



INSTITUTE *for*
RESEARCH *on*
POVERTY

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Understanding the Link Between Income and Child Maltreatment

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Poverty 101

5/27/15

Outline

- Poverty and child maltreatment: What we know, what we don't know
- Poverty and child maltreatment: Recent evidence suggesting causal links between poverty and child maltreatment
- Project GAIN: Evolution of and early findings from a randomized control trial (RCT) providing economic support to prevent child maltreatment

What We Know

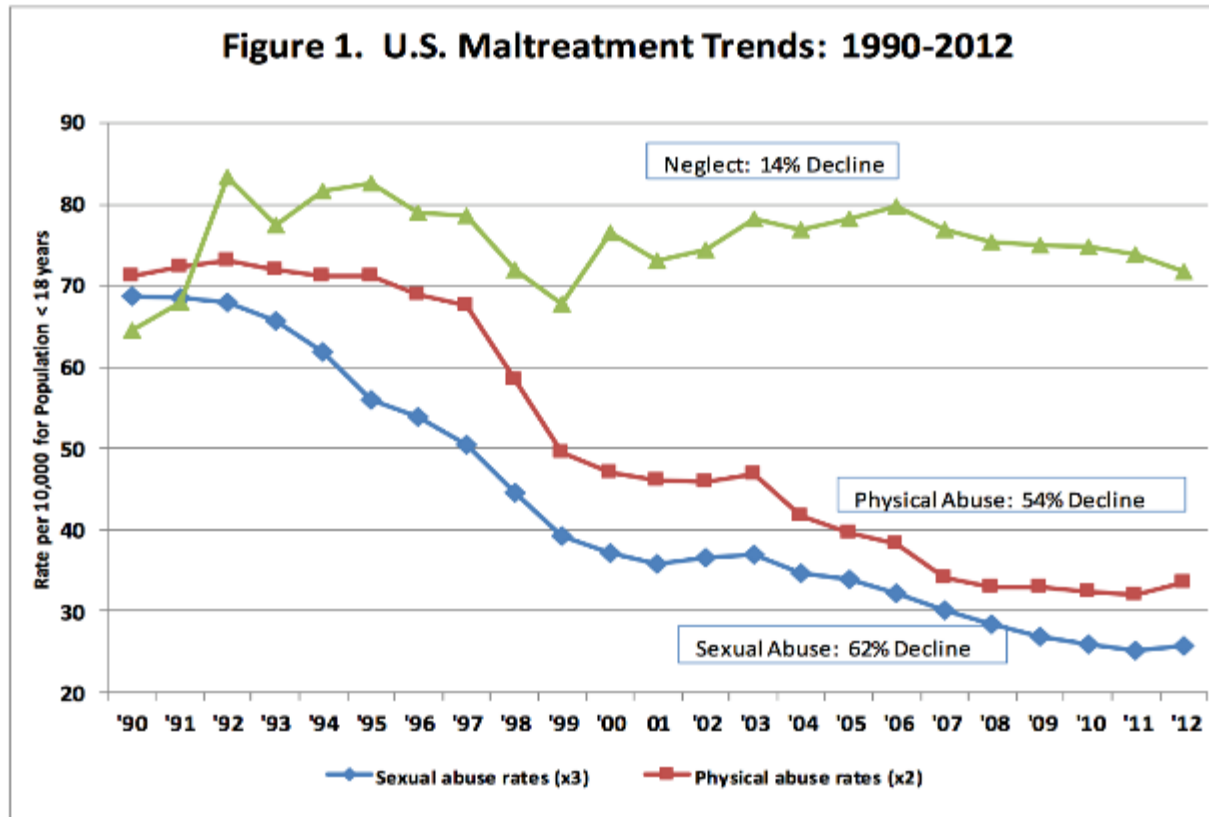
- Low-income families are over-represented in child protective services (CPS) and out-of-home care populations
- In U.S. National Incidence Studies (NIS-1-2-3-4), strong inverse correlation with income; strongest for neglect
- Child maltreatment report rates are greatest in communities with high poverty rates and high unemployment rates
- Receipt of public assistance (e.g., TANF, Food Stamps) predictive of CPS involvement
- Prior state-by-year level analyses suggest strong positive associations of poverty and economic hardship with CPS involvement
- Negative associations between social welfare benefit generosity and CPS involvement

