The Regularity of Noncustodial Parent Child Support and the Wellbeing of Custodial Families with Young Children

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Research Question

• Interest in family economic stability and child wellbeing

• Evidence: Impact on maternal labor supply, income volatility, role of noncash support, response to policy, selection effects

• Contribution: Role of child support, defined broadly, in the regularity of custodial labor supply, family income, and child care for families with children under age 5
Summary of Methods

  • Measures of financial support, contact frequency, and in-kind support as well as family characteristics over time
• Descriptive analyses
• Correlations in timing of monthly income and sources of income support
• Regression-based models of earnings and child care conditional on noncustodial support and family characteristics/history
Results

Monthly Income (in thousands)

- Other income
- Help from others
- Public assistance
- Child support
- Earnings

Number of Child Care Arrangements

- Income support: Low
- Income support: High

- Time: Low
- Time: High

- In-kind: Low
- In-kind: High

Week 3: September 17, 2019
Policy Implications

- Noncustodial support may fill a gap when there are fewer income sources in a given month, yet income support is also more likely in months when a custodial single parent has earnings.

- Months with no earnings are particularly hard for the custodial family as there are insufficient levels of income smoothing on average.

- Child support generally implies lower earnings volatility, lower public assistance participation, and higher spending on [formal] child care for a larger number of child care arrangements.