



**Institute for
Research on
Poverty**

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

**Child Support and Child Welfare System Interactions:
Examining the Potential Economic Mechanisms Linking Child Support
Cost-Recovery Orders to Reunification from Foster Care**

2024–2026 Child Support Policy Research Agreement: Task 5, Deliverable 2

Lawrence M. Berger
University of Wisconsin–Madison

Maria Cancian
Georgetown University

Anna Ko
University of Wisconsin–Madison

Jessica Pac
University of Wisconsin–Madison

Submitted February 2026
Revised April 2026

The research reported in this paper was supported by the 2024–2026 Child Support Policy Research Agreement between the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families and the Institute for Research on Poverty (IRP). We are grateful to the Wisconsin Departments of Children and Families, Health Services, and Workforce Development for access to the administrative data used in our analyses; the IRP data science team for assistance with these data; Molly Costanzo for expert technical assistance, Judith Bartfeld for helpful feedback, and James Spartz and Dawn Duren for editorial and production assistance. The views expressed here are those of the authors alone and not necessarily the sponsoring institutions.

INTRODUCTION

This report is the second of three deliverables associated with Task 5 of the 2024–2026 Child Support Policy Research Agreement (CSRA): “Child support and child welfare system interactions.” Under the 2022–2024 Research Agreement, we estimated the causal effects of foster care cost-recovery child support orders on children’s foster care trajectories, finding that cost-recovery orders (to either the mother or father) lead to longer stays in foster care, decrease the likelihood of reunification, and increase the likelihood of termination of parental rights (TPR) (Berger et al., 2024). Under Task 5a of the current Agreement, we estimated the causal effect of arrears accumulation as a result of a cost recovery order on the stability of child reunification. Our results indicated that cost-recovery arrears, particularly those issued to mothers, lead to an increased probability that children will re-enter foster care (Berger et al., 2025).

This report examines whether changes in custodial parents’ economic resources underlie the relationship between foster care cost-recovery orders and a reduction in the likelihood of reunification and increase in the likelihood of TPR. We first describe custodial parents’ earned and transfer income sources before, during, and after a child is in out-of-home care (OHC), highlighting the role of child support. We then examine how specific economic resources respond to child removal in the period surrounding foster care cost-recovery child support order assignment. Here, we examine whether, while children are in foster care and afterward, there are differences between families with and without mother-to-government and father-to-government cost-recovery orders with respect to mothers’ economic resources. We consider net child support received or paid by custodial mothers which may vary due to redirection of existing orders and/or establishment of new cost-recovery orders. We also analyze custodial mothers’ other economic resources: earnings and social welfare benefits, including W2/TANF, SNAP, UI, SSI,

and SSDI. This allows us to quantify a range of potential economic costs of foster care placement from the perspective of the custodial parent and children. Finally, we examine whether changes in these economic resources serve as mechanisms linking child support cost-recovery orders to whether children reunify and whether they are subject to TPR. Specifically, we estimate the extent to which changes in total income—including child support receipt and payment, earnings, and benefit receipt—serve to ‘explain’ the relation of child support cost-recovery order assignment with reunification and TPR.

We discuss the policy context in detail in our prior reports (Berger et al., 2024, 2025). As such, we only briefly summarize the core issues here:

- Child protective services (CPS) intervention is a common occurrence, particularly for low-income families and families of color (e.g., Black and Native American families);
- Most CPS-involved families do not experience child removal and, for those that do, the majority of children reunify with their family of origin;
- OHC is expensive, and its costs are shared by federal, state, and local (i.e., county, city) governments;
- Federal policy allows state and local governments to recoup some of their OHC expenses by establishing cost-recovery orders;
- Cost-recovery orders may consist of establishing a new order for either or both parents (regardless of coresidential or marital status prior to the child’s removal) to reimburse the state for OHC costs and/or re-assigning an existing order for a noncustodial parent (hereafter, father) to provide support to a custodial parent (hereafter, mother) such that the father is ordered to pay support to the state rather than to the mother;
- Parents may experience multiple types of orders (e.g., father-to-mother, father-to-government, mother-to-government) simultaneously and/or at different points of the course of an OHC episode;
- Parents may owe support arrears to government after OHC has ended, even if the child has been reunified;
- State and local governments, including across counties in Wisconsin, vary widely with respect to cost-recovery order practices, and cost-recovery orders are no longer assigned in Milwaukee County and Dane County;

- Cost-recovery orders likely function to increase rather than decrease net government expenditures because they are expensive to enforce, result in limited collections, and lead to both substantially longer durations in OHC and higher rates of foster care re-entry for children who reunify with their families;
- For these reasons, federal guidance now discourages cost-recovery order assignment except in rare circumstances.

DATA AND METHODS

Sample

Our data are drawn from the Wisconsin Administrative Data Core (WADC), which includes matched data from Wisconsin's child welfare system (WiSACWIS), Child Support Enforcement system (KIDS), Client Assistance for Re-employment and Economic Support system (CARES), Unemployment Insurance system (UI), and other systems. Our analyses employ data spanning 2008–2023 on OHC placements, reunifications, TPRs, child support enforcement actions, employment and earnings, child and family demographics, and participation in the W2/TANF, SNAP, UI, SSI, and SSDI programs.

Our sample consists of Wisconsin mothers who experienced the placement of all of their co-resident biological or adopted children (under age 18) have first-entered OHC between July 2008 and June 2020, regardless of whether the mother was married to, living with, and/or was the payee or payor on a child support order prior to her child(ren)'s placement in OHC. These families are followed through 2023. We construct a monthly panel at the level of mothers and their co-resident children under 18 years. Mothers are included in the analytic sample only if all of their co-resident eligible children are placed in OHC. A mother's OHC episode begins in the month when any of her children **first** enters care and ends in the month when all of her children achieve permanency. We observe each mother for 3–5 years after her children have been placed in OHC. From an initial sample of 24,831 mothers, we exclude those whose children died, went

missing, or ran away from OHC (94 mothers); did not have any father with a valid IRPID in the WADC (1,155 mothers); did not have an identified county in the WADC (2,656 mothers); and whose children's OHC episode lasted fewer than 30 days (1,878 mothers). As such, our final analytic sample consists of 19,048 mothers.

Measures

Our foster care outcomes, drawn from WiSACWIS, include dichotomous indicators for (1) whether any of a mother's children reunify and (2) whether any of a mother's children experience a TPR in the 3–5-year period following the removal of all her children. Our key predictors, drawn from KIDS, are dichotomous indicators of whether, in any month during which a mother had any children in OHC, the mother had a mother-to-government child support cost-recovery order, a father-to-government child support cost-recovery order, and a father-to-mother child support order in place for the mother's child(ren). These indicators reflect whether—at any point during the OHC episode—the mother experienced each type of order. As such, they are non-mutually exclusive. However, they do not differentiate whether multiple orders were in place simultaneously or during different months of the episode, nor do they consider whether either or both parents had any type of order in place before or after the episode. On the whole, 41.7% of mothers experienced no child support order; 23.7% experienced one type of order (with 6.0% experiencing only a mother-to-government, 4.8% only a father-to-government, and 13.0% only a father-to-mother order); 22.2% experienced two types of orders (with 12.7% experiencing a father-to-mother and father-to-government order, 0.8% a father-to-mother and mother-to-government order, and 8.7% a father-to-government and mother-to-government order); and 12.5% experienced all three types of orders during their children's OHC episode.

We consider several key forms of economic resources through which cost-recovery orders may impact reunification and/or TPR, including the child support amount received or paid by the mother, the mother's earnings for employment that pays into the UI system, and benefit amounts the mother received from W2/TANF, SNAP, UI, SSI, and SSDI. We examine any receipt of, and the amount received of, each of these economic resources. A key caveat is that we are unable to observe earnings for occupations that do not pay into the UI system, such as cash-only payment or gig work. As such, we cannot be sure that mothers with no UI-reported earnings do not have earnings from other sources.

In all models, we control for demographic characteristics, including the mother's race and ethnicity, the mother's age, the father's age (for the oldest father of any of the mother's children), the oldest child's age, whether the youngest child is one or younger, and the total number of children in the household. We also control for the county-level CPS report substantiation rate (i.e., the rate of substantiation among referrals screened-in for investigation) and the county-level unemployment rate in the year prior to OHC placement to account for county-level differences in agency practices and economic factors, as well as for county- and year-of-removal fixed effects to account for unobserved county- and year-specific factors. All dollar amounts are adjusted for inflation using the CPI-U 2023. Descriptive statistics for all study variables are presented in Appendix Table A1, for the full sample and families that did and did not reunify, as well as by child support order status and type during OHC. Descriptive statistics by child support order status and type during OHC are presented in Appendix Table A2.

Analyses

Our first aim is to describe patterns of child support orders and payments before, during, and after mothers' children are in OHC. Thus, we first present simple descriptive statistics that

assess variation in whether a mother-to-government, father-to-government, or father-to-mother order was in place, the amounts of these orders, whether payments were made on these orders, and the amounts of any such payments on these orders in each period (i.e., pre-OHC, during OHC, post-OHC). We additionally examine whether no order was in place.

Our second aim is to describe variation in family economic resources in the pre-, during- and post-OHC periods, overall and by child support order status. Here, we compare the gains and losses of mothers' total income, earnings, child support, and social welfare benefits in each period by whether a mother-to-government, father-to-government, father-to-mother, or no child support order was in place when a mother's children were in OHC.

Our third aim is to assess the extent to which changes in economic resources when children are in OHC serve as mechanisms through which cost-recovery orders influence children's OHC trajectories (i.e., reunification and TPR). To examine whether changes in economic resources serve to partially or fully 'explain' (mediate) these relations, we estimate two sets of ordinary least squares (OLS) linear probability models.¹ First, we regress, separately, whether reunification and TPR occurred within a given period (12-, 24-, 36-, 48-, and 60-months) on whether a mother experienced a mother-to-government cost-recovery order, a father-to-government cost-recovery order, and/or a father-to-mother child support order, with no child support order serving as the reference condition for each, controlling for pre-placement household and county characteristics. The resulting estimates are interpreted as the percentage

¹Our prior work (Berger et al., 2024, 2025) employed instrumental variables (IV) strategies to estimate the causal effects of cost-recovery orders on children's OHC trajectories. However, IV strategies are not amenable to analysis of mechanisms. For this reason, we employ OLS regressions in this study. Notably, our OLS estimates of *associations* of cost-recovery orders with children's OHC trajectories are consistent in direction and statistical significance with the *causal effects* revealed by our IV analyses, though there are some differences in the magnitudes of the estimates. As such, the descriptive analyses presented here are appropriate for examining whether changes in family economic resources may plausibly serve as mechanisms linking cost-recovery orders to OHC trajectories. Our estimates should not be interpreted as causal in nature. Critically, our LPM estimates are consistent with those estimated using a logit link function (results available upon request).

point difference in the likelihood of reunification or TPR when a mother-to-government, father-to-government, or father-to-mother order is in place, relative to when no order is in place. We then re-estimate these regressions with the addition of measures of changes in mother's total income while children are in OHC to the models.

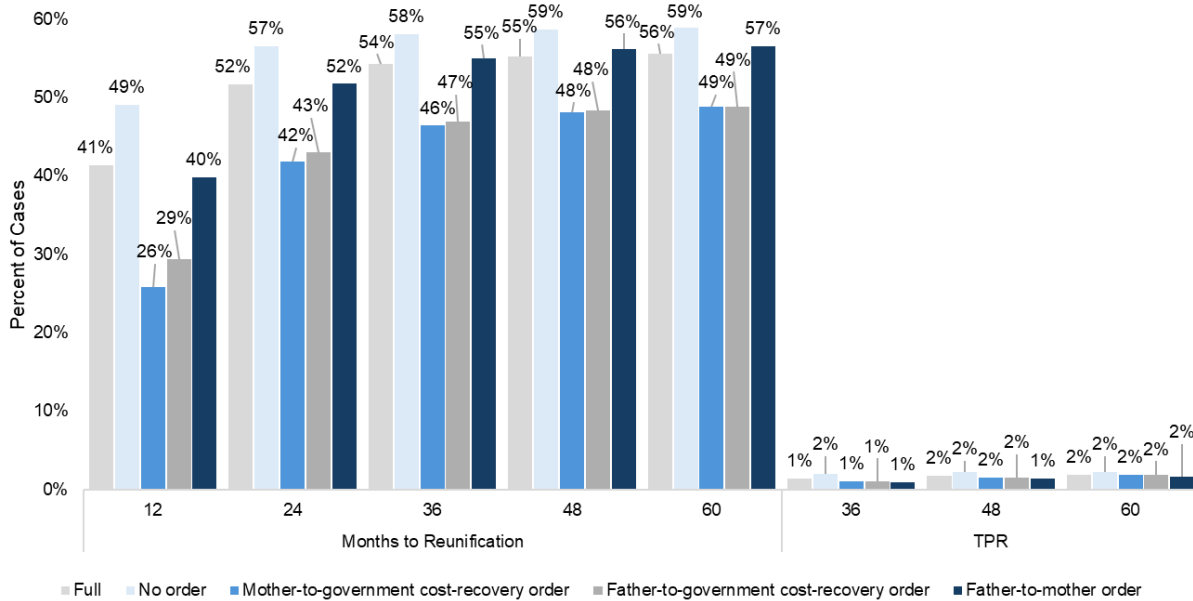
To determine whether changes in economic resources underlie the relation between cost-recovery orders and foster care outcomes, we compare coefficients on cost-recovery orders before and after adding measures of relative changes in economic resources to the model. Attenuation (i.e., decrease in magnitude) in the cost-recovery order coefficients after accounting for changes in economic resources during OHC is consistent with a mechanistic interpretation. In other words, attenuation implies that economic resources serve as mechanisms that account for the relation between cost-recovery orders and OHC trajectories. Comparing the magnitudes of the estimates from the two models enables us to quantify the extent to which this is the case.

RESULTS

Variation in OHC Trajectories by Child Support Orders

Figure 1 shows variation in the probability of family reunification within 12-, 24-, 36-, 48-, and 60-months and of TPR within 36-, 48-, and 60-months following entry into out-of-home care (OHC) by child support order status and type. Consistent with our previous work, we find that families with mother-to-government and father-to-government cost-recovery orders are less likely to experience reunification and more likely to experience TPR than families with father-to-mother orders. Notably, however, we also see that families with no child support order have the highest rates of reunification across all time periods and are least likely to experience TPR.

Figure 1. Reunification and Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) Rates by Child Support Order Type



Note: This figure reports unadjusted reunification and termination of parental rights (TPR) rates within 12, 24, 36, 48, and 60 months following entry into out-of-home care (OHC), calculated as percentages of the full analytic sample. Results are shown for all children (“Full”) and by child support order type experienced at any point during the OHC episode. Child support order categories are not mutually exclusive, as mothers may experience multiple order types simultaneously or across months. The analytic sample includes 19,048 mothers whose children remained in OHC for at least 30 days.

How Do Child Support Orders Vary Before, During, and After OHC?

Most mothers with children in OHC experience child support orders before, during, and after OHC. Approximately 58.3% of our sample of mothers had one or more types of child support orders in place for one or more months of their children’s OHC placement: 27.9% had a mother-to-government order, 38.6% had a father-to-government order, and 38.9% had a father-to-mother order (as shown in the first panel of Appendix Table A2). The order types are not mutually exclusive given that mothers may have had one or more orders in place simultaneously or at different points during their children’s OHC placements.

Figure 2 presents descriptive statistics for child support orders before, during, and after (among those who reunified) OHC placement, by whether a mother had a mother-to-government

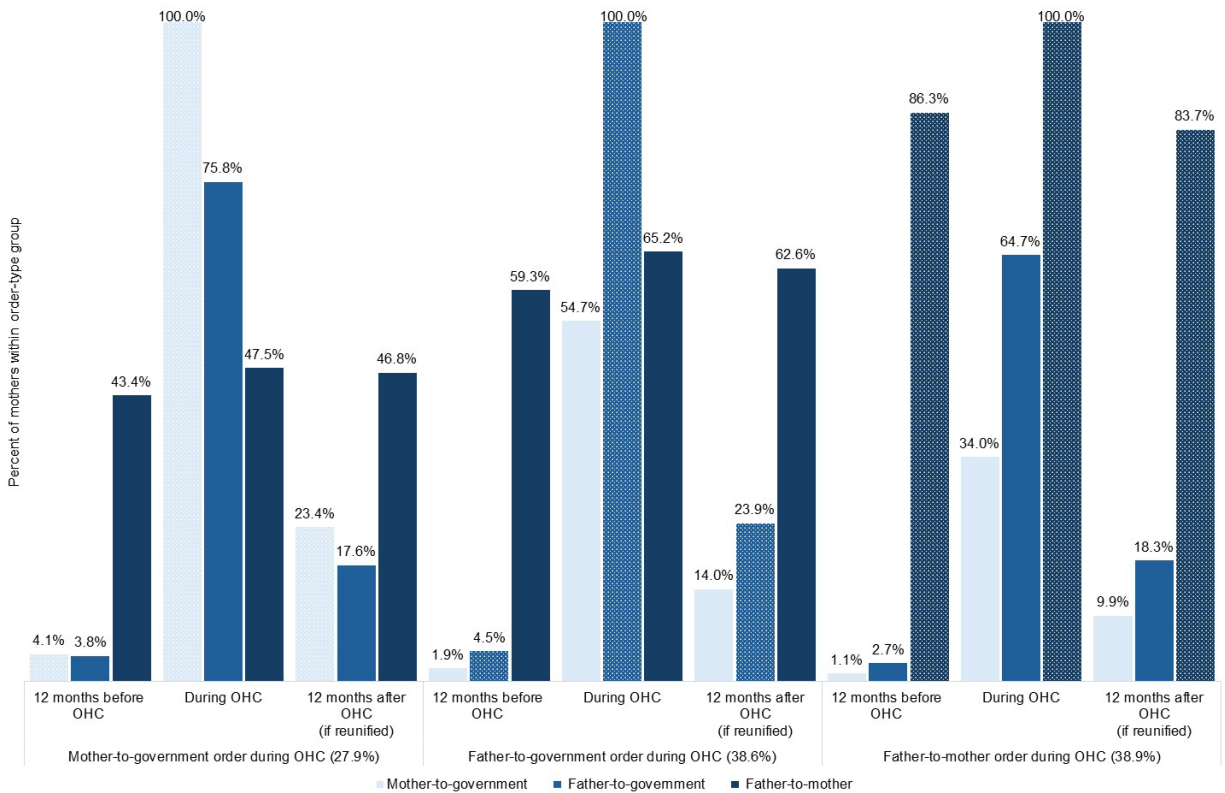
cost-recovery order, a father-to-government cost-recovery order, and/or a father-to-mother child support order during any month during which any of her children were in OHC. Several key patterns are apparent. First, most of these mothers had an order—typically a father-to-mother order—prior to their children’s placement. Among the 27.9% of mothers with mother-to-government order *during* their children’s OHC placement (left panel), the 38.6% of mothers with father-to-government orders during their child’s OHC placement (center panel) and the 38.9% of mothers with father-to-mother orders during their child’s OHC placement (right panel), 1.1%–4.1% had a mother-to-government (light blue), 2.7%–4.5% had a father-to-government (medium blue), and 43.4%–86.3% had a father-to-mother (dark blue) order at some point in the 12 months *before* OHC, as indicated in the leftmost set of columns in each panel.