What Else We Know

- Low-income/lack of resources/material hardship are the strongest and most consistent characteristics associated with CPS involvement across the developed countries
- Both SES and parenting struggles predict maltreatment, particularly neglect; parenting characteristics do not appear to mediate (explain) the links between low SES and maltreatment
 - Suggests independent effects of SES and parenting
- Income (and changes therein) is also strongly associated with substandard parenting/maltreatment risk net of a host of potentially confounding factors
 - Implies that higher rates of CPS involvement and out-of-home placement not solely due to monitoring, biases in system, etc.

U.S. Trends in Child Maltreatment Victimization by Maltreatment Type

Source: Finkelhor, D. (2014)



Note: Trend estimates represent total change from 1992 to 2012. Annual rates for physical abuse and sexual abuse have been multiplied by 2 and 3 respectively in Figure 1 so that trend comparisons can be highlighted.

Three Studies of Interest

**Fragile Families
and Child Wellbeing
(FFCW)
N=1,820**

**Healthy
Families New
York
(HFNY)
N=421**

**Illinois Families
Study-Child
Wellbeing
(IFS-CWB)
N=385**

All three studies:

- involve probabilistic samples (or subsamples) of low-income families with young children
- involve prospective, longitudinal designs
- are able to distinguish neglect from other forms of maltreatment, and have two different measures of neglect outcomes
- share a relatively large set of common/approximate measures

Questions

- What predicts child neglect among low-income families with young children (0-5 years)?
 - What predicts involvement with child protective services (CPS) for reasons of neglect in three separate studies?
 - Do similar factors within separate studies predict both neglect-related CPS involvement and a validated (parental) self-report measure of child neglect?
 - Are there consistencies across studies in the predictors of both neglect outcomes?

(Full paper is published in the Children and Youth Services Review, Slack et al., 2011)

Statistically Significant Predictors of Neglect

CPS NEGLECT

HFNY: public benefit receipt, material hardships, unemployment, depression, substance use

IFS-CWB: public benefit receipt, material hardships, unemployment, (low) self efficacy, (low) involvement in child activities, spanking, parenting stress

FFCW: material hardships, depression, parent health problems, (low) self efficacy, (low) involvement in child activities, parenting stress

