenting the effectiveness of a pilot quality rating system (QRS) in improving outcomes for children, families, and programs across Minnesota's early care and education system by examining how low-income families make child care decisions. This study will explore how this population navigates the complex array of child care settings, financial resources, and information about available child care and how the implementation of the QRS affects these processes. The project will track QRS and non-QRS communities for two years to gather data for descriptive analyses and the testing of econometric models.

The following are research questions that will be addressed.

1. What are the pathways to the use QRS data in choice of child care setting? What factors affect awareness of the QRS data and the

family's ability to access the data? What are the characteristics of families using the QRS?

2. How does the QRS affect choice of child care? How does the use of the QRS change families' child care choices? Does the QRS affect the use of CCAP subsidies?
3. What influences the use of CCAP subsidies? Does the type of setting chosen affect the use of subsidies? Which characteristics of the family are associated with use of CCAP subsidies?
4. How do subsidies (CCAP and allowances) affect choice of child care? Do subsidies change the type of child care chosen? Do subsidies change the quality of child care chosen? Is the use of subsidies associated with more stable child care arrangements over time?
5. What factors influence child care stability, reliability, and employment outcomes? What family, community, and child care characteristics affect child care stability and reliability, and employment outcomes? How do parental perceptions of the quality and reliability of care influence the relationship between family/community/child care characteristics and child care-related work disruptions? Do child care-related work disruptions significantly predict job tenure, job advancement, and wage increases (controlling for characteristics of the community and family)?

The Massachusetts Child Care Study: Child Care Subsidies, Child Care needs and Utilization, and Choice of Care Among Low-Income Working Families

Principal Investigator:

Nancy Marshall

Co-Principal Investigators:

Wendy Robeson and Joanne Roberts

Institutional Grantee:

Wellesley College

Project Funding Years:

2007-2010

Project Abstract:

This study will examine the role that child care resource and referral

agencies and community agencies play in the parental access and choice of child care. Specifically, the researchers will examine the extent to which different types of child care assistance support families' abilities to obtain and maintain employment and self-sufficiency, and the extent to which child care subsidy policies and practices affect family choice and access to quality child care that meets their needs.

The researchers propose a multi-method study that includes the use of Massachusetts administrative data, a review of state plans for the Child Care and Development Fund program, key informant interviews with State Administrators and subsidy administration agencies, and original data collection. The original data collection will consist of surveys of licensed care providers, low-income families using these providers, and families using kith and kin care, with a focus on the communities of Boston and Somerville, MA. This project will also identify models used in other states to support choice of care for low-income families.

This project will address the following research questions:

1. What are the child care needs and utilization patterns of low-income working families?
2. What factors influence choice of care among low-income working families?

The Impact of Childhood Behavior Problems on Child Care and Employment Decision-Making: A Nationally Representative Panel Study

Principal Investigator:
Guillermo Montes

Institutional Grantee:
The Children's Institute

Project Funding Years:
2007-2010

Project Abstract:

The goal of this study is to examine associations between childhood behavior problems and the stability of child care and employment among working families. Particular attention will be paid to childhood behavior problems that may go undiagnosed and autism. The study will follow a nationally representative sample of 1500 parents and children ages 0-13 selected from

Gallup panel data which will include an oversample of low-income respondents, and a comparison group of parents of children with autism, also selected from Gallup panel data. Both descriptive and multivariate analyses will be conducted, and an instrumental variable approach will be applied to address possible endogeneity.

The expected benefits of this project are to document the influence of behavior problems on child care and employment at the national level, to inform CCDF eligibility criteria for children ages 0-13 with undiagnosed developmental and/or behavior problems, and to build research capacity by linking child care research to autism research and develop two nationally representative longitudinal public domain datasets.

Project Publications and Resources:

<http://researchconnections.org/childcare/resources/13223/related>