Second, mothers with orders in place *during* OHC (center set of columns in each panel) were highly likely to have experienced multiple types of orders (simultaneously or in different months). For example, 75.8% of mothers with a mother-to-government order during OHC (left panel) also experienced a father-to-government order during OHC and 47.5% also experienced a father-to-mother order during OHC. Additionally, 54.7% of those with a father-to-government order during OHC (center panel) also experienced a mother-to-government order and 65.2% also experienced a father-to-mother order during OHC; 34.0% of those with a father-to-mother order during OHC (right panel) also experienced a mother-to-government order while 64.7% also experienced a father-to-government order during OHC.

Third, more than a quarter of mothers with a mother- or father-to-government order in place during OHC (left and center panels) continued to have such orders after the placement (23.4%–23.9%) and a considerable portion (14.0%–17.6%) continued to have an other-parent-to-government order in place.

Fourth, most mothers with any type of order in place during OHC (all three panels) experienced a father-to-mother order after OHC (46.8%–83.7%). This stands in contrast to patterns for the 42% of mothers with no order during OHC; only 7.9% of these mothers had an order for support from a father in the year after reunification, and less than 3% had cost-recovery orders in place for either parent (see Appendix Table A2).

Figure 2: Child Support Orders

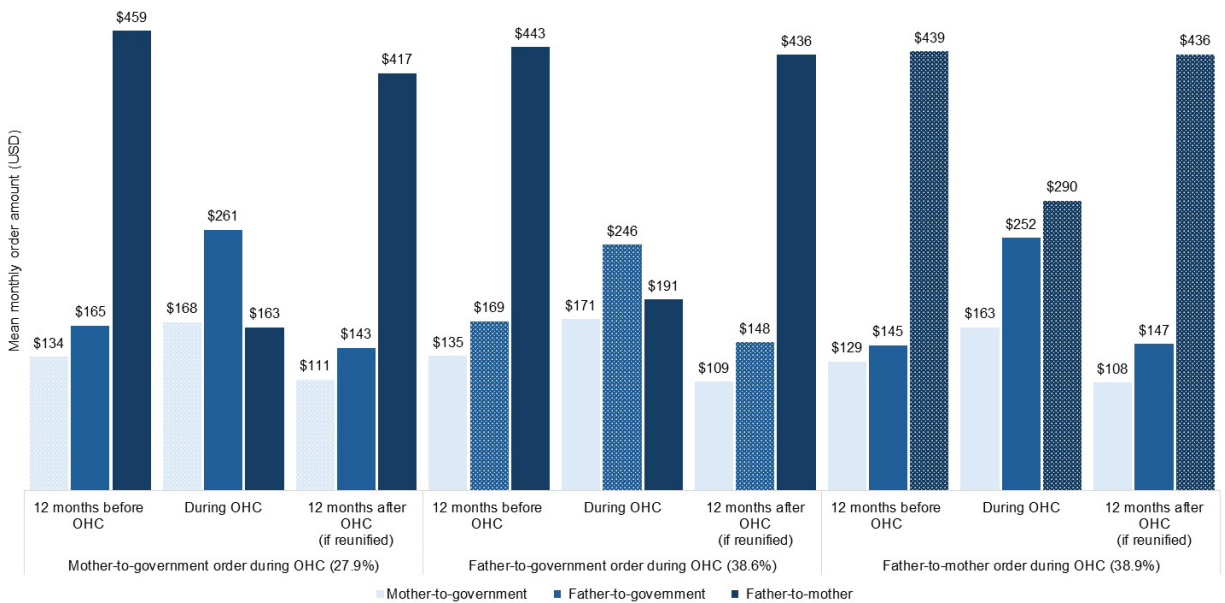


Notes: This figure reports the percentage of mothers with a child support order by timing relative to an out-of-home care (OHC) episode: the 12 months before OHC, during OHC, and the 12 months after reunification (conditional on reunification). Each panel conditions on mothers with child support order type at any point during the OHC episode (panel labels report the share of the full analytic sample in each group). Within each panel, percentages indicate the share of mothers with a positive order during the specified period. The analytic sample includes 19,048 mothers whose children (under age 18) experienced an OHC episode lasting at least 30 days. All specifications apply consistent restrictions, including removal of all co-resident children, closed OHC cases, exclusion of cases with unidentified fathers, and valid county identifiers. Corresponding tabular results are reported in Appendix Table A2.

Figure 3 presents order amounts among those with each type of order. Father-to-mother orders were consistently highest in the pre-OHC (\$443–\$459 per month), during-OHC (\$163–

\$290), and post-OHC (\$417–\$436) periods. Relative to mothers’ median pre-OHC total income (\$2,078 per month; see Appendix Table A1), these amounts represent approximately 21–22% of monthly income prior to OHC, 8–14% during OHC, and 20–21% post-OHC. Although these order amounts declined substantially during OHC—likely because of reassignment of the order to the government—they returned to their pre-OHC amounts in the post-OHC period. Mother- and father-to-government orders ranged from \$163–\$171 (about 8% of pre-OHC income) and \$252–\$261 (about 12–13% of pre-OHC income), respectively, during OHC and from \$108–\$111 and \$143–\$148 post-OHC (which corresponds to roughly 5–7% of pre-OHC income; see Appendix Table A1 and A2 for additional detail).

Figure 3: Child Support Order Amounts

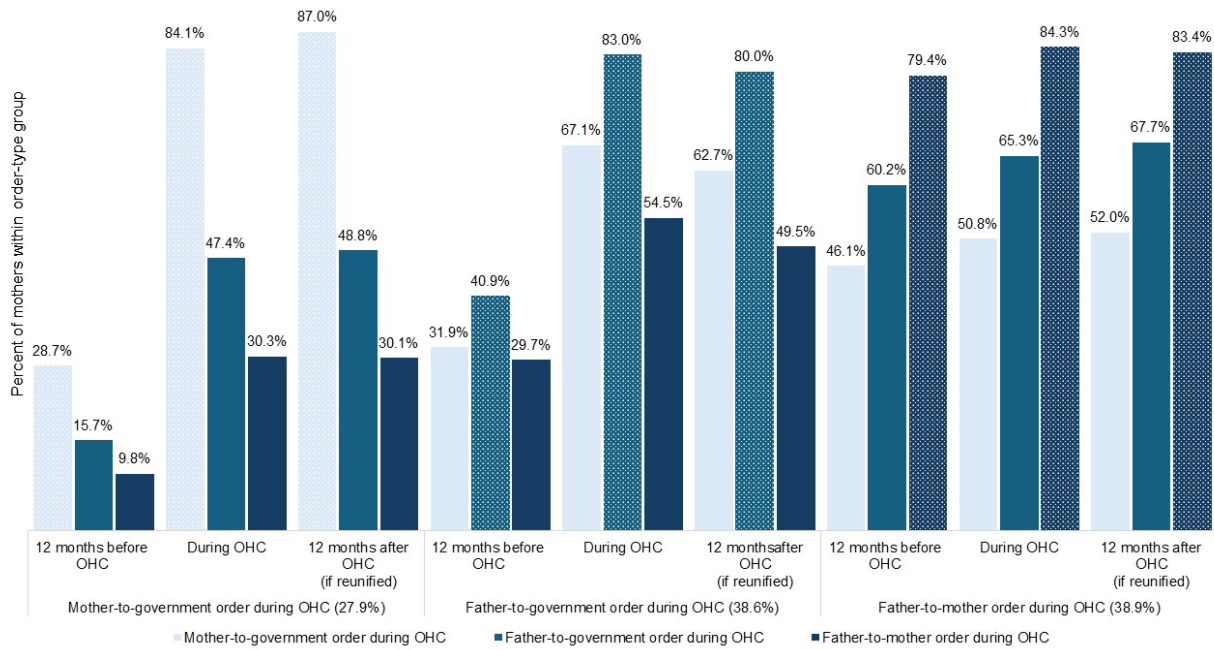


Notes: This figure reports average monthly child support order amounts by timing relative to an out-of-home care (OHC) episode: the 12 months before OHC, during OHC, and the 12 months after reunification (conditional on reunification). Each panel conditions on mothers who had child support order type at any point during the OHC episode (panel labels report the share of the full analytic sample in each group). Within each period, dollar amounts represent mean monthly order values calculated among mothers with a positive order during that period. The analytic sample includes 19,048 mothers whose children (under age 18) experienced an OHC episode lasting at least 30 days. All specifications apply consistent restrictions, including removal of all co-resident children, closed OHC cases, exclusion of cases with unidentified fathers, and valid county identifiers. Corresponding tabular results are reported in Appendix Table A2.

How Do Child Support Payments Vary Before, During, and After OHC?

Figures 4 and 5 present descriptive statistics for payments among those with an order during OHC (see Appendix Table A3 for additional detail). Figure 4 shows the proportion of parents with each type of order during OHC who made any payments. About 84.1% of mothers with a mother-to-government order in place during OHC (27.9% of full sample, leftmost panel) made at least one payment during OHC, and 87.0% made at least one payment after reunification, whereas fathers made payments in 83.0% (during OHC) and 80.0% (post-OHC) of cases with a father-to-government order in place during OHC (38.6% of full sample, center panel). By comparison, fathers made payments to mothers during and after OHC at rates of 84.3% and 83.4% when a father-to-mother order was in place during OHC (38.9% of full sample, right panel).

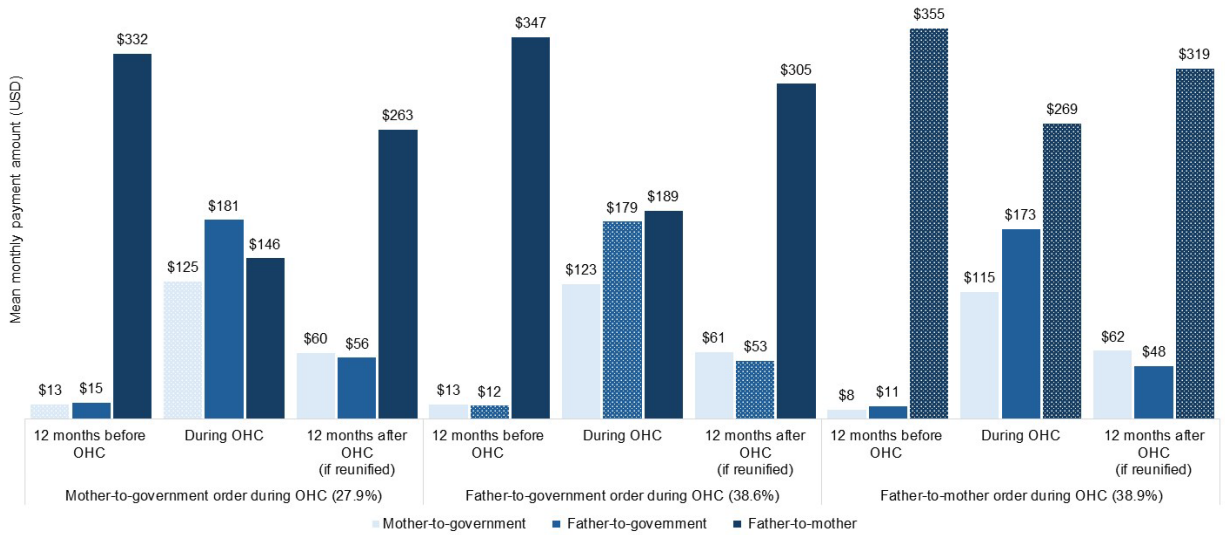
Figure 4: Child Support Payments



Notes: This figure reports the percentage of mothers with a positive child support payment by timing relative to an out-of-home care (OHC) episode: the 12 months before OHC, during OHC, and the 12 months after reunification (conditional on reunification). Each panel conditions on mothers who had child support order type at any point during the OHC episode (panel labels report the share of the full analytic sample in each group). Percentages indicate the share of mothers within each order-type group who made at least one positive payment during the specified period. The analytic sample includes 19, 048 mothers whose children (under age 18) experienced an OHC episode lasting at least 30 days. All specifications apply consistent restrictions, including removal of all co-resident children, closed OHC cases, exclusion of cases with unidentified fathers, and valid county identifiers. Corresponding tabular results are reported in Appendix Table A3.

Figure 5 shows average payment amounts among those who made any payments. Among mothers with a father-to-mother order during OHC, father-to-mother payment amounts were consistently higher than mother- and father-to-government payment amounts, averaging \$355 before OHC, \$269 during OHC, and \$319 after OHC (shown in the rightmost panel). By comparison, mother-to-government and father-to-government payments, among those with such orders during OHC (leftmost and center panels) averaged \$13 and \$12 before OHC (when such orders were least common), \$125 and \$179 during OHC, and \$60 and \$53 after OHC, respectively, among those who made payments.

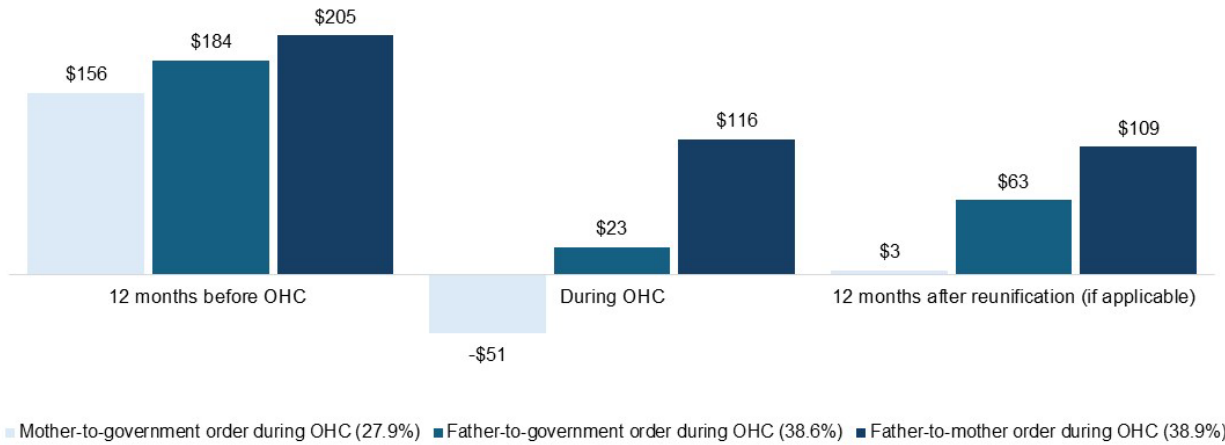
Figure 5: Child Support Payment Amounts



Notes: This figure reports average monthly child support payment amounts by timing relative to an out-of-home care (OHC) episode: the 12 months before OHC, during OHC, and the 12 months after reunification (conditional on reunification). Each panel conditions on mothers who had child support order type at any point during the OHC episode (panel labels report the share of the full analytic sample in each group). Within each period, dollar amounts represent mean monthly payment values calculated among mothers with at least one positive payment during that period. The analytic sample includes 19,048 mothers whose children (under age 18) experienced an OHC episode lasting at least 30 days. All specifications apply consistent restrictions, including removal of all co-resident children, closed OHC cases, exclusion of cases with unidentified fathers, and valid county identifiers. Corresponding tabular results are reported in Appendix Table A3.

Figure 6 shows net child support amounts by order type among the mothers with orders during OHC. Overall, net child support receipt decreases substantially when children are in OHC and, while net child support receipt recovers somewhat post-OHC period, it does not return to pre-OHC level. Net child support amounts for mothers with mother-to-government, father-to-government, and father-to-mother orders averaged \$156, \$184, and \$205 per month in the 12 months before OHC, fell to -\$51, \$23, and \$116 per month during OHC, and recovered slightly to \$3, \$63, and \$109 per month during OHC.

Figure 6: Mother’s Net Child Support Amount Among Those with Orders



Notes: This figure reports average monthly net child support amounts by timing relative to an out-of-home care (OHC) episode: the 12 months before OHC, during OHC, and the 12 months after reunification (conditional on reunification). Each panel conditions on mothers who had child support order type at any point during the OHC episode (panel labels report the share of the full analytic sample in each group). Net amounts reflect the difference between child support received and paid and may be positive or negative. Within each period, dollar amounts represent mean monthly net order values calculated among mothers with a positive child support order during that period. The analytic sample includes 19,048 mothers whose children (under age 18) experienced an OHC episode lasting at least 30 days. All specifications apply consistent restrictions, including removal of all co-resident children, closed OHC cases, exclusion of cases with unidentified fathers, and valid county identifiers. Corresponding tabular results are reported in Appendix Table A2.