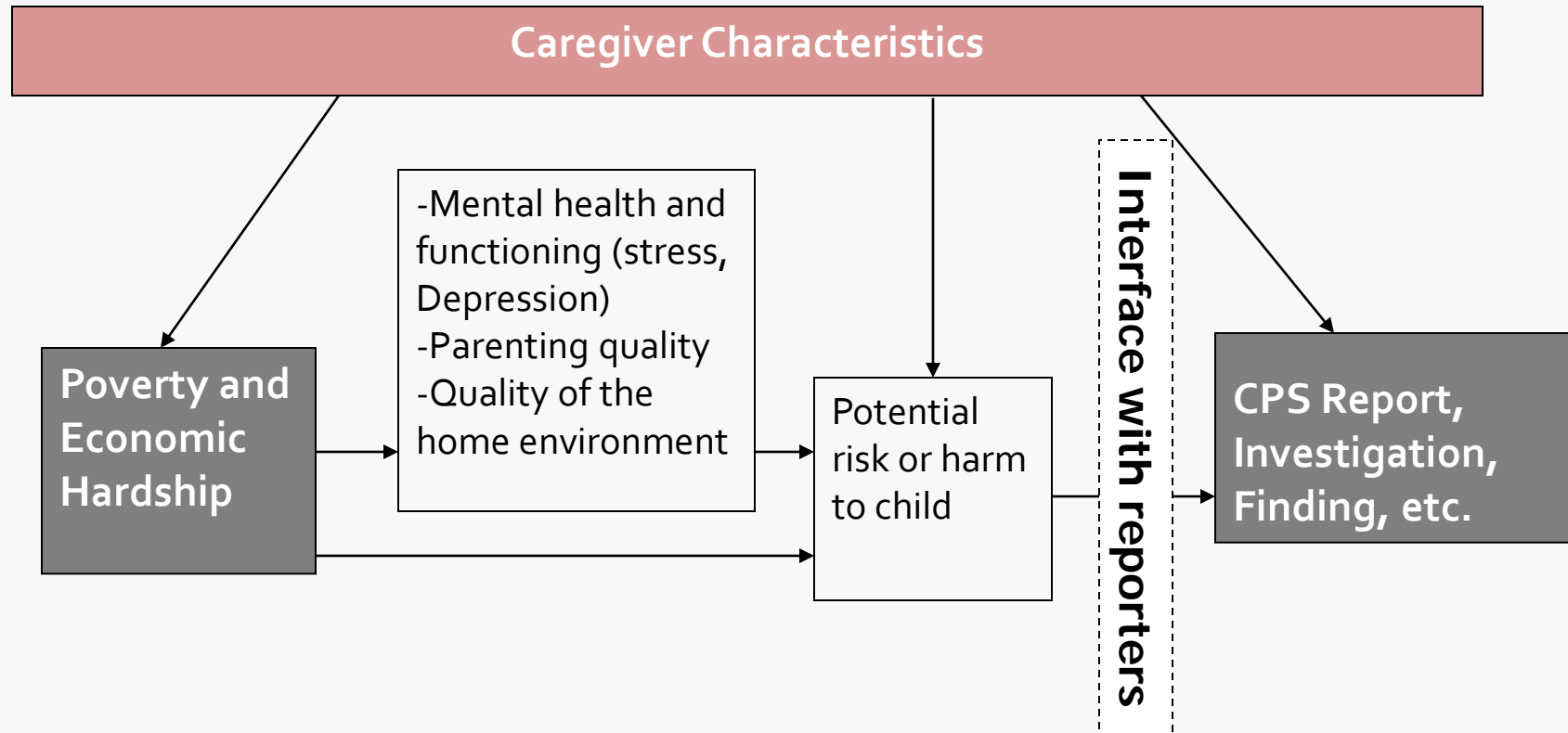
SELF REPORT NEGLECT

HFNY: public benefit receipt, material hardships, spanking, (low) self efficacy, LBW (-)

IFS-CWB: material hardships, (low) self efficacy, (low) involvement with child activities, parenting stress, domestic violence

FFCW: material hardships, depression, parent health problems, child health problems, domestic violence, substance use

How Might Poverty Matter for CPS Involvement?



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Child Support Income and Child Maltreatment

- The study:
 - Tested whether exogenous (random) increase in income via full child support pass-through was associated with decreased CPS involvement
 - Employed Wisconsin Child Support Demonstration Evaluation (CSDE) data; implemented in 1997-98, followed 2-years post assignment
 - All TANF entering mothers of nonmarital children (N=13,652) assigned to E or C groups, with the E group receiving full pass-through of child support payments and the C group receiving the greater of \$50 or 41% of child support payments
- Experimental group families were 10-11 percent less likely to have a screened-in report ($p < .05$)

(Full paper is published in the Social Service Review, Cancian et al., 2013)