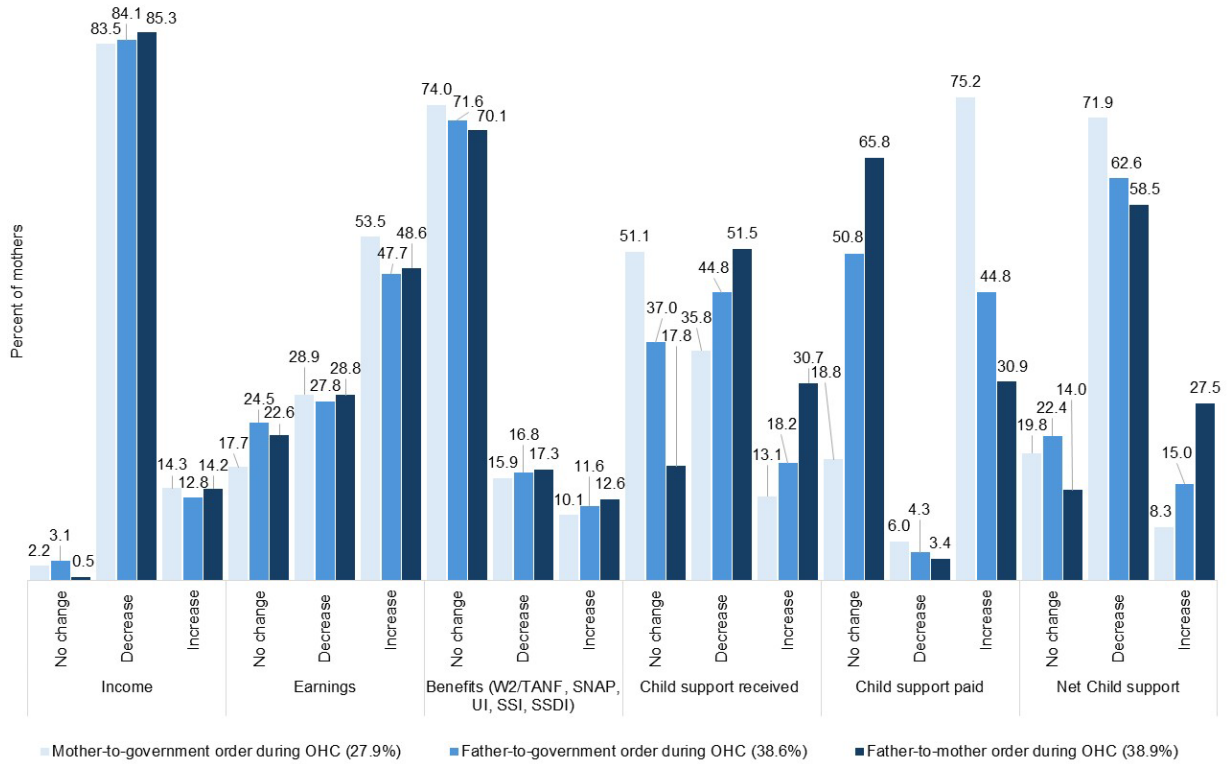
How Do Economic Resources Vary Before, During, and After OHC?

Above we reviewed patterns of child support payments and receipts for mothers before, during, and after OHC. These vary depending on whether mothers have orders to receive or to pay child support and by whether fathers have cost-recovery orders. We now consider changes in mothers’ economic resources in terms of child support and other sources of income. Figures 7 and 8 present descriptive statistics summarizing the proportion of mothers experiencing changes in average monthly income (Figure 7) and the average amount of those changes (Figure 8) between the pre-OHC period (12 months before OHC) and during OHC (see Appendix Table A6 for additional detail). Here and throughout, unless we explicitly refer to mother-to-government or father-to-government cost recovery orders, our use of the term ‘cost-recovery orders’ experienced by mothers refers to both forms of cost-recovery orders.

Figure 7 shows that, overall, most mothers experience a decrease in total income during OHC relative to before OHC, including 67.6% of those with no child support order (see Appendix Table A4), and 83.5 to 85.3% of those with orders. By comparison, 12.8%–14.3% of mothers with orders experienced an increase in total income and 2.2%–3.1% experienced no change in total income during OHC compared to before OHC.

As shown in the subsequent panels of Figure 7, these decreases in income largely reflect decreases in child support receipt (experienced by 35.8%–44.8% of those with cost-recovery child support orders, and 51.5% of those with father-to-mother orders), increases in child support paid, especially for those with mother-to-government cost recovery orders (75.15%) and, to a lesser extent, decreases in earnings (experienced by 27.8%–28.9%) and in benefit receipt (experienced by 15.9%–17.3%). At the same time, 13.1%–18.2% of those with cost-recovery child support orders experienced an increase in child support received (relative to 30.7% of those with father-to-mother orders), and 4.3%–6.0% experienced a decrease in child support paid. On the whole, these results suggest that mothers with cost-recovery orders have similar patterns of earnings and benefit receipt to those of mothers with only father-to-mother orders, but are markedly less likely to experience an increase in child support received, and markedly more likely to experience an increase in child support paid—as expected.

Figure 7: Proportion of Families with Monthly Average Income Change Between the Pre-OHC and Post-OHC Periods

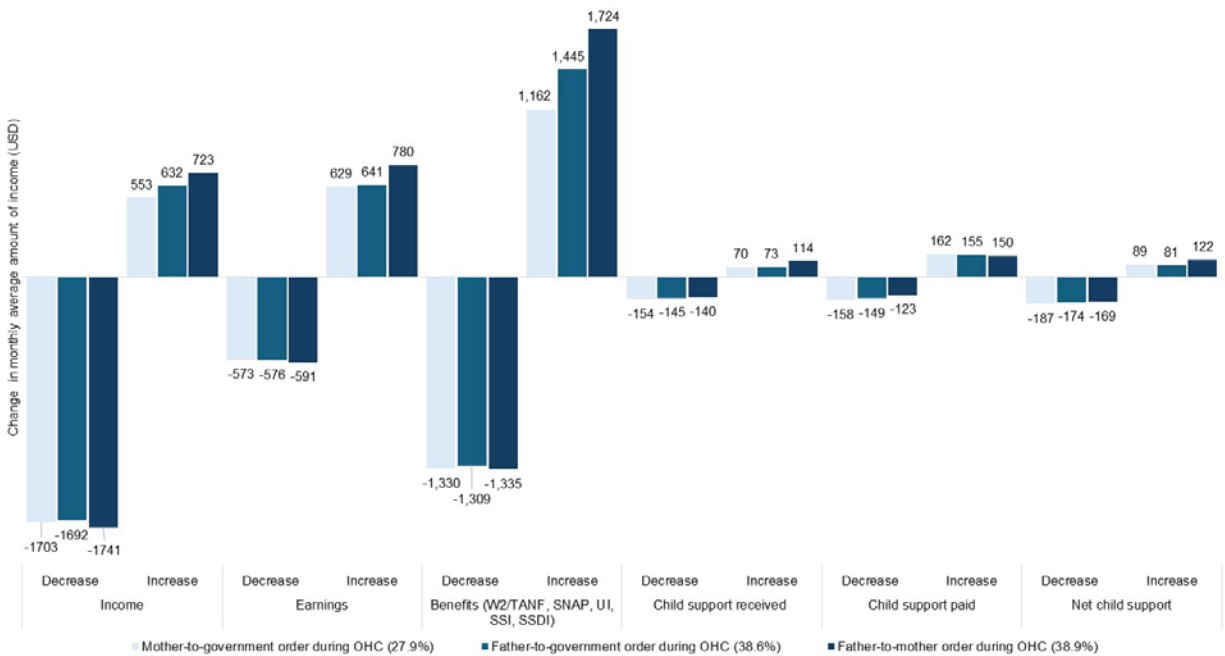


Notes: This figure reports the proportion of mothers experiencing changes in economic resources between the 12 months before an out-of-home care (OHC) episode and the period during OHC. Results are shown by percent of mothers who had child support order type at any point during the OHC episode (panel labels report the share of the full analytic sample in each group). For each resource measure, percentages are calculated within order-type groups. “No change” includes mothers with no receipt in either period as well as those with positive receipt in both periods. “Decrease” indicates the outcome is lower during OHC than in the pre-OHC period, and “Increase” indicates the outcome is higher during OHC than in the pre-OHC period. The analytic sample includes 19,048 mothers whose co-resident children (under age 18) experienced an OHC episode lasting at least 30 days. All specifications apply consistent restrictions, including removal of all co-resident children, closed OHC cases, exclusion of cases with unidentified fathers, and valid county identifiers. Corresponding tabular results, including mean dollar changes, are reported in Appendix Table A4.

Figure 8 shows average amounts of income gains and losses between the pre-OHC and OHC periods for mothers experiencing a change in income. On the whole, most mothers lost income (as shown in Figure 7), and those losing income experienced losses of \$1,461 (for those with no child support order; see, Appendix Table A4) to \$1,741 per month during OHC. Losses were more common, and such losses were modestly larger, among those with any type of child

support order. The minority of mothers gaining income experienced average increases of \$553–\$723 per month, and these gains were relatively similar among those with and without child support orders, though lowest for those with mother-to-government orders. Losses of earnings (among the 27.8–28.9% who experienced such losses) were also similar among mothers with and without orders (\$573–\$591), but gains in earnings, were more common but, on average, smaller for families with child support orders (\$629–\$780 versus \$909 for those with no order; Appendix Table A4). For social welfare program benefit changes when children were in OHC, losses were somewhat more common, and amounts lost were slightly larger, for those with child support orders (\$1,309–\$1,335 versus \$1,251 for those with no order; sum of all benefit loss amounts in Appendix Table A4), whereas the proportion with gains in benefit amounts differed less and, among those experiencing such gains, were considerably smaller for families with child support orders (\$1,162–\$1,724 versus \$1,857 for those with no order; sum of all benefit gain amounts in Appendix Table A4). Changes in child support receipt were common only among mothers with child support orders during OHC, for whom losses averaged \$140–\$154. Decreases in child support paid were relatively rare and averaged from \$123 to \$158; increases were more common for those with orders during OHC and averaged between \$150–\$162.

Figure 8: Monthly Average Amount of Income Change Between the Pre-OHC and Post-OHC Periods



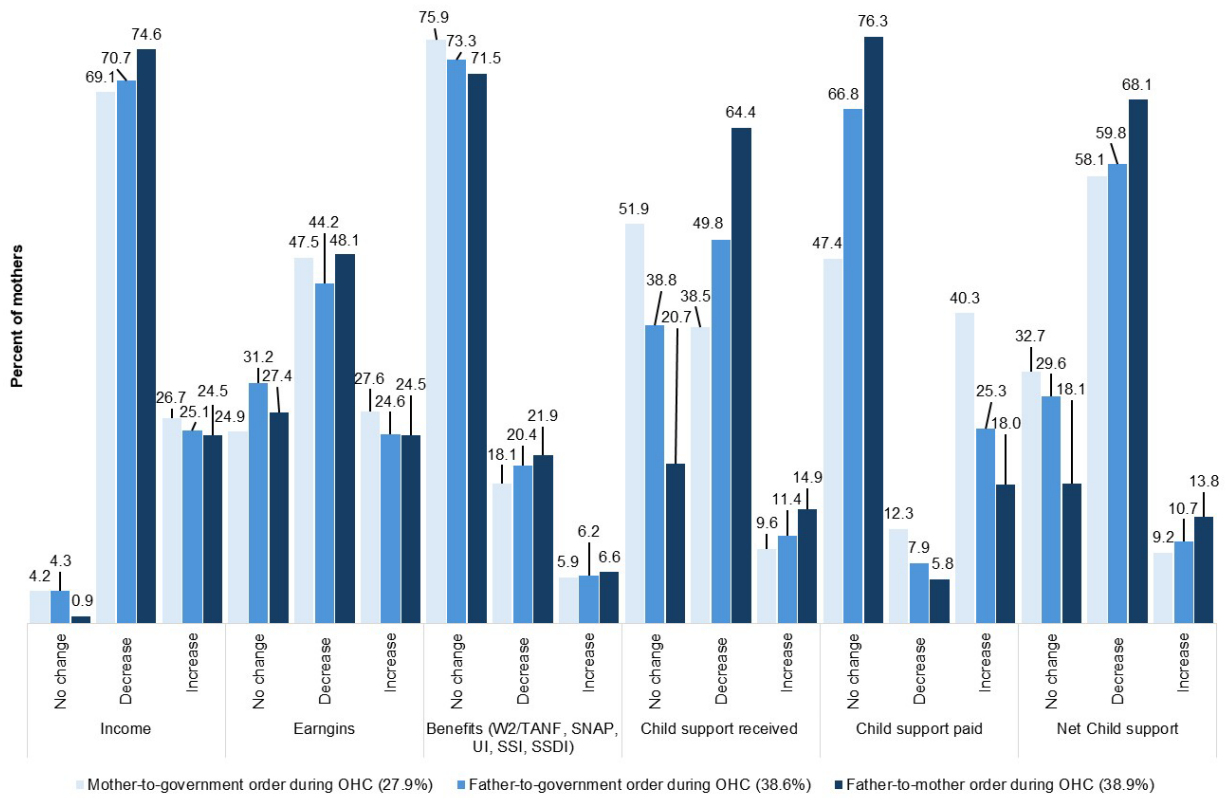
Notes: This figure reports the proportion of mothers experiencing changes in economic resources between the 12 months before an out-of-home care (OHC) episode and the 12 months after OHC, by child support order type during OHC. Child support order types include mother-to-government cost-recovery orders, father-to-government cost-recovery orders, and father-to-mother orders. Results are shown by percent of mothers who had child support order type at any point during the OHC episode (panel labels report the share of the full analytic sample in each group). For each resource measure, “No change” includes mothers with no receipt in either period as well as those with positive receipt in both periods. “Decrease” indicates the outcome is lower in the post-OHC period than in the pre-OHC period, and “Increase” indicates the outcome is higher in the post-OHC period than in the pre-OHC period. The analytic sample includes 19,048 mothers whose co-resident children (under age 18) experienced an OHC episode lasting at least 30 days. All specifications apply consistent restrictions, including removal of all co-resident children, closed OHC cases, exclusion of cases with unidentified fathers, and valid county identifiers. Corresponding tabular results are reported in Appendix Table A4.

Figures 9 and 10 show descriptive statistics summarizing the proportion of mothers experiencing changes in monthly average income (Figure 9) and the average amount of those changes (Figure 10) between the 12-month pre-OHC period and the 12-month post-OHC period (see Appendix Table A4 for additional detail). On the whole, these patterns are consistent with those for changes in income between the pre-OHC and during-OHC periods (Figures 7 and 8), suggesting that changes in resources during OHC tend to persist in the post OHC period. A notable exception to this pattern is that much larger proportions of families appear to experience

earnings losses in the post-OHC period relative to during OHC. In addition, increases in child support paid are somewhat less common, though 40.3% of those with mother-to-government cost-recovery orders were paying more post-OHC than during.²

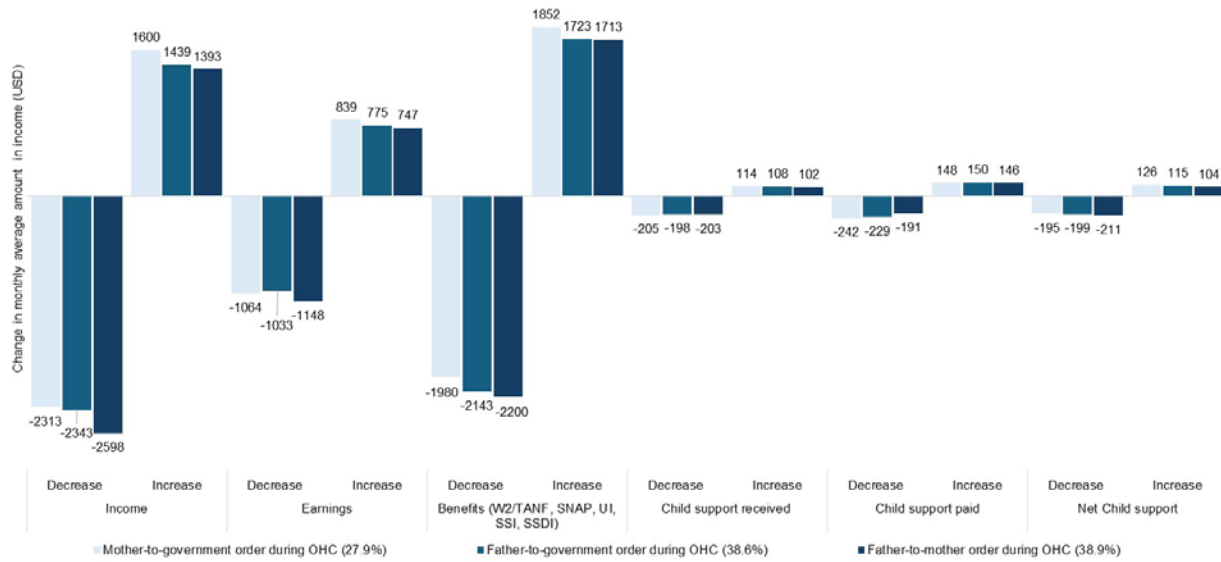
²We also examined changes in mother's income amounts (overall and by income type) between the pre-OHC and OHC periods as a function of child support order type and status during OHC using regression analysis (Appendix Table A5). On the whole, we find that overall income declined substantially for mothers with all types of child support orders during OHC and that declines for those with mother-to-government orders were particularly large when a father-to-mother order was not also in place at some point during the OHC spell, whereas declines for those with father-to-government orders were particularly large for mothers who also had a father-to-mother order in place at some point during the OHC spell. Father-to-government orders were also associated with declines in mothers' earnings, TANF benefits, SNAP benefits, child support receipt, and net child support received/paid. Mother-to-government orders were associated with declines in SNAP benefits, SSI benefits, SSDI benefits, child support received, and net child support received/paid, as well as with an increase in child support paid.

Figure 9: Proportion of Families with Monthly Average Income Change Between the Pre-OHC and Post-OHC Periods



Notes: This figure reports mean monthly dollar changes in mothers’ economic resources between the 12 months before an out-of-home care (OHC) episode and the period during OHC, by child support order type during OHC. The table only based on mothers who had child support order type at any point during the OHC episode Dollar changes are calculated as the comparison period minus the pre-OHC period, with negative values indicating declines (or net outflows, where applicable) and positive values indicating increases. Child support order types include mother-to-government cost-recovery orders, father-to-government cost-recovery orders, and father-to-mother orders. The analytic sample includes 19,048 mothers whose co-resident children (under age 18) experienced an OHC episode lasting at least 30 days. All specifications apply consistent restrictions, including removal of all co-resident children, closed OHC cases, exclusion of cases with unidentified fathers, and valid county identifiers. Corresponding tabular results are reported in Appendix Table A4.

Figure 10: Monthly Average Amount of Income Change Between the Pre-OHC and Post-OHC Periods



Notes: This figure reports mean monthly dollar changes in mothers’ economic resources between the 12 months before an out-of-home care (OHC) episode and the 12 months after OHC, by child support order type during OHC. The table is only based on mothers who had child support order type at any point during the OHC episode. Dollar changes are calculated as the post-OHC period minus the pre-OHC period, with negative values indicating declines (or net outflows, where applicable) and positive values indicating increases. Child support order types include mother-to-government cost-recovery orders, father-to-government cost-recovery orders, and father-to-mother orders. The analytic sample includes 19,048 mothers whose co-resident children (under age 18) experienced an OHC episode lasting at least 30 days. All specifications apply consistent restrictions, including removal of all co-resident children, closed OHC cases, exclusion of cases with unidentified fathers, and valid county identifiers. Corresponding tabular results are reported in Appendix Table A4.

Are Changes in Economic Resources Mechanisms Linking Cost-Recovery Child Support Orders with Reunification and TPR?

Table 1 presents results from OLS regressions examining whether a mother experienced the reunification of at least one of her children within 12, 24, 36, 48, and 60 months, as a function of whether she experienced a mother-to-government, father-to-government, and/or father-to-mother order at some point during her children’s OHC placements. The reference category is mothers who did not experience any type of child support order while having children in OHC. We show results from two models for each outcome period in which reunification may have occurred. Model 1 (the leftmost regression in each pair of columns)

controls only for mother-level demographics, county-year characteristics, county fixed effects, and year fixed effects. Results from this model can be interpreted as the ‘full’ associations of child support orders with reunification, net of the covariates. Model 2 (the rightmost regression in each pair of columns) additionally adjusts for whether the mother experienced a change in income during her children’s time in OHC, relative to her income before OHC.³ These estimates allow us to assess both whether increases and decreases in income are associated with the likelihood of reunification, and whether adjusting for changes in income serves to account for all or part of the ‘full’ associations of child support orders with reunification. We assess the latter by comparing the magnitude of the child support order coefficients from Models 1 and 2, such that the magnitude of decrease in these associations between Model 1 and Model 2 is indicative of the extent to which changes in economic resources account for (i.e., serve as a mechanism for) associations of child support orders with reunification.

We find a consistent pattern of results for associations of child support orders with reunification in each time period, such that mother- and father-to-government orders are associated with large decreases in the probability of reunification (e.g., 42.4% or 20.8 percentage points and 34.4% or 16.9 percentage points lower likelihoods of reunification within 12 months shown in column 1, and 16.5% or 10.4 percentage points and 22.4% or 13.2 percentage point lower likelihoods of reunification within 60 months shown in column 9), whereas father-to-mother orders are associated with a relatively modest consistent *increase* in the probability of reunification (e.g., a 10.8% or 5.3 percentage point greater likelihood of reunification within 12 months and 10.9% or 6.4 percentage point greater likelihood of reunification within 60 months).

³See Appendix Table A6 for descriptive statistics for income change categories by child support order status and type.

We also find a consistent pattern such that income losses during OHC are associated with a decreased likelihood of reunification, whereas income gains are associated with an increased likelihood of reunification, in each period. For example, a 50% or greater decrease in income during OHC is associated with a 26.5% (13.0 percentage point) lower likelihood of reunification within 12 months (column 2) and a 20.6% (12.1 percentage point) lower likelihood of reunification within 60 months (column 10). Conversely, a 50% or greater increase in income during OHC is associated with a 20.2% (9.9 percentage point) greater likelihood of reunification within 12 months and a 17.5% (10.3 percentage point) greater likelihood of reunification within 60 months.

Turning to whether changes in economic resources serve as the primary mechanism linking child support orders to reunification, we find relatively weak evidence that such changes explain the relation between mother-to-government orders and reunification, modest evidence that they partially explain the relation between father-to-government orders and reunification, and no evidence that they explain the relation between father-to-mother orders and reunification. For example, comparing the coefficients from Models 1 and 2 for mother-to-government orders at 12 months (-.208 or 20.8 percentage points in column 1 vs. -.199 or 19.9 percentage points in column 2) and 60 months (-.104 in column 9 and -.097 in column 10) indicates that changes in economic resources explain only 4.3% of this relation at 12 months and only 6.7% at 60 months. The same comparison for father-to-government orders indicates that changes in economic resources explain 7.7% of this relation at 12 months and 9.1% at 60 months. The coefficients in Models 1 and 2 are virtually identical for father-to-mother orders, providing no evidence of mediation.

Table 1. Effects of Child Support Orders on the Probability of Reunification - Full Sample

	Within 12 Months		Within 24 Months		Within 36 Months		Within 48 Months		Within 60 Months	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Any mother-to-government cost recovery order during OHC	-0.208*** (0.014)	-0.199*** (0.012)	-0.141*** (0.013)	-0.133*** (0.013)	-0.119*** (0.013)	-0.112*** (0.013)	-0.109*** (0.013)	-0.102*** (0.013)	-0.104*** (0.013)	-0.097*** (0.013)
Any father-to-government cost recovery order during OHC	-0.169*** (0.014)	-0.156*** (0.014)	-0.148*** (0.015)	-0.136*** (0.014)	-0.137*** (0.014)	-0.125*** (0.013)	-0.133*** (0.014)	-0.121*** (0.013)	-0.132*** (0.015)	-0.120*** (0.014)
Any father-to-mother child support order during OHC	0.053*** (0.012)	0.053*** (0.011)	0.060*** (0.010)	0.059*** (0.010)	0.064*** (0.011)	0.063*** (0.010)	0.065*** (0.011)	0.064*** (0.011)	0.064*** (0.011)	0.064*** (0.011)
Percent change in income (ref = no change in income)										
Income decrease > 50%		-0.130*** (0.020)		-0.122*** (0.021)		-0.116*** (0.020)		-0.120*** (0.019)		-0.121*** (0.021)
Income decrease 1-50%		-0.081** (0.023)		-0.046* (0.021)		-0.036 (0.022)		-0.037+ (0.020)		-0.038+ (0.021)
-1% ~ +1 % Income change		-0.043+ (0.023)		0.024 (0.022)		0.037 (0.022)		0.038+ (0.018)		0.035+ (0.019)
Income increase 1~50%		0.055** (0.017)		0.076** (0.020)		0.084** (0.023)		0.079** (0.022)		0.076** (0.022)
Income increase > 50%		0.099*** (0.016)		0.099*** (0.020)		0.106*** (0.020)		0.105*** (0.019)		0.103*** (0.019)
Observations	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048
Mean of Dependent Variables	0.491	0.491	0.566	0.566	0.581	0.581	0.586	0.586	0.589	0.589
County fixed effects	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Year fixed effects	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Standard error clustered at county	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Standard error clustered at year	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mother-level demographics	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
State-level demographics	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Note: This table reports estimates from linear probability models of reunification within 12-60 months of removal and placement into out-of-home care (OHC). The analytic sample includes 19,048 mothers whose children remained in OHC for at least 30 days. Coefficients represent percentage point changes in the probability of reunification. All models include county- and year- fixed effects, mother-level demographic characteristics (mother’s race, age, number of fathers, number of children, oldest father’s age, oldest child’s age, binary indicator of youngest child being 1 or less, highest father’s OHC prior 12 months’ income), and county-level demographics (county-year CPS report substantiation and unemployment rates). Income change is measured as the proportional change in total cash income between the pre-OHC and during-OHC periods, defined as ((income during OHC–income pre-OHC)/income pre-OHC), and categorized to capture large losses, moderate losses, stability, and gains. Model 2, the second column in each outcome pair, uses mothers with no income in both periods as the reference group. Standard errors are two-way clustered at the county and year levels. The mean of the dependent variable is reported for reference. Significance levels: + p<0.10, * p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001.

Table 2 presents identical analyses but using TPR, rather than reunification, as the outcome. Because TPR is an extremely rare outcome, particularly in the first two years of OHC placement, we show these results only for 36, 48, and 60 months and, even in these periods, the TPR rate is 2% or less. As such, these results are imprecisely estimated and should be interpreted with caution. On the whole, we find that mother-to-government orders are associated with an increased likelihood of TPR at 48 (22.7%) and 60 (26.1%) months. We find no evidence of relations of father-to-government or father-to-mother orders with TPR, and no consistent evidence that changes in economic resources explain the relation between mother-to-government orders and TPR.

Sensitivity Analyses

We estimated several sensitivity analyses to test the robustness of our results to various assumptions and model specifications. These included limiting the sample to only mothers' with children in OHC for six or more months (Appendix Tables A8 and A9), estimating hazard models examining number of months until exit from care to reunification or TPR as a function of child support order status and type (Appendix Table A10), examining duration of child support order (proportion of months during OHC that order was in place; Appendix Table A11), examining average monthly amount of child support order (Appendix Table A12), controlling for mother's pre-OHC income (Appendix Table A13), and accounting for co-occurring cost-recovery orders. In all cases, results were generally consistent with those from our primary analyses.

Table 2. Effects of Child Support Orders on the Probability of TPR - Full sample

	Within 36 Months		Within 48 Months		Within 60 Months	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Any mother-to-government cost recovery order during OHC	0.002	0.002	0.005	0.004	0.006+	0.006+
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Any father-to-government cost recovery order during OHC	-0.001	-0.001	0.000	0.000	0.003	0.002
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Any father-to-mother child support order during OHC	-0.004	-0.004	-0.003	-0.003	-0.004	-0.004
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Percent change in income (ref = no change in income)						
Income decrease > 50%		-0.006		-0.001		0.001
		(0.006)		(0.007)		(0.007)
Income decrease 1–50%		-0.010*		-0.007+		-0.005
		(0.004)		(0.004)		(0.004)
-1% ~ +1 % Income change		-0.001		-0.001		0.000
		(0.007)		(0.007)		(0.007)
Income increase 1~50%		-0.008+		-0.008		-0.006
		(0.005)		(0.005)		(0.005)
Income increase > 50%		-0.008		-0.007		-0.005
		(0.006)		(0.005)		(0.005)
Observations	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048
Mean of Dependent Variables	0.020	0.020	0.022	0.022	0.023	0.023
County fixed effects	X	X	X	X	X	X
Year fixed effects	X	X	X	X	X	X
Standard error clustered at county	X	X	X	X	X	X
Standard error clustered at year	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mother-level demographics	X	X	X	X	X	X
State-level demographics	X	X	X	X	X	X

Notes: This table reports estimates from linear probability models of termination of parental rights (TPR) within 36–60 months of removal and placement into out-of-home care (OHC). The analytic sample includes 19,048 mothers whose children remained in OHC for at least 30 days. Coefficients represent percentage-point changes in the probability of TPR. All models include county- and year- fixed effects, mother-level demographic characteristics (mother’s race, age, number of fathers, number of children, oldest father’s age, oldest child’s age, binary indicator of youngest child being 1 or less, highest father’s OHC prior 12 months’ income), and county-level demographic controls (county-year CPS report substantiation and unemployment rates). Income change is measured as the proportional change in total cash income between the pre-OHC and during-OHC periods, defined as ((income during OHC–income pre-OHC)/income pre-OHC), and categorized to capture large losses, moderate losses, stability, and gains. Model 2, the second column in each outcome pair, uses mothers with no income in both periods as the reference group. Standard errors are two-way clustered at the county and year levels. The mean of the dependent variable is reported for reference. Significance levels: + p<0.10, * p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001.

CONCLUSIONS

In prior research, we estimated the causal effects of foster care cost-recovery child support orders on children’s foster care trajectories, finding that cost-recovery orders (to either

the mother or father) lead to longer stays in foster care, decrease the likelihood of reunification, and increase the likelihood of TPR (Berger et al., 2024). We also found that cost-recovery arrears, particularly to mothers, lead to an increased probability that children will re-enter foster care (Berger et al., 2025).

There are multiple pathways through which cost-recovery orders might impact children's foster care trajectories. First, cost-recovery orders may directly impact mothers' economic resources by depleting the income that might otherwise support reunification. For example, for mothers who are trying to maintain secure housing and afford utility and bill payments and reliable transportation, additional cost-recovery order payments might increase economic precarity. Over time, this could lead to falling behind on rent or utility payments, which may compromise a mother's ability to reunify.⁴ Second, cost-recovery orders may discourage engagement with the formal labor market and thereby reduce income and undercut one's chances for reunification. Child support orders typically result in deductions from a mother's (formal) earnings, directly reducing the incentive to work in the formal labor market. Further, if county agencies base cost-recovery amounts on mother's earned income, mothers might be disincentivized from earning and might therefore reduce work on the extensive or intensive margins, resulting in a reduction of hours worked or labor market exit. Subsequently, mothers might be less able to make payments for housing and transportation, which are critical for reunification. Finally, cost-recovery orders may influence families' engagement with the child welfare system or the child support system—e.g., by increasing perceptions that either or both

⁴Additionally, though not directly related to cost-recovery orders, mothers who rely on public benefits for income may lose eligibility or experience benefit reductions when children are removed from their household, further compromising their economic stability.

programs are punitive rather than supportive. In these ways and others, such orders may increase parents' psychological distress.

In this paper, we address the first hypothesis and evaluate whether changes in mothers' economic resources operate as mechanisms linking foster care cost-recovery orders to decreased family reunification and increased TPR. We begin by documenting custodial parents' income sources and highlighting the role of child support. We examine how economic resources vary with child removal and placement into OHC, comparing sources and levels of income before, during, and after OHC, and differences therein between mothers with and without mother-to-government and father-to-government cost-recovery orders. We document the importance of child support income for mothers with children in OHC. Namely, 58.3% of mothers had one or more types of child support orders in place during OHC. Child support order payments made during OHC averaged \$125–\$179 for mother- and father-to-government cost recovery orders, or around 6.0% and 8.6% of mothers' pre-OHC income, respectively. Critically, the ordered amounts are considerably higher for cost-recovery orders, ranging from \$163–\$171 for mother-to-government and \$252–\$261 for father-to-government cost recovery orders. Literature from psychology finds such differences between the orders and payments can be a significant cause of psychological distress.

Finally, we examine the relationship between changes in economic resources and the timing and probability of reunification and TPR. We find that cost-recovery orders, which generally reduce the resources available to mothers during OHC (directly in the case of mother-to-government orders, which mothers must pay from their earnings or cash benefits, and indirectly in the case of father-to-government orders, which reduce the resources the father would have been required to pay to the mother), are associated with reduced rates of

reunification, whereas father-to-mother child support orders, which increase the resources available to custodial families, increase reunification. We find no discernible relation between child support orders and the probability of TPR, except for a slightly increased probability of TPR within 48 and 60 months for those with mother-to-government orders. We also find that declines in total income (including child support, earnings, and benefits) are associated with slower reunification, while increases in total income are associated with faster reunification. However, critically, we do not find that these changes in income account for much of the relation between child support orders and reunification. Even when controlling for changes in income, child support cost-recovery orders are strongly associated with slower reunification, and father-to-mother orders with faster reunification. Thus, the direct economic impact of child support paid and received does not appear to explain the relation between cost recovery orders and reunification.

Our results should be considered in the context of three primary study limitations: (1) our analyses are descriptive, rather than causal in nature; (2) the WADC does not include the full range of earnings (i.e., only earnings reported to the UI system are included) and benefits that mothers may receive; and (3) we are unable to observe tax intercepts (e.g., of the CTC or EITC) for parents who owe arrears. With these caveats in mind, our results highlight the importance of additional research and policy initiatives focusing on alternative pathways (other than the direct economic impact of child support paid and received) through which cost-recovery orders may affect children's foster care trajectories. As noted above, cost-recovery orders may influence families' engagement with the child support and child welfare systems, in addition to increasing parents' stress. The potential for cost-recovery orders to be counterproductive contributes to growing calls to phase out the practice (Cancian and Doar, 2024; Chesnik, 2026).