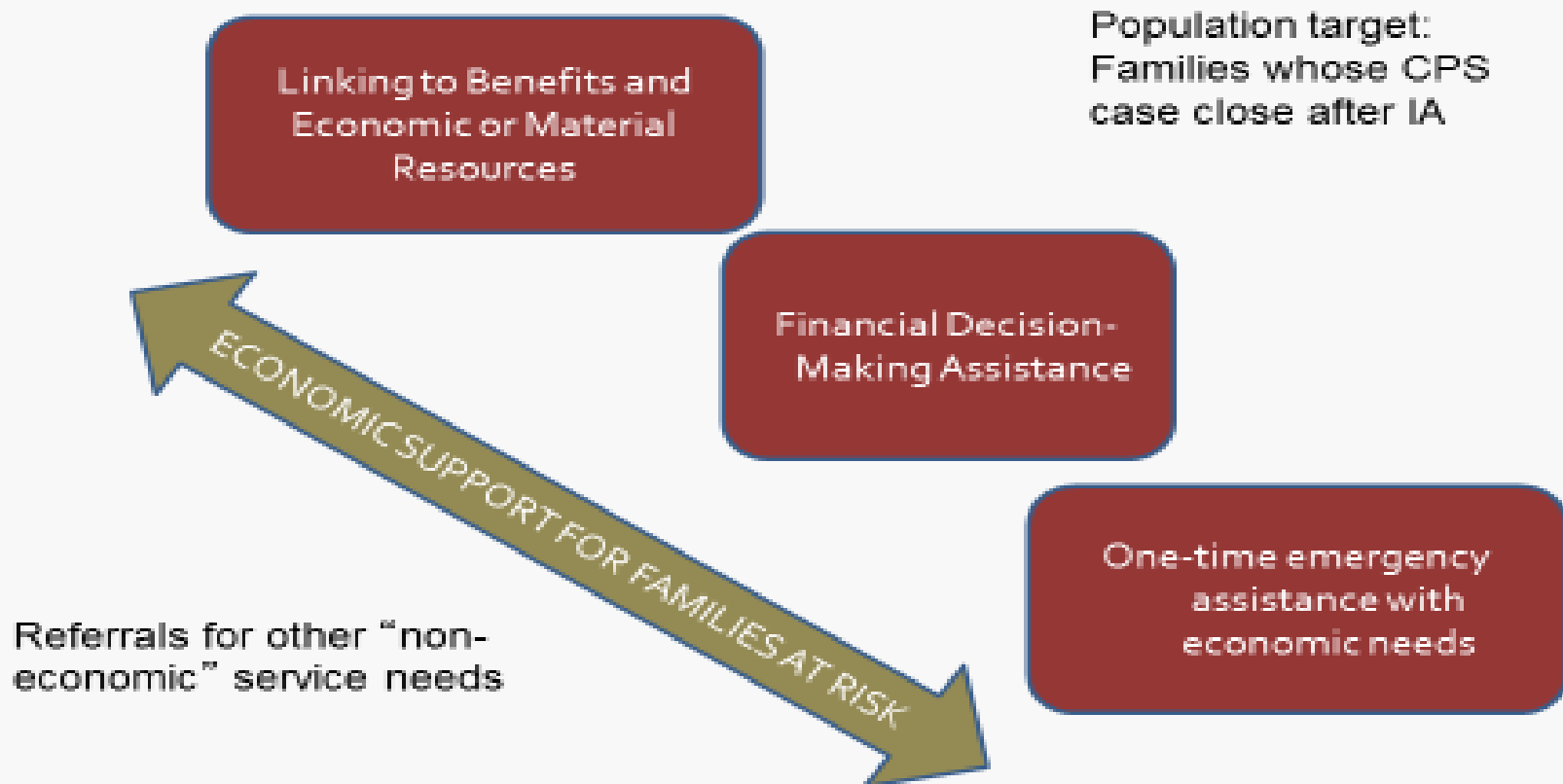
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Project GAIN: Question of Interest

How much child maltreatment prevention can we “buy” with economic support interventions alone?

Project GAIN Model



Menu of Services

- Employment – job search, licenses, resume building, practice interviews
- Housing – eviction prevention, homelessness, referrals for foreclosure prevention, home-ownership
- Benefit Advocacy – W2, Social Security, FoodShare, landlords
- Education – GED, CNA, MATC, UWM
- Financial Decision Making – taxes, credit repair, bill paying, reducing financial fees, debt and bankruptcy, banking, budgeting, legal issues, financial goal-setting