REFERENCES

- Berger, L. M., Cancian, M., Kim, H., Ko, A., & Pac, J. (2024). Child Support and Child Welfare System Interactions. *Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin*.
- Berger, L. M., Cancian, M., Kim, H., Ko, A., & Pac, J. (2025). Child Support and Child Welfare System Interactions: Evaluating the Effect of Cost-Recovery Arrears on the Stability of Reunification. *Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin*.
- Cancian, M, and Doar, R. (2024). Child Support Policy: Areas of Emerging Agreement and Ongoing Debate. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, Policy Insights*. 43(3): 938–942. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pam.22590>
- Chesnik, C. (2026). Testimony to Work & Welfare Subcommittee Hearing on Strengthening the Child Support Enforcement Program: Status, Challenges, and Opportunities for Modernization. January 21, 2026. Available at: <https://waysandmeans.house.gov/event/work-welfare-subcommittee-hearing-on-strengthening-the-child-support-enforcement-program-status-challenges-and-opportunities-for-modernization/>

APPENDIX

Table A1: Summary Statistics

	Full sample		Reunified within 60 months		Not reunified within 60 months		No order during OHC		Mother-to-government cost recovery order		Father-to-government cost recovery order		Father-to-mother order	
	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
Number of mothers	19,048	19,048	10,594	10,594	8,454	8,454	7,934	7,934	5,308	5,308	7,360	7,360	7417	7417
Percent of mothers	100%	100%	55.6%	55.6%	44.4%	44.4%	41.7%	41.7%	27.9%	27.9%	38.6%	38.6%	38.9%	38.9%
Mother is Non-Hispanic White	63.7%		66.2%		60.6%		58.7%		74.5%		69.3%		63.8%	
Mother is Non-Hispanic Black	21.6%		19.5%		24.2%		24.4%		11.7%		17.8%		23.4%	
Mother is Hispanic	10.0%		9.6%		10.5%		11.3%		8.9%		9.0%		9.6%	
Mother is Other race	4.4%		4.4%		4.4%		5.0%		4.9%		3.8%		3.2%	
Mother's age	32.35		32.92		31.63		32.49		31.72		32.04		32.21	
Oldest father's age	38.12		38.47		37.69		38.34		37.4		37.67		37.96	
Oldest child's age	11.57		11.97		11.07		11.34		11.07		11.45		11.97	
Number of children	3.48		3.43		3.54		3.36		3.44		3.54		3.69	
Number of fathers	2.01		1.96		2.06		1.84		2.06		2.12		2.25	
Whether youngest child is <1	33.6%		30.1%		37.9%		36.5%		35.4%		33.6%		29.6%	
County substantiation rate	5.96		6.04		5.86		5.96		5.81		5.94		6.03	
County unemployment rate	0.16		0.17		0.16		0.15		0.18		0.17		0.16	
Mother's total income														
For the 12 months before OHC	\$2,585	\$2,078	\$2,871	\$2,263	\$2,225	\$1,864	\$2,261	\$1,699	\$2,618	\$2,014	\$2,699	\$2,237	\$3,100	\$2,560
During OHC	\$1,474	\$1,004	\$1,809	\$1,296	\$1,054	\$708	\$1,403	\$892	\$1,275	\$863	\$1,357	\$976	\$1,718	\$1,254
For the 12 months after reunification, conditional on reunification	\$1,356	\$0	\$1,505	\$0	\$1,170	\$0	\$1,259	\$0	\$1,448	\$95	\$1,404	\$80	\$1,502	\$193
Mother's total income excluding child support														
For the 12 months before OHC	\$1,255	\$998	\$1,394	\$1,086	\$1,081	\$897	\$1,121	\$842	\$1,266	\$950	\$1,293	\$1,064	\$1,473	\$1,204
During OHC	\$1,441	\$979	\$1,758	\$1,255	\$1,044	\$699	\$1,387	\$877	\$1,316	\$890	\$1,341	\$969	\$1,629	\$1,194
For the 12 months after reunification, conditional on reunification	\$675	\$0	\$744	\$0	\$587	\$0	\$628	\$0	\$732	\$49	\$699	\$23	\$738	\$58

Notes: The analytic sample consists of Wisconsin mothers all of whose co-resident children (under age 18) first entered out-of-home care (OHC) from July 2008 and June 2020. Mothers' OHC episodes begin in the month when the last co-resident child is placed in OHC and are followed until all children achieve permanency or for three to five years. The final sample includes 19,048 mothers, after excluding cases with missing identifiers, incomplete linkage information, child deaths or missing episodes, or OHC spells shorter than 30 days. Descriptive statistics report means (medians for income measures) at the mother level.

Table A2: Child Support Orders Before, During, and After OHC Placement – Column Percentages for Full Sample

	Any order		Mother-to-govt cost-recovery order during OHC		Father-to-government cost-recovery order during OHC		Father-to-mother order during OHC	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	No order	With order	Without	With	Without	With	Without	With
Number of mothers	7,934	11,114	13,740	5,308	11,688	7,360	11,631	7,417
Percent of mothers	41.75%	58.3%	72.1%	27.9%	61.46%	38.6%	61.1%	38.9%
Panel A: Mother-to-government cost-recovery order								
For the 12 months before OHC	0.13%	2.02%	0.12%	4.11%	0.79%	1.94%	1.30%	1.13%
During OHC	0.00%	47.76%	0.00%	100.00%	10.99%	54.66%	23.95%	34.00%
For the 12 months after ‘any’ reunification, conditional on reunification	2.63%	12.38%	3.11%	23.36%	5.05%	13.97%	6.91%	9.89%
Average amount for the 12 months before OHC	\$0.05	\$2.69	\$0.08	\$5.49	\$0.94	\$2.62	\$1.67	\$1.46
Average amount during any month of OHC	\$0.00	\$80.33	\$0.00	\$168.20	\$17.43	\$93.62	\$41.33	\$55.55
Average amount for the 12 months after reunification, conditional on reunification	\$2.47	\$13.05	\$2.66	\$25.95	\$4.88	\$15.21	\$6.89	\$10.68
Average amount (If positive) for the 12 months before OHC	\$42.38	\$132.64	\$67.60	\$133.57	\$119.73	\$134.63	\$128.82	\$128.77
Average amount (If positive) during any month of OHC	\$0.00	\$168.20	\$0.00	\$168.20	\$158.55	\$171.28	\$172.56	\$163.38
Average amount (If positive) for the 12 months after reunification, conditional on reunification	\$93.97	\$105.39	\$85.71	\$111.11	\$96.53	\$108.81	\$99.79	\$107.97
Panel B: Father-to-government cost-recovery order								
For the 12 months before OHC	0.11%	3.26%	1.22%	3.84%	0.32%	4.54%	1.47%	2.70%
During OHC	0.00%	66.22%	24.29%	75.79%	0.00%	100.00%	22.03%	64.69%
For the 12 months after reunification, conditional on reunification	2.61%	17.53%	8.79%	17.62%	4.27%	23.92%	6.14%	18.29%
Average amount for the 12 months before OHC	\$0.13	\$5.29	\$1.90	\$6.34	\$0.28	\$7.68	\$2.65	\$3.92
Average amount during any month of OHC	\$0.00	\$162.64	\$55.20	\$197.65	\$0.00	\$245.60	\$51.26	\$163.33
Average amount for the 12 months after reunification, conditional on reunification	\$2.80	\$25.76	\$12.56	\$25.13	\$5.42	\$35.46	\$8.32	\$26.81
Average amount (If positive) for the 12 months before OHC	\$113.12	\$162.47	\$156.69	\$165.03	\$89.36	\$169.24	\$179.94	\$145.32
Average amount (If positive) during any month of OHC	\$0.00	\$245.60	\$227.29	\$260.79	\$0.00	\$245.60	\$232.72	\$252.48
Average amount (If positive) for the 12 months after reunification, conditional on reunification	\$107.53	\$146.96	\$142.98	\$142.59	\$127.05	\$148.27	\$135.47	\$146.59
Panel C: Father-to-mother child support order								
For the 12 months before OHC	3.84%	60.86%	34.69%	43.39%	23.11%	59.35%	5.76%	86.27%
During OHC	0.00%	66.74%	35.63%	47.51%	22.41%	65.19%	0.00%	100.00%
For the 12 months after reunification, conditional on reunification	7.91%	63.57%	36.54%	46.83%	26.90%	62.63%	9.73%	83.72%
Average amount for the 12 months before OHC	\$8.64	\$260.80	\$138.95	\$199.30	\$88.21	\$263.06	\$13.65	\$378.64
Average amount during any month of OHC	\$0.00	\$193.24	\$126.34	\$77.56	\$105.37	\$124.47	\$0.00	\$289.56
Average amount for the 12 months after reunification, conditional on reunification	\$21.83	\$269.92	\$149.42	\$195.36	\$102.80	\$272.85	\$26.45	\$365.07
Average amount (If positive) for the 12 months before OHC	\$224.68	\$428.53	\$400.59	\$459.35	\$381.71	\$443.25	\$236.91	\$438.88
Average amount (If positive) during any month of OHC	\$0.00	\$289.56	\$354.64	\$163.24	\$470.22	\$190.94	\$0.00	\$289.56

	Any order		Mother-to-govt cost-recovery order during OHC		Father-to-government cost-recovery order during OHC		Father-to-mother order during OHC	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	No order	With order	Without	With	Without	With	Without	With
Average amount (If positive) for the 12 months after reunification, conditional on reunification Observed period: 2008/7-2020/6	\$275.96	\$424.60	\$408.92	\$417.19	\$382.18	\$435.62	\$271.84	\$436.03
Any/All child removed	All	All	All	All	All	All	All	All
Closecase restriction	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Age restriction	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18
Unidentified fathers restriction	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
County identifier restriction	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Notes: This table reports column percentages and average monthly child support order amounts for the full sample of mothers whose children experienced an out-of-home care (OHC) episode. Columns are defined by whether the mother had a given type of child support order during OHC (“With”) or did not (“Without”). Panel A reports mother-to-government cost-recovery orders, Panel B reports father-to-government cost-recovery orders, and Panel C reports father-to-mother child support orders. Rows describe the timing of orders and payments relative to the OHC episode: the 12 months before OHC, during OHC, and the 12 months after reunification (conditional on reunification). Percentages indicate the share of mothers in each column-defined group with a positive order or payment during the specified period. Average amounts represent mean monthly dollar values. Rows labeled “average amount” are calculated across all mothers and months in the subgroup, including months with zero payments. Rows labeled “average amount (if positive)” restrict the calculation to mothers and months with positive payment amounts and therefore reflect conditional means among active payers or recipients. Rows labeled “conditional on reunification” restrict the sample to mothers whose children were reunified following the OHC episode; rows without this qualifier include all mothers in the column-defined group regardless of reunification outcomes. The analytic sample includes 19,048 mothers whose children (under age 18) experienced an out-of-home care (OHC) episode lasting at least 30 days. All specifications apply consistent restrictions: all co-resident children removed, closed OHC cases, exclusion of cases with unidentified fathers, and valid county identifiers.

Table A3: Child Support Payments Before, During, and After OHC Placement -- Column Percentages for Full Sample

	Any order		Mother-to-govt cost-recovery order during OHC		Father-to-government cost-recovery order during OHC		Father-to-mother order during OHC	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	No order	With order	Without	With	Without	With	Without	With
Number of mothers	7,934	11,114	13,740	5,308	11,688	7,360	11,631	7,417
Percent of mothers	41.75%	58.3%	72.1%	27.9%	61.46%	38.6%	61.1%	38.9%
Panel A: Mother-to-government cost-recovery payment								
For the 12 months before OHC	0.50%	13.98%	0.52%	28.69%	3.76%	15.68%	7.43%	9.84%
During OHC	1.02%	41.11%	1.36%	84.08%	9.91%	47.45%	20.63%	30.35%
For the 12 months after 'any' reunification, conditional on reunification	2.91%	40.43%	3.33%	86.96%	11.04%	48.83%	19.88%	30.06%
Average amount for the 12 months before OHC	\$0.05	\$1.92	\$0.11	\$3.81	\$0.57	\$2.05	\$1.34	\$0.83
Average amount during any month of OHC	\$0.23	\$50.34	\$0.22	\$105.17	\$11.33	\$58.28	\$25.94	\$35.00
Average amount for the 12 months after reunification, conditional on reunification	\$1.72	\$24.13	\$1.90	\$52.17	\$6.36	\$29.58	\$11.41	\$18.61
Average amount (If positive) for the 12 months before OHC	\$10.39	\$13.71	\$21.18	\$13.27	\$15.11	\$13.06	\$17.98	\$8.47
Average amount (If positive) during any month of OHC	\$22.48	\$122.45	\$16.23	\$125.09	\$114.33	\$122.83	\$125.76	\$115.32
Average amount (If positive) for the 12 months after reunification, conditional on reunification	\$59.33	\$59.68	\$56.87	\$59.99	\$57.56	\$60.58	\$57.41	\$61.92
Panel B: Father-to-government cost-recovery payment								
For the 12 months before OHC	0.54%	27.76%	10.44%	31.91%	1.02%	40.88%	7.96%	29.69%
During OHC	1.11%	56.21%	20.17%	67.13%	1.96%	82.96%	19.70%	54.52%
For the 12 months after reunification, conditional on reunification	2.97%	51.67%	19.63%	62.73%	4.51%	80.03%	17.59%	49.49%
Average amount for the 12 months before OHC	\$0.14	\$3.51	\$1.12	\$4.66	\$0.41	\$4.80	\$1.31	\$3.36
Average amount during any month of OHC	\$0.32	\$99.05	\$33.31	\$121.63	\$0.66	\$148.86	\$34.76	\$94.25
Average amount for the 12 months after reunification, conditional on reunification	\$1.97	\$28.15	\$10.66	\$34.91	\$3.49	\$42.06	\$11.93	\$23.77
Average amount (If positive) for the 12 months before OHC	\$25.82	\$12.64	\$10.72	\$14.60	\$40.28	\$11.74	\$16.40	\$11.32
Average amount (If positive) during any month of OHC	\$28.42	\$176.22	\$165.13	\$181.20	\$33.93	\$179.43	\$176.49	\$172.85
Average amount (If positive) for the 12 months after reunification, conditional on reunification	\$66.31	\$54.48	\$54.29	\$55.66	\$77.35	\$52.55	\$67.84	\$48.04
Panel C: Father to Mother child support payment								
For the 12 months before OHC	9.96%	59.04%	35.70%	46.10%	24.98%	60.22%	12.60%	79.37%
During OHC	9.34%	62.95%	36.67%	50.83%	25.10%	65.26%	12.77%	84.29%
For the 12 months after reunification, conditional on reunification	14.96%	66.09%	40.85%	51.99%	31.15%	67.66%	17.45%	83.37%
Average amount for the 12 months before OHC	\$15.35	\$199.84	\$111.32	\$153.23	\$68.68	\$209.25	\$21.59	\$282.03
Average amount during any month of OHC	\$14.20	\$156.75	\$106.31	\$74.26	\$80.91	\$123.53	\$14.97	\$226.60
Average amount for the 12 months after reunification, conditional on reunification	\$26.83	\$200.96	\$120.19	\$136.98	\$81.90	\$206.44	\$31.15	\$266.10
Average amount (If positive) for the 12 months before OHC	\$154.18	\$338.48	\$311.83	\$332.38	\$274.92	\$347.50	\$171.40	\$355.32

	Any order		Mother-to-govt cost-recovery order during OHC		Father-to-government cost-recovery order during OHC		Father-to-mother order during OHC	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	No order	With order	Without	With	Without	With	Without	With
Average amount (If positive) during any month of OHC	\$152.04	\$249.02	\$289.87	\$146.10	\$322.30	\$189.29	\$117.24	\$268.83
Average amount (If positive) for the 12 months after reunification, conditional on reunification	\$179.31	\$304.08	\$294.26	\$263.49	\$262.91	\$305.11	\$178.58	\$319.19
Panel D: Net child support received or paid by mother								
For the 12 months before OHC	13.06%	61.20%	35.60%	55.52%	28.25%	61.63%	19.32%	75.38%
During OHC	9.74%	70.17%	32.01%	78.64%	28.67%	70.94%	24.61%	76.99%
For the 12 months after 'any' reunification, conditional on reunification	6.16%	35.69%	16.47%	41.74%	15.64%	36.34%	13.08%	37.32%
Average amount for the 12 months before OHC	\$19.66	\$112.07	\$68.56	\$86.59	\$48.70	\$113.09	\$22.02	\$154.43
Average amount during any month of OHC	\$16.35	\$44.19	\$60.76	-\$40.31	\$42.84	\$16.31	-\$3.41	\$89.04
Average amount for the 12 months after reunification, conditional on reunification	\$4.29	\$26.13	\$21.50	\$1.24	\$13.16	\$23.02	\$0.56	\$40.80
Average amount (If positive) for the 12 months before OHC	\$150.56	\$183.12	\$192.59	\$155.95	\$172.38	\$183.50	\$114.00	\$204.87
Average amount (If positive) during any month of OHC	\$167.79	\$62.97	\$189.81	-\$51.27	\$149.44	\$22.99	-\$13.84	\$115.66
Average amount (If positive) for the 12 months after reunification, conditional on reunification	\$69.64	\$73.21	\$130.53	\$2.98	\$84.13	\$63.33	\$4.27	\$109.32
Observed period: 2008/7-2020/6								
Any/All child removed	All	All	All	All	All	All	All	All
Closecase restriction	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Age restriction	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18
Unidentified father's restriction	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
County identifier restriction	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Notes: This table reports column percentages and average monthly child support payment amounts for the full sample of mothers whose children experienced an out-of-home care (OHC) episode. Columns are defined by whether the mother had a given type of child support order during OHC (“With”) or did not (“Without”). Panel A reports mother-to-government cost-recovery orders, Panel B reports father-to-government cost-recovery orders, and Panel C reports father-to-mother child support orders. Rows describe the timing of orders and payments relative to the OHC episode: the 12 months before OHC, during OHC, and the 12 months after reunification (conditional on reunification). Percentages indicate the share of mothers in each column-defined group with a positive order or payment during the specified period. Average amounts represent mean monthly dollar values. Rows labeled “average amount” are calculated across all mothers and months in the subgroup, including months with zero payments. Rows labeled “average amount (if positive)” restrict the calculation to mothers and months with positive payment amounts and therefore reflect conditional means among active payers or recipients. Rows labeled “conditional on reunification” restrict the sample to mothers whose children were reunified following the OHC episode; rows without this qualifier include all mothers in the column-defined group regardless of reunification outcomes. The analytic sample includes 19,048 mothers whose children (under age 18) experienced an out-of-home care (OHC) episode lasting at least 30 days. All specifications apply consistent restrictions: all co-resident children removed, closed OHC cases, exclusion of cases with unidentified fathers, and valid county identifiers.

Table A4: Change in Mother’s Economic Resources by Child Support Order Types of Full Sample

	Full sample		No order		Mother-to-government cost-recovery order		Father-to-government cost-recovery order		Father-to-mother	
	Any (%) (1)	Mean (\$) (2)	Any (%) (3)	Mean (\$) (4)	Any (%) (5)	Mean (\$) (6)	Any (%) (7)	Mean (\$) (8)	Any (%) (9)	Mean (\$) (10)
Number of mothers	19,048	19,048	7,934	7,934	5,308	5,308	7,360	7,360	7,417	7,417
Percent of mothers	100.0%	100.0%	41.7%	41.7%	27.9%	27.9%	38.6%	38.6%	38.9%	38.9%
Panel A. Change Pre-During										
Mother’s total cash income										
No change (including zero in both period)	7.11	\$0.00	13.21	\$0.00	2.20	\$0.00	3.07	\$0.00	0.51	\$0.00
Decrease (Pre > During)	76.22	-\$1,603.30	67.62	-\$1,461.05	83.48	-\$1,703.45	84.09	-\$1,692.22	85.26	-\$1,740.81
Increase (During > Pre)	16.67	\$665.56	19.17	\$680.21	14.32	\$553.10	12.84	\$632.30	14.22	\$723.25
Mother’s total cash income (minus Net child support)										
No change (including zero in both period)	8.72	\$0.00	13.74	\$0.00	5.50	\$0.00	5.15	\$0.00	2.25	\$0.00
Decrease (Pre > During)	40.21	-\$549.11	34.16	-\$524.15	45.93	-\$552.38	46.98	-\$562.16	46.06	-\$579.08
Increase (During > Pre)	51.07	\$795.46	52.10	\$854.78	48.57	\$624.99	47.87	\$651.54	51.69	\$818.94
Mother’s wage										
No change (including zero in both period)	30.79	\$0.00	39.78	\$0.00	17.65	\$0.00	24.52	\$0.00	22.62	\$0.00
Decrease (Pre > During)	26.18	-\$566.70	23.47	-\$555.20	28.88	-\$573.44	27.80	-\$575.96	28.81	-\$590.96
Increase (During > Pre)	43.03	\$794.34	36.75	\$909.17	53.47	\$629.11	47.68	\$640.72	48.56	\$780.05
Mother’s W2/TANF										
No change (including zero in both period)	79.82	\$0.00	82.43	\$0.00	79.50	\$0.00	77.96	\$0.00	75.11	\$0.00
Decrease (Pre > During)	13.11	-\$266.62	10.81	-\$256.02	13.06	-\$243.36	14.73	-\$281.53	16.75	-\$280.07
Increase (During > Pre)	7.07	\$235.25	6.76	\$293.08	7.44	\$133.92	7.31	\$161.45	8.14	\$207.61
Mother’s Foodshare/SNAP										
No change (including zero in both period)	22.05	\$0.00	29.06	\$0.00	17.90	\$0.00	16.51	\$0.00	12.71	\$0.00
Decrease (Pre > During)	46.05	-\$268.21	35.76	-\$235.94	55.76	-\$292.43	56.55	-\$295.00	56.56	-\$291.25
Increase (During > Pre)	31.90	\$247.05	35.18	\$263.68	26.34	\$160.96	26.94	\$188.03	30.73	\$264.93
Mother’s Unemployment Insurance (UI)										
No change (including zero in both period)	85.75	\$0.00	89.51	\$0.00	80.99	\$0.00	83.26	\$0.00	81.81	\$0.00
Decrease (Pre > During)	6.71	-\$350.34	5.17	-\$338.82	8.16	-\$355.44	7.51	-\$371.67	8.47	-\$360.14
Increase (During > Pre)	7.53	\$492.36	5.32	\$598.23	10.85	\$379.84	9.23	\$419.77	9.72	\$477.30
Mother’s Social Security Income (SSI)										
No change (including zero in both period)	88.75	\$0.00	87.19	\$0.00	95.93	\$0.00	88.42	\$0.00	89.32	\$0.00
Decrease (Pre > During)	3.18	-\$235.30	3.38	-\$238.40	1.21	-\$293.90	3.68	-\$222.21	3.18	-\$235.89
Increase (During > Pre)	8.07	\$276.59	9.43	\$323.46	2.86	\$191.80	7.89	\$219.82	7.50	\$235.54
Mother’s Social Security Disability Income (SSDI)										
No change (including zero in both period)	92.26	\$0.00	92.15	\$0.00	95.59	\$0.00	91.97	\$0.00	91.72	\$0.00
Decrease (Pre > During)	1.01	-\$172.87	0.79	-\$181.58	1.28	-\$144.42	1.41	-\$138.90	1.31	-\$167.71
Increase (During > Pre)	6.73	\$420.93	7.06	\$378.09	3.13	\$295.77	6.62	\$456.37	6.97	\$538.30
Mother’s child support received										

	Full sample		No order		Mother-to-government cost-recovery order		Father-to-government cost-recovery order		Father-to-mother	
	Any (%)	Mean (\$)	Any (%)	Mean (\$)	Any (%)	Mean (\$)	Any (%)	Mean (\$)	Any (%)	Mean (\$)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
No change (including no receipt in both periods)	58.53	\$0.00	86.87	\$0.00	51.13	\$0.00	37.02	\$0.00	17.78	\$0.00
Decrease (Pre > During)	26.22	-\$134.74	8.05	-\$111.63	35.78	-\$153.95	44.77	-\$145.08	51.54	-\$139.96
Increase (During > Pre)	15.25	\$111.83	5.08	\$116.61	13.09	\$69.85	18.21	\$72.78	30.67	\$113.96
Mother's child support paid										
No change (including no receipt in both periods)	71.10	\$0.00	91.86	\$0.00	18.82	\$0.00	50.83	\$0.00	65.75	\$0.00
Decrease (Pre > During)	3.95	-\$145.22	3.18	-\$147.98	6.03	-\$158.37	4.33	-\$149.16	3.37	-\$123.41
Increase (During > Pre)	24.95	\$160.78	4.97	\$185.75	75.15	\$161.72	44.84	\$154.50	30.88	\$149.63
Mother's Net child support										
No change (including no receipt in both periods)	49.34	\$0.00	86.00	\$0.00	19.80	\$0.00	22.45	\$0.00	14.04	\$0.00
Decrease (Pre > During)	36.56	-\$158.06	8.51	-\$113.42	71.95	-\$186.61	62.57	-\$174.14	58.46	-\$169.24
Increase (During > Pre)	14.10	\$119.17	5.50	\$115.33	8.25	\$89.20	14.99	\$81.22	27.50	\$121.98
Panel B. Change Pre-Post										
Mother's total cash income										
No change (including zero in both period)	7.68	\$0.00	13.02	\$0.00	4.20	\$0.00	4.25	\$0.00	0.88	\$0.00
Decrease (Pre > Post)	67.05	-\$2,362.55	60.93	-\$2,230.92	69.08	-\$2,312.51	70.65	-\$2,343.34	74.61	-\$2,598.49
Increase (Post > Pre)	25.27	\$1,408.41	26.05	\$1,373.56	26.71	\$1,600.37	25.10	\$1,439.19	24.51	\$1,393.21
Mother's total cash income (minus Net child support)										
No change (including zero in both period)	9.23	\$0.00	13.71	\$0.00	6.95	\$0.00	6.15	\$0.00	2.80	\$0.00
Decrease (Pre > Post)	65.12	-\$1,171.09	60.36	-\$1,112.00	65.45	-\$1,158.83	67.88	-\$1,152.18	71.77	-\$1,269.99
Increase (Post > Pre)	25.65	\$708.37	25.93	\$690.18	27.60	\$812.62	25.96	\$724.91	25.43	\$697.06
Mother's wage										
No change (including zero in both period)	34.85	\$0.00	41.95	\$0.00	24.89	\$0.00	31.20	\$0.00	27.44	\$0.00
Decrease (Pre > Post)	42.76	-\$1,087.29	37.91	-\$1,068.28	47.53	-\$1,064.22	44.18	-\$1,033.28	48.05	-\$1,148.49
Increase (Post > Pre)	22.39	\$753.27	20.14	\$727.19	27.58	\$839.32	24.62	\$775.28	24.51	\$747.06
Mother's W2/TANF										
No change (including zero in both period)	80.34	\$0.00	82.32	\$0.00	80.95	\$0.00	79.17	\$0.00	76.12	\$0.00
Decrease (Pre > Post)	14.88	-\$284.63	13.06	-\$278.14	14.09	-\$242.46	16.03	-\$293.97	18.11	-\$300.04
Increase (Post > Pre)	4.78	\$248.92	4.63	\$272.26	4.95	\$220.04	4.80	\$234.02	5.77	\$230.68
Mother's Foodshare/SNAP										
No change (including zero in both period)	23.22	\$0.00	29.49	\$0.00	20.70	\$0.00	18.38	\$0.00	13.97	\$0.00
Decrease (Pre > Post)	59.40	-\$393.84	52.07	-\$364.86	62.51	-\$397.57	65.16	-\$411.82	69.29	-\$429.46
Increase (Post > Pre)	17.38	\$195.02	18.44	\$201.20	16.79	\$208.07	16.45	\$191.12	16.75	\$183.49
Mother's Unemployment Insurance (UI)										
No change (including zero in both period)	87.68	\$0.00	90.03	\$0.00	85.44	\$0.00	86.82	\$0.00	84.86	\$0.00
Decrease (Pre > Post)	8.35	-\$421.05	6.55	-\$407.88	9.61	-\$434.84	9.06	-\$432.19	10.56	-\$430.45
Increase (Post > Pre)	3.97	\$518.76	3.42	\$519.06	4.95	\$515.93	4.12	\$495.26	4.58	\$512.55

	Full sample		No order		Mother-to-government cost-recovery order		Father-to-government cost-recovery order		Father-to-mother	
	Any (%) (1)	Mean (\$) (2)	Any (%) (3)	Mean (\$) (4)	Any (%) (5)	Mean (\$) (6)	Any (%) (7)	Mean (\$) (8)	Any (%) (9)	Mean (\$) (10)
Mother's Social Security Income (SSI)										
No change (including zero in both period)	89.33	\$0.00	87.52	\$0.00	96.48	\$0.00	89.46	\$0.00	90.08	\$0.00
Decrease (Pre > Post)	7.59	-\$497.49	9.06	-\$511.55	2.03	-\$397.25	7.39	-\$487.52	6.77	-\$479.51
Increase (Post > Pre)	3.09	\$307.82	3.42	\$301.36	1.49	\$425.44	3.15	\$342.94	3.15	\$297.81
Mother's Social Security Disability Income (SSDI)										
No change (including zero in both periods)	92.48	\$0.00	91.97	\$0.00	96.08	\$0.00	92.72	\$0.00	92.30	\$0.00
Decrease (Pre > Post)	4.60	-\$517.22	4.89	-\$490.46	2.41	-\$508.15	4.59	-\$517.37	4.79	-\$560.33
Increase (Post > Pre)	2.92	\$425.82	3.14	\$380.17	1.51	\$482.75	2.69	\$459.79	2.91	\$488.79
Mother's child support received										
No change (including no receipt in both periods)	58.76	\$0.00	85.37	.	51.90	\$0.00	38.76	\$0.00	20.71	\$0.00
Decrease (Pre > Post)	33.25	-\$194.43	11.55	-\$169.07	38.51	-\$205.34	49.81	-\$197.96	64.42	-\$202.90
Increase (Post > Pre)	7.99	\$101.68	3.09	\$99.42	9.59	\$113.67	11.43	\$107.92	14.87	\$101.80
Mother's child support paid										
No change (including no receipt in both periods)	78.58	\$0.00	91.13	\$0.00	47.42	\$0.00	66.83	\$0.00	76.26	\$0.00
Decrease (Pre > Post)	6.98	-\$215.93	5.33	-\$205.63	12.26	-\$241.71	7.85	-\$228.65	5.76	-\$191.42
Increase (Post > Pre)	14.44	\$143.08	3.54	\$121.21	40.32	\$148.39	25.31	\$149.96	17.99	\$146.45
Mother's Net child support										
No change (including no receipt in both periods)	52.50	\$0.00	83.60	\$0.00	32.69	\$0.00	29.55	\$0.00	18.11	\$0.00
Decrease (Pre > Post)	39.28	-\$191.15	12.53	-\$165.99	58.14	-\$194.90	59.76	-\$199.19	68.07	-\$210.52
Increase (Post > Pre)	8.22	\$106.04	3.87	\$101.64	9.17	\$126.11	10.69	\$115.49	13.82	\$104.14

Notes: This table summarizes changes in mothers' economic resources before, during, and after an out-of-home care (OHC) episode for the full analytic sample (N = 19,048). Columns group mothers by the type of child support order during OHC: no order during OHC, father-to-mother order, father-to-government cost-recovery order, and mother-to-government cost-recovery order. For each outcome, the "Any (%)" column reports the share of mothers in that group experiencing a given change category, and the "Mean (\$)" column reports the mean monthly dollar change (comparison period minus pre period) among mothers in that category. Panel A reports changes from the 12 months before OHC (Pre) to during OHC (During); Panel B reports changes from the 12 months before OHC (Pre) to the 12 months after reunification (Post), conditional on reunification. For each resource measure, "No change" includes mothers with no receipt in either period as well as those with positive receipt in both periods. "Decrease" indicates the outcome is lower in the comparison period than in the pre period; "Increase" indicates the outcome is higher in the comparison period than in the pre period. Dollar values are expressed in monthly amounts; negative values indicate declines (or net outflows, where applicable). The analytic sample includes mothers whose co-resident children (under age 18) experienced an OHC episode lasting at least 30 days; all specifications apply consistent restrictions: all co-resident children removed, closed OHC cases, exclusion of cases with unidentified fathers, and valid county identifiers.

Table A5: Effects of Child Support Order on Change in Mother's Economic Resources

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Panel A. Change in mother's cash income			
Any mother-to-government cost-recovery order	-210.485** (49.470)	-180.508** (57.288)	-241.387** (58.827)
Any father-to-government cost-recovery order	-193.669*** (37.116)	-288.757** (72.437)	-92.697+ (47.604)
Any father-to-mother child support order	-230.119*** (26.972)		
Observations	19,048	7,417	11,631
Mean of Dependent Variables	-857.569	-857.569	-857.569
Panel B. Change in mother's cash income excluding child support			
Any mother-to-government cost-recovery order	-153.370*** (34.584)	-139.898** (37.670)	-160.514** (42.388)
Any father-to-government cost-recovery order	-197.505*** (28.361)	-259.787** (64.091)	-139.490*** (22.033)
Any father-to-mother child support order	33.210* (15.233)		
Observations	19,048	7,417	11,631
Mean of Dependent Variables	266.351	266.351	266.351
Panel C. Change in mother's wage			
Any mother-to-government cost-recovery order	-20.935 (24.908)	-11.622 (28.203)	-29.161 (32.022)
Any father-to-government cost-recovery order	-109.059*** (21.896)	-145.022** (41.200)	-71.166** (21.365)
Any father-to-mother child support order	48.358* (16.112)		
Observations	19,048	7,417	11,631
Mean of Dependent Variables	203.853	203.853	203.853
Panel D. Change in mother's W2/TANF			
Any mother-to-government cost-recovery order	-5.773 (4.631)	0.042 (6.128)	-9.968+ (4.907)
Any father-to-government cost-recovery order	-15.555* (6.687)	-18.121** (5.270)	-12.612 (9.118)
Any father-to-mother child support order	-14.208*** (2.707)		
Observations	19,048	7,417	11,631
Mean of Dependent Variables	-7.887	-7.887	-7.887
Panel E. Change in mother's FoodShare/SNAP			
Any mother-to-government cost-recovery order	-82.494*** (11.078)	-84.587*** (14.251)	-80.781*** (8.951)
Any father-to-government cost-recovery order	-80.826*** (7.944)	-112.453*** (12.423)	-54.215*** (7.718)
Any father-to-mother child support order	-17.549 (9.982)		
Observations	19,048	7,417	11,631
Mean of Dependent Variables	8.389	8.389	8.389