Milwaukee MCRP Financial Advocates



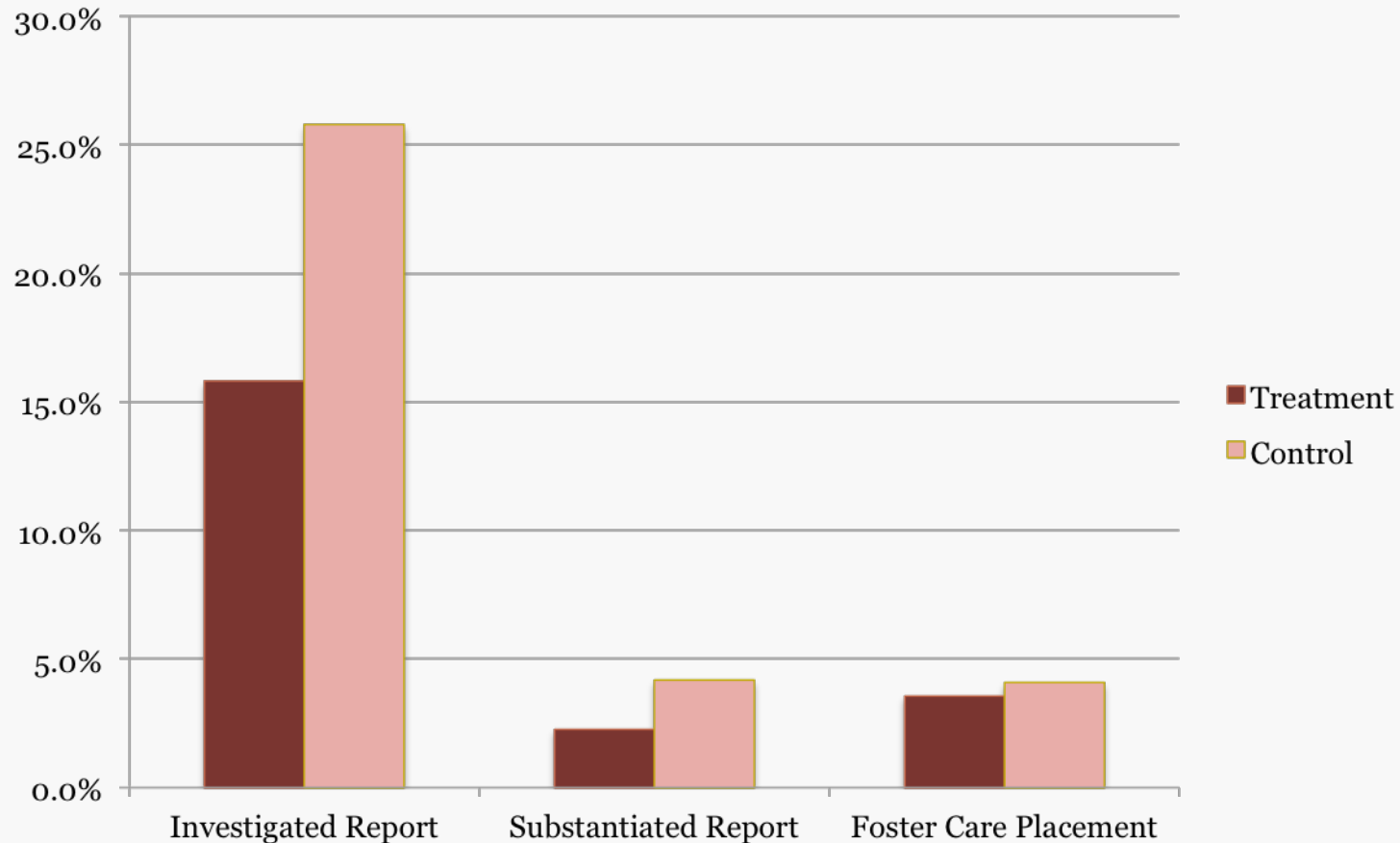
Engagement Rates

- October 18, 2011 – December 31, 2013 (~26 months)
 - Total referred = 1579 families, 489 enrolled (31%)
 - Initially Interested = 77% of total contacted
 - Completed Intake = 79% of those interested

Evaluation Parameters

- Approximately 4,200 families have been randomized into T and C groups since mid-2012
- Approximately 40% of families cannot be located at the point of case closure following an investigation
- Preliminary analyses followed families through December 2013
 - ITT effects null
 - TOT effects not finalized
 - Large subgroup effect: Families with a prior history of CPS involvement

Preliminary Findings for Families with History of CPS Involvement (~15%)





For reasons of poverty alone.....