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Panel F. Change in mother's UI			
Any mother-to-government cost-recovery order	-3.609 (6.170)	-3.870 (9.795)	-3.840 (6.063)
Any father-to-government cost-recovery order	-3.198 (3.015)	-6.080 (6.219)	-1.248 (5.883)
Any father-to-mother child support order	6.620+ (3.568)		
Observations	19,048	7,417	11,631
Mean of Dependent Variables	14.310	14.310	14.310
Panel G. Change in mother's SSI			
Any mother-to-government cost-recovery order	-14.804** (3.520)	-10.690+ (5.066)	-18.401** (4.478)
Any father-to-government cost-recovery order	0.524 (2.240)	-0.435 (3.675)	1.598 (3.707)
Any father-to-mother child support order	-4.828+ (2.385)		
Observations	19,048	7,417	11,631
Mean of Dependent Variables	22.442	22.442	22.442
Panel H. Change in mother's SSDI			
Any mother-to-government cost-recovery order	-25.755 (0.000)	-29.172 (0.000)	-18.364** (4.299)
Any father-to-government cost-recovery order	10.608 (0.000)	22.323 (0.000)	-1.848 (3.985)
Any father-to-mother child support order	14.818 (0.000)		
Observations	19,048	7,417	11,631
Mean of Dependent Variables	25.244	25.244	25.244
Panel I. Change in mother's child support receipt			
Any mother-to-government cost-recovery order	-17.619*** (2.744)	-38.130*** (4.933)	-2.722 (2.652)
Any father-to-government cost-recovery order	-41.839*** (3.592)	-79.030*** (11.403)	-10.455*** (2.127)
Any father-to-mother child support order	-9.675+ (4.803)		
Observations	19,048	7,417	11,631
Mean of Dependent Variables	-3.068	-3.068	-3.068
Panel J. Change in mother's child support payment			
Any mother-to-government cost-recovery order	105.230*** (5.488)	105.070*** (6.107)	104.534*** (7.235)
Any father-to-government cost-recovery order	-2.690 (3.095)	0.161 (3.209)	-5.007 (5.726)
Any father-to-mother child support order	2.209 (2.519)		
Observations	19,048	7,417	11,631
Mean of Dependent Variables	4.524	4.524	4.524

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Panel K. Change in mother's net child support			
Any mother-to-government cost-recovery order	-96.894*** (5.265)	-117.400*** (5.329)	-81.692*** (6.230)
Any father-to-government cost-recovery order	-44.162*** (3.705)	-82.226*** (11.285)	-12.356** (3.465)
Any father-to-mother child support order	-11.565* (5.126)		
Observations	19,048	7,417	11,631
Mean of Dependent Variables	-3.312	-3.312	-3.312
County fixed effects	X	X	X
Year fixed effects	X	X	X
Standard error clustered at county	X	X	X
Standard error clustered at year	X	X	X
Mother-level demographics	X	X	X
State-level demographics	X	X	X

Notes: This table reports regression estimates of the effects of child support orders on changes in mothers' economic resources, including cash income, wages, public benefits, and net child support (annual dollars). Indicators for mother-to-government cost-recovery orders, father-to-government cost-recovery orders, and father-to-mother child support orders are included jointly. Columns (1) report estimates for the full sample of mothers observed during out-of-home care (OHC). Column (2) restricts the sample to mothers who have an active father-to-mother child support order during OHC, while Column (3) restricts the sample to mothers without a father-to-mother child support order during OHC. As a result, the indicator for a father-to-mother child support order is omitted from Columns (2) and (3) because it is constant within these subsamples. All models include county and year fixed effects, mother-level and state-level covariates. Standard errors are two-way clustered at the county and year levels and reported in parentheses. Means of dependent variables are shown at the bottom. The analytic sample includes 19,048 mothers whose co-resident children (under age 18) experienced an OHC episode lasting at least 30 days; all specifications apply consistent restrictions: all co-resident children removed, closed OHC cases, exclusion of cases with unidentified fathers, and valid county identifiers. Significance levels: + p<0.10, * p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001.

Table A6: Distribution of Mothers' Income Changes Before, During, and After OHC Placement, by Child Support Order Type

	Full sample (1)	No order (2)	Mother-to- government cost- recovery order (3)	Father-to- government cost- recovery order (4)	Father-to-mother order (5)
Number of mothers	19,048	7,934	5,308	7,360	7,417
Percent of mothers	100.0%	41.7%	27.9%	38.6%	38.9%
Panel A: During OHC- Pre OHC income change					
No income either period	5.70	10.51	1.71	2.60	0.32
Income decrease > 50%	41.27	34.23	50.51	49.88	47.31
Income decrease 1-50%	34.05	33.10	30.50	32.93	37.56
-1% ~ +1 % Income change	5.25	6.72	5.82	4.17	2.13
Income increase 1~50%	7.07	7.57	5.07	5.26	7.42
Income increase > 50%	6.67	7.86	6.39	5.16	5.26
Panel B: Post OHC- Pre OHC income change					
No income either period	6.14	11.01	2.45	3.13	0.48
Income decrease > 50%	54.75	51.34	56.55	56.40	58.42
Income decrease 1-50%	14.68	13.06	14.62	15.80	16.74
-1% ~ +1 % Income change	1.03	1.21	0.91	0.86	0.93
Income increase 1~50%	11.12	11.15	10.31	11.01	11.94
Income increase > 50%	12.28	12.23	15.16	12.81	11.49

Notes: This table reports the distribution of proportional changes in mothers' total cash income before, during, and after an out-of-home care (OHC) episode. Columns classify mothers by the type of child support order during OHC: no order during OHC, father-to-mother order, father-to-government cost-recovery order, and mother-to-government cost-recovery order. Entries are column percentages and therefore sum to 100 within each column. Income changes are calculated as proportional changes relative to the pre-OHC period. "During OHC-Pre OHC income change" compares income during OHC to income in the 12 months prior to OHC; "Post OHC-Pre OHC income change" compares income in the 12 months after reunification to income in the 12 months prior to OHC, conditional on reunification. "No income either period" indicates zero income in both periods. Negative values indicate income declines and positive values indicate income increases, with categories defined by the magnitude of the proportional change. The analytic sample includes 19,048 mothers whose co-resident children (under age 18) experienced an OHC episode lasting at least 30 days; all specifications apply consistent restrictions: all co-resident children removed, closed OHC cases, exclusion of cases with unidentified fathers, and valid county identifiers.

Table A7: Descriptive Differences Between Mothers With and Without Child Support Orders During Out-of-Home Care

	No order (1)	Mother-to- government cost recovery order (2)	Difference (1)-(2)	Father-to- government cost-recovery order (3)	Difference (1)-(3)	Father-to- mother order (4)	Difference (1)-(4)
Mother is Non-Hispanic White	0.59	0.75	-0.16***	0.69	-0.11***	0.64	-0.05***
Mother is Non-Hispanic Black	0.25	0.12	0.13***	0.18	0.07***	0.23	0.01**
Mother is Hispanic	0.11	0.09	0.02***	0.09	0.02***	0.10	0.01**
Mother is Other race	0.05	0.05	0.00	0.04	0.01***	0.03	0.02***
Mother's age	32.48	31.72	0.76***	32.04	0.44***	32.21	0.28**
Oldest father's age	38.30	37.40	0.90***	37.67	0.63***	37.96	0.35**
Oldest child's age	11.38	11.07	0.31**	11.45	-0.07	11.97	-0.59***
Number of children	3.38	3.44	-0.05*	3.54	-0.16***	3.69	-0.30***
Number of fathers	1.86	2.06	-0.20***	2.12	-0.26***	2.25	-0.39***
Whether youngest child is <1	0.35	0.35	0.00	0.34	0.02**	0.30	0.06***
Highest father's income for the 12 months before OHC	1,848.96	1,768.94	80.02*	1,859.62	-10.66	1,811.02	37.94
Mother's total income							
For the 12 months before OHC	2,616.57	2,718.98	-102.41**	2,808.92	-192.35***	3,121.58	-505.02***
During OHC	1,596.94	1,305.51	291.43***	1,400.98	195.95***	1,729.25	-132.32***
For the 12 months after reunification, conditional on reunification	2,613.64	2,566.29	47.34	2,574.65	38.98	2,790.70	-177.07**
Mother's total income excluding child support							
For the 12 months before OHC	1,299.25	1,345.05	-45.80*	1,366.86	-67.61***	1,506.35	-207.10***
During OHC	1,586.52	1,391.32	195.20***	1,413.29	173.23***	1,664.03	-77.50**
For the 12 months after reunification, conditional on reunification	1,308.85	1,366.86	-58.01*	1,325.02	-16.17	1,396.49	-87.64**
County substantiation rate	5.97	5.81	0.16***	5.94	0.02	6.03	-0.06*
County unemployment rate	0.16	0.18	-0.02***	0.17	-0.01***	0.16	-0.01***

Notes: This table reports mean differences in baseline characteristics and economic measures between mothers with no child support order during out-of-home care (OHC) and mothers with a specified type of child support order during OHC. Columns compare mothers with (1) no order to those with (2) a mother-to-government cost-recovery order, (3) a father-to-government cost-recovery order, and (4) a father-to-mother child support order. Entries are differences in group means (order group minus no-order group) from two-sample t-tests. Monetary values are expressed in monthly dollars. The analytic sample includes 20,490 mothers whose co-resident children (under age 18) experienced an OHC episode lasting at least 30 days. All variables are measured as defined in the main text and appendix tables. Significance levels: + p<0.10, * p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001.

Table A8: Effects of Child Support Orders on the Probability of Reunification for those Mothers with 6+ Months Spell Lengths

	Within 12 months		Within 24 months		Within 36 months		Within 48 months		Within 60 months	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Any mother-to-government cost recovery order during OHC	-0.081*** (0.011)	-0.081*** (0.010)	-0.050** (0.014)	-0.051** (0.014)	-0.035* (0.015)	-0.037* (0.016)	-0.026 (0.015)	-0.028+ (0.015)	-0.021 (0.015)	-0.023 (0.015)
Any father-to-government cost recovery order during OHC	-0.082*** (0.011)	-0.081*** (0.011)	-0.089*** (0.009)	-0.087*** (0.009)	-0.081*** (0.009)	-0.079*** (0.009)	-0.077*** (0.009)	-0.076*** (0.009)	-0.077*** (0.010)	-0.075*** (0.010)
Any father-to-mother child support order during OHC	0.035* (0.013)	0.036* (0.013)	0.055*** (0.011)	0.056*** (0.011)	0.062*** (0.011)	0.062*** (0.012)	0.064*** (0.011)	0.065*** (0.012)	0.063*** (0.011)	0.064*** (0.012)
Percent change in income (ref = no income)										
Income decrease > 50%		-0.081*** (0.016)		-0.082** (0.020)		-0.076*** (0.017)		-0.083*** (0.017)		-0.086*** (0.019)
Income decrease 1-50%		-0.026+ (0.014)		0.001 (0.014)		0.012 (0.016)		0.009 (0.016)		0.006 (0.017)
-1% ~ +1 % Income change		-0.013 (0.015)		0.066** (0.021)		0.082** (0.023)		0.081** (0.020)		0.076** (0.022)
Income increase 1~50%		0.067*** (0.011)		0.100*** (0.018)		0.112*** (0.020)		0.105*** (0.021)		0.100*** (0.021)
Income increase > 50%		0.015 (0.015)		0.051* (0.021)		0.070** (0.019)		0.071** (0.018)		0.068** (0.019)
Observations	13,615	13,615	13,615	13,615	13,615	13,615	13,615	13,615	13,615	13,615
Mean of Dependent Variables	0.262	0.262	0.385	0.385	0.410	0.410	0.419	0.419	0.423	0.423
County fixed effects	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Year fixed effects	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Standard error clustered at county	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Standard error clustered at year	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mother-level demographics	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
State-level demographics	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Notes: This table reports estimates from linear probability models of reunification within 12-60 months of out-of-home care (OHC) placement. The analytic sample includes 13,615 mothers whose children remained in OHC for at least 6 months or more. Coefficients represent percentage-point changes in the probability of reunification. All models include county and year fixed effects, mother-level demographic characteristics (mother’s race, age, number of fathers, number of children, oldest father’s age, oldest child’s age, binary indicator of youngest child being 1 or less, highest father’s OHC prior 12 months income), and county-level demographic controls (county-year substantiation and unemployment rate). Income change is measured as the proportional change in total cash income between the pre-OHC and during-OHC periods, defined as (income during OHC–income pre-OHC)/income pre-OHC, and categorized to capture large losses, moderate losses, stability, and gains. Second models in each category uses mothers with no income in both periods as the reference group. Standard errors are two-way clustered at the county and year levels. The mean of the dependent variable is reported for reference. Significance levels: + p<0.10, * p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001.

Table A9: Effects of Child Support Orders on the Probability of TPR for those Mothers with 6+ Month Spell Lengths

	Within 36 months		Within 48 months		Within 60 months	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Any mother-to-government cost recovery order during OHC	0.001 (0.003)	0.001 (0.003)	0.003 (0.003)	0.003 (0.003)	0.005 (0.004)	0.005 (0.004)
Any father-to-government cost recovery order during OHC	-0.003 (0.003)	-0.002 (0.003)	-0.002 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)
Any father-to-mother child support order during OHC	-0.005 (0.004)	-0.005 (0.005)	-0.004 (0.004)	-0.004 (0.004)	-0.006 (0.005)	-0.005 (0.005)
Percent change in income (ref = no income)						
Income decrease > 50%		0.000 (0.007)		0.005 (0.009)		0.008 (0.009)
Income decrease 1-50%		-0.006 (0.005)		-0.003 (0.004)		0.001 (0.005)
-1% ~ +1 % Income change		0.004 (0.010)		0.005 (0.010)		0.006 (0.009)
Income increase 1~50%		-0.003 (0.005)		-0.002 (0.005)		0.000 (0.005)
Income increase > 50%		0.001 (0.011)		0.004 (0.009)		0.006 (0.009)
Observations	13,615	13,615	13,615	13,615	13,615	13,615
Mean of Dependent Variables	0.028	0.028	0.031	0.031	0.032	0.032
County fixed effects	X	X	X	X	X	X
Year fixed effects	X	X	X	X	X	X
Standard error clustered at county	X	X	X	X	X	X
Standard error clustered at year	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mother-level demographics	X	X	X	X	X	X
State-level demographics	X	X	X	X	X	X

Notes: This table reports estimates from linear probability models of termination of parental rights (TPR) within 36-60 months. The analytic sample includes 14,639 mothers whose children remained in OHC for at least 6 months or more. Coefficients represent percentage-point changes in the probability of reunification. All models include county and year fixed effects, mother-level demographic characteristics (mother's race, age, number of fathers, number of children, oldest father's age, oldest child's age, binary indicator of youngest child being 1 or less, highest father's OHC prior 12 months income), and county-level demographic controls (county-year substantiation and unemployment rate). Income change is measured as the proportional change in total cash income between the pre-OHC and during-OHC periods, defined as $(\text{income during OHC} - \text{income pre-OHC}) / \text{income pre-OHC}$, and categorized to capture large losses, moderate losses, stability, and gains. Second models of each category uses mothers with no income in both periods as the reference group. Standard errors are two-way clustered at the county and year levels. The mean of the dependent variable is reported for reference. Significance levels: + $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Table A10: Cox Proportional Hazard Model on Child Support Orders on the Probability of Reunification

	Reunification		TPR	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Any mother-to-government cost recovery order during OHC	0.532*** (0.019)	0.527*** (0.017)	0.693*** (0.068)	0.697*** (0.066)
Any father-to-government cost recovery order during OHC	0.548*** (0.024)	0.563*** (0.024)	0.596*** (0.044)	0.601*** (0.047)
Any father-to-mother child support order during OHC	1.239*** (0.046)	1.253*** (0.048)	0.945 (0.166)	1.004 (0.168)
Percent change in income (ref = no income)		1.000 (0.000)		1.000 (0.000)
Income decrease > 50%		0.626*** (0.037)		0.402** (0.120)
Income decrease 1-50%		0.753*** (0.042)		0.292*** (0.076)
-1% ~ +1 % Income change		0.940 (0.061)		0.362*** (0.101)
Income increase 1~50%		1.152* (0.070)		0.382*** (0.092)
Income increase > 50%		1.520*** (0.097)		0.423** (0.131)
Observations	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048
County fixed effects	X	X	X	X
Year fixed effects	X	X	X	X
Standard error clustered at county	X	X	X	X
Standard error clustered at year	X	X	X	X
Mother-level demographics	X	X	X	X
State-level demographics	X	X	X	X

Notes: This table reports estimates from Cox proportional hazard models of the association between child support orders during out-of-home care (OHC) and the hazard of reunification (Cols. 1–2) and termination of parental rights (TPR) (Cols. 3–4). The sample includes 19,048 mothers whose children remained in OHC for at least 30 days. Coefficients are hazard ratios; values above (below) one indicate a higher (lower) hazard of the event. Key regressors indicate mother-to-government cost recovery, father-to-government cost recovery, and father-to-mother child support orders during OHC. Income change is the proportional change in total cash income from pre-OHC to during-OHC and is categorized to capture losses, stability, and gains; Second models of each category use mothers with no income in both periods as the reference group. All specifications include county and year fixed effects, mother-level demographics, and county-level controls (substantiation and unemployment rates). Standard errors are two-way clustered by county and year. Significance levels: + p<0.10, * p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001.

Table A11: Effects of Child Support Order Duration on the Probability of Reunification and TPR

	Reunification										Termination of Parental Rights (TPR)					
	Within 12 months		Within 24 months		Within 36 months		Within 48 months		Within 60 months		Within 36 months		Within 48 months		Within 60 months	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)
Percentage of OHC spell months with a mother-to-government cost-recovery order	-0.228*** (0.019)	-0.223*** (0.018)	-0.159*** (0.018)	-0.154*** (0.020)	-0.130*** (0.017)	-0.126*** (0.019)	-0.117*** (0.015)	-0.112*** (0.017)	-0.109*** (0.015)	-0.104*** (0.017)	0.001 (0.003)	0.001 (0.003)	0.003 (0.003)	0.003 (0.003)	0.005 (0.003)	0.005 (0.003)
Percentage of OHC spell months with a father-to-government cost-recovery order	-0.108*** (0.013)	-0.094*** (0.014)	-0.081*** (0.015)	-0.070*** (0.015)	-0.070*** (0.015)	-0.060** (0.014)	-0.067*** (0.014)	-0.056** (0.014)	-0.067*** (0.015)	-0.057** (0.014)	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.003)	-0.003 (0.003)	-0.002 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.002)
Percentage of OHC spell months with a father-to-mother child support order	0.167*** (0.008)	0.151*** (0.009)	0.136*** (0.010)	0.121*** (0.010)	0.128*** (0.010)	0.113*** (0.010)	0.126*** (0.010)	0.111*** (0.010)	0.124*** (0.010)	0.109*** (0.010)	-0.004 (0.003)	-0.003 (0.003)	-0.005 (0.003)	-0.004 (0.003)	-0.006 (0.003)	-0.006 (0.004)
Percent change in income (ref = no income)																
Income decrease > 50%		-0.150*** (0.021)		-0.135*** (0.022)		-0.126*** (0.021)		-0.129*** (0.020)		-0.130*** (0.021)		-0.006 (0.006)		-0.001 (0.007)		0.001 (0.007)
Income decrease 1-50%		-0.107** (0.025)		-0.065* (0.022)		-0.051* (0.023)		-0.050* (0.021)		-0.051* (0.021)		-0.010* (0.004)		-0.007 (0.004)		-0.004 (0.004)
-1% ~ +1 % Income change		-0.062* (0.025)		0.011 (0.023)		0.027 (0.023)		0.029 (0.020)		0.026 (0.020)		-0.001 (0.007)		-0.001 (0.006)		0.000 (0.006)
Income increase 1~50%		0.031 (0.019)		0.060* (0.021)		0.071* (0.024)		0.067* (0.022)		0.065* (0.023)		-0.008+ (0.005)		-0.007 (0.005)		-0.006 (0.005)
Income increase > 50%		0.077*** (0.017)		0.084** (0.020)		0.094*** (0.020)		0.094*** (0.019)		0.092*** (0.019)		-0.008 (0.005)		-0.006 (0.005)		-0.005 (0.005)
Observations	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048
Mean of Dependent Variables	0.491	0.491	0.566	0.566	0.581	0.581	0.586	0.586	0.589	0.589	0.020	0.020	0.022	0.022	0.023	0.023
County fixed effects	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Year fixed effects	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Standard error clustered at county	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Standard error clustered at year	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mother-level demographics	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
State-level demographics	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Notes: This table reports estimates from linear probability models of reunification within 12-60 months and TPR within 36-60 months of out-of-home care (OHC) placement. The analytic sample includes 19,048 mothers whose children remained in OHC for at least 30 days. Coefficients represent percentage-point changes in the probability of reunification. All models include county and year fixed effects, mother-level demographic characteristics (mother's race, age, number of fathers, number of children, oldest father's age, oldest child's age, binary indicator of youngest child being 1 or less, highest father's OHC prior 12 months income), and county-level demographic controls (county-year substantiation and unemployment rate). Income change is measured as the proportional change in total cash income between the pre-OHC and during-OHC periods, defined as (income during OHC - income pre-OHC)/income pre-OHC, and categorized to capture large losses, moderate losses, stability, and gains. Second models of each category uses mothers with no income in both periods as the reference group. Standard errors are two-way clustered at the county and year levels. The mean of the dependent variable is reported for reference. . Significance levels: + p<0.10, * p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001.

Table A12: Effects of Child Support Order Average Amounts on the Probability of Reunification and TPR

	Reunification										Termination of Parental Rights (TPR)					
	Within 12 months		Within 24 months		Within 36 months		Within 48 months		Within 60 months		Within 36 months		Within 48 months		Within 60 months	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)
Average amount of mother-to-government cost-recovery order (in \$100 USD)	-0.060*** (0.007)	-0.058*** (0.007)	-0.040*** (0.006)	-0.039*** (0.006)	-0.034*** (0.005)	-0.033*** (0.006)	-0.030*** (0.005)	-0.029*** (0.005)	-0.030*** (0.005)	-0.028*** (0.005)	0.000 (0.001)	0.000 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)
Average amount of father-to-government cost-recovery order (in \$100 USD)	-0.025*** (0.004)	-0.022*** (0.004)	-0.021*** (0.004)	-0.018*** (0.004)	-0.018*** (0.004)	-0.015** (0.004)	-0.017*** (0.004)	-0.014** (0.004)	-0.017** (0.004)	-0.014** (0.004)	-0.001 (0.000)	-0.001 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)
Average amount of father-to-mother child support order (in \$100 USD)	0.017*** (0.002)	0.016*** (0.002)	0.014*** (0.002)	0.012*** (0.002)	0.013*** (0.002)	0.012*** (0.002)	0.013*** (0.002)	0.011*** (0.002)	0.013*** (0.002)	0.011*** (0.002)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	-0.001+ (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	-0.001+ (0.000)	-0.001+ (0.000)
Percent change in income (ref = no income)																
Income decrease > 50%		-0.150*** (0.022)		-0.134*** (0.022)		-0.125*** (0.021)		-0.127*** (0.020)		-0.129*** (0.022)		-0.007 (0.006)		-0.001 (0.007)		0.001 (0.007)
Income decrease 1-50%		-0.109** (0.026)		-0.064* (0.023)		-0.050+ (0.023)		-0.048* (0.021)		-0.050* (0.022)		-0.010* (0.004)		-0.007 (0.004)		-0.004 (0.004)
-1% ~ +1 % Income change		-0.059* (0.025)		0.014 (0.023)		0.030 (0.023)		0.032 (0.020)		0.028 (0.020)		-0.001 (0.007)		-0.001 (0.006)		0.000 (0.006)
Income increase 1~50%		0.038+ (0.018)		0.067** (0.021)		0.077** (0.024)		0.074** (0.022)		0.071* (0.023)		-0.009+ (0.005)		-0.008 (0.005)		-0.006 (0.005)
Income increase > 50%		0.087*** (0.016)		0.093*** (0.019)		0.102*** (0.020)		0.102*** (0.019)		0.100*** (0.019)		-0.008 (0.005)		-0.007 (0.005)		-0.005 (0.005)
Observations	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048
Mean of Dependent Variables	0.491	0.491	0.566	0.566	0.581	0.581	0.586	0.586	0.589	0.589	0.020	0.020	0.022	0.022	0.023	0.023
County fixed effects	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Year fixed effects	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Standard error clustered at county	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Standard error clustered at year	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mother-level demographics	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
State-level demographics	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Notes: This table reports estimates from linear probability models of reunification within 12-60 months and TPR within 36-60 months of out-of-home care (OHC) placement. The analytic sample includes 19,048 mothers whose children remained in OHC for at least 30 days. Key explanatory variables are the average amounts of mother-to-government cost-recovery orders, father-to-government cost-recovery orders, and father-to-mother child support orders, measured in hundreds of U.S. dollars. Coefficients represent percentage-point changes in the probability of reunification or TPR. All models include county and year fixed effects, mother-level demographic characteristics (mother's race, age, number of fathers, number of children, oldest father's age, oldest child's age, binary indicator of youngest child being 1 or less, highest father's OHC prior 12 months income), and county-level demographic controls (county-year substantiation and unemployment rate). Income change is measured as the proportional change in total cash income between the pre-OHC and during-OHC periods, defined as (income during OHC - income pre-OHC)/income pre-OHC, and categorized to capture large losses, moderate losses, stability, and gains. Second models of each category uses mothers with no income in both periods as the reference group. Standard errors are two-way clustered at the county and year levels. The mean of the dependent variable is reported for reference. Significance levels: + p<0.10, * p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001.

Table A13: Effects of Child Support Order on the Probability of Reunification and TPR, Controlling for Baseline Income

	Reunification										Termination of Parental Rights (TPR)					
	Within 12 months		Within 24 months		Within 36 months		Within 48 months		Within 60 months		Within 36 months		Within 48 months		Within 60 months	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)
Any mother-to-government cost-recovery order	-0.206*** (0.014)	-0.197*** (0.012)	-0.139*** (0.013)	-0.131*** (0.013)	-0.118*** (0.013)	-0.110*** (0.013)	-0.108*** (0.013)	-0.100*** (0.013)	-0.103*** (0.013)	-0.095*** (0.013)	0.002 (0.002)	0.002 (0.002)	0.005 (0.003)	0.004 (0.003)	0.006+ (0.003)	0.006 (0.003)
Any father-to-government cost-recovery order	-0.168*** (0.014)	-0.152*** (0.014)	-0.147*** (0.014)	-0.133*** (0.014)	-0.136*** (0.014)	-0.122*** (0.013)	-0.131*** (0.014)	-0.118*** (0.013)	-0.130*** (0.015)	-0.117*** (0.014)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)	0.000 (0.002)	0.000 (0.002)	0.002 (0.003)	0.002 (0.003)
Any father-to-Mother child support order	0.044** (0.012)	0.046** (0.011)	0.051*** (0.010)	0.053*** (0.009)	0.055*** (0.010)	0.057*** (0.010)	0.057*** (0.010)	0.058*** (0.010)	0.056*** (0.010)	0.057*** (0.010)	-0.004 (0.004)	-0.003 (0.004)	-0.003 (0.003)	-0.002 (0.003)	-0.004 (0.004)	-0.004 (0.004)
Percent change in income (ref = no income)																
Income decrease > 50%		-0.164*** (0.018)		-0.154*** (0.019)		-0.146*** (0.018)		-0.149*** (0.017)		-0.151*** (0.019)		-0.005 (0.006)		0.000 (0.007)		0.002 (0.008)
Income decrease 1-50%		-0.127*** (0.022)		-0.090*** (0.019)		-0.078** (0.019)		-0.078*** (0.017)		-0.079*** (0.018)		-0.008+ (0.004)		-0.006 (0.004)		-0.003 (0.005)
-1% ~ +1 % Income change		-0.058* (0.021)		0.009 (0.020)		0.023 (0.020)		0.024 (0.017)		0.021 (0.017)		-0.001 (0.007)		0.000 (0.007)		0.001 (0.007)
Income increase 1~50%		0.000 (0.015)		0.025 (0.019)		0.035 (0.021)		0.031 (0.020)		0.028 (0.020)		-0.007 (0.005)		-0.006 (0.005)		-0.004 (0.006)
Income increase > 50%		0.073*** (0.015)		0.075** (0.018)		0.083*** (0.019)		0.083*** (0.017)		0.080*** (0.018)		-0.007 (0.006)		-0.006 (0.005)		-0.005 (0.005)
Observations	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048	19,048
Mean of Dependent Variables	0.491	0.491	0.566	0.566	0.581	0.581	0.586	0.586	0.589	0.589	0.020	0.020	0.022	0.022	0.023	0.023
County fixed effects	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Year fixed effects	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Standard error clustered at county	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Standard error clustered at year	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mother-level demographics	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
State-level demographics	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Notes: This table reports estimates from linear probability models of reunification within 12-60 months and TPR within 36-60 months of out-of-home care (OHC) placement. The analytic sample includes 19,048 mothers whose children remained in OHC for at least 30 days. Coefficients represent percentage-point changes in the probability of reunification. All models include county and year fixed effects, mother-level demographic characteristics (mother's race, age, number of fathers, number of children, oldest father's age, oldest child's age, binary indicator of youngest child being 1 or less, highest father's OHC prior 12 months income), and county-level demographic controls (county-year substantiation and unemployment rate). Income change is measured as the proportional change in total cash income between the pre-OHC and during-OHC periods, defined as $(\text{income during OHC} - \text{income pre-OHC}) / \text{income pre-OHC}$, and categorized to capture large losses, moderate losses, stability, and gains. Second models of each category uses mothers with no income in both periods as the reference group. Standard errors are two-way clustered at the county and year levels. The mean of the dependent variable is reported for reference. Significance levels: + $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Table A14: Effects of child support orders on the probability of reunification - Mother's with/without father-to-mother child support order

	Within 12 months				Within 24 months				Within 36 months				Within 48 months				Within 60 months			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19)	(20)
Any mother-to-government cost recovery order during OHC	-0.198***	-0.208***	-0.193***	-0.197***	-0.129***	-0.142***	-0.125***	-0.133***	-0.109***	-0.121***	-0.105***	-0.111***	-0.096***	-0.112***	-0.092***	-0.103***	-0.091***	-0.107***	-0.087	-0.097***
	(0.019)	(0.016)	(0.019)	(0.014)	(0.015)	(0.016)	(0.015)	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.000)	(0.016)
Any father-to-government cost recovery order during OHC	-0.180***	-0.167***	-0.160***	-0.158***	-0.153***	-0.152***	-0.137***	-0.144***	-0.137***	-0.145***	-0.121***	-0.137***	-0.131***	-0.143***	-0.115***	-0.134***	-0.131***	-0.142***	-0.114	-0.133***
	(0.022)	(0.016)	(0.025)	(0.017)	(0.021)	(0.013)	(0.022)	(0.013)	(0.019)	(0.013)	(0.019)	(0.012)	(0.020)	(0.012)	(0.020)	(0.012)	(0.020)	(0.013)	(0.000)	(0.012)
Percent change in income (ref = no income)																				
Income decrease > 50%			-0.273***	-0.112**			-0.254**	-0.107**			-0.261**	-0.096**			-0.254**	-0.100**			-0.259	-0.101**
			(0.038)	(0.027)			(0.062)	(0.027)			(0.063)	(0.026)			(0.063)	(0.025)			(0.000)	(0.026)
Income decrease 1-50%			-0.205**	-0.076*			-0.157*	-0.045+			-0.155*	-0.035			-0.143*	-0.037			-0.145	-0.040
			(0.048)	(0.029)			(0.060)	(0.025)			(0.063)	(0.025)			(0.062)	(0.025)			(0.000)	(0.025)
-1% ~ +1 % Income change			-0.167**	-0.034			-0.069	0.024			-0.072	0.042			-0.053	0.039			-0.061	0.037
			(0.047)	(0.028)			(0.062)	(0.029)			(0.060)	(0.027)			(0.060)	(0.025)			(0.000)	(0.024)
Income increase 1~50%			-0.072	0.062*			-0.037	0.079*			-0.041	0.090*			-0.031	0.083*			-0.036	0.080*
			(0.043)	(0.026)			(0.063)	(0.027)			(0.066)	(0.030)			(0.066)	(0.029)			(0.000)	(0.030)
Income increase > 50%			-0.042	0.114***			-0.040	0.118***			-0.042	0.126***			-0.032	0.125***			-0.036	0.123***
			(0.041)	(0.024)			(0.062)	(0.025)			(0.066)	(0.025)			(0.064)	(0.025)			(0.000)	(0.025)
Observations	7,417	11,631	7,417	11,631	7,417	11,631	7,417	11,631	7,417	11,631	7,417	11,631	7,417	11,631	7,417	11,631	7,417	11,631	7,417	11,631
Mean of Dependent Variables	0.399	0.423	0.399	0.423	0.517	0.516	0.517	0.516	0.550	0.539	0.550	0.539	0.562	0.547	0.562	0.547	0.565	0.550	0.565	0.550
County fixed effects	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Year fixed effects	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Standard error clustered at county	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Standard error clustered at year	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mother-level demographics	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
State-level demographics	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Notes: This table reports estimates from linear probability models of reunification within 12–60 months following out-of-home care (OHC) placement, corresponding to Table 1. Models are estimated separately for mothers with and without a father-to-mother child support order. The analytic sample includes 19,048 mothers whose children remained in OHC for at least 30 days. Coefficients represent percentage-point changes in the probability of reunification. All models include county and year fixed effects, mother-level demographic characteristics (mother's race, age, number of fathers, number of children, oldest father's age, oldest child's age, binary indicator of youngest child being 1 or less, highest father's OHC prior 12 months income), and county-level demographic controls (county-year substantiation and unemployment rate). Income change is measured as the proportional change in total cash income between the pre-OHC and during-OHC periods, defined as (income during OHC–income pre-OHC)/income pre-OHC, and categorized to capture large losses, moderate losses, stability, and gains. Second models of each category uses mothers with no income in both periods as the reference group. Standard errors are two-way clustered at the county and year levels. The mean of the dependent variable is reported for reference. Significance levels: + p<0.10, * p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001.

Table A15: Effects of Child Support Orders on the Probability of TPR -- Mother's With/Without Father-to-Mother Child Support Order

	Within 36 months				Within 48 months				Within 60 months			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Any mother-to-government cost recovery order during OHC	0.005 (0.003)	-0.002 (0.003)	0.005 (0.003)	-0.002 (0.003)	0.006+ (0.003)	0.002 (0.003)	0.006 (0.004)	0.002 (0.003)	0.010* (0.004)	0.002 (0.004)	0.010* (0.005)	0.002 (0.004)
Any father-to-government cost recovery order during OHC	-0.002 (0.003)	0.002 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.003)	0.002 (0.002)	0.001 (0.003)	0.001 (0.002)	0.000 (0.003)	0.002 (0.002)	0.002 (0.003)	0.005 (0.004)	0.002 (0.003)	0.005 (0.004)
Percent change in income (ref = no income)												
Income decrease > 50%			-0.003 (0.014)	-0.010 (0.008)			0.007 (0.016)	-0.007 (0.009)			0.009 (0.016)	-0.004 (0.010)
Income decrease 1-50%			-0.006 (0.013)	-0.014* (0.006)			-0.002 (0.013)	-0.011 (0.006)			0.002 (0.013)	-0.008 (0.007)
-1% ~ +1 % Income change			-0.001 (0.014)	-0.003 (0.008)			-0.004 (0.015)	-0.001 (0.008)			0.000 (0.015)	-0.001 (0.008)
Income increase 1~50%			-0.007 (0.014)	-0.011 (0.008)			-0.003 (0.015)	-0.011 (0.008)			-0.002 (0.015)	-0.008 (0.009)
Income increase > 50%			-0.007 (0.014)	-0.011 (0.007)			-0.002 (0.014)	-0.010 (0.007)			0.001 (0.014)	-0.009 (0.007)
Observations	7,417	11,631	7,417	11,631	7,417	11,631	7,417	11,631	7,417	11,631	7,417	11,631
Mean of Dependent Variables	0.009	0.017	0.009	0.017	0.014	0.019	0.014	0.019	0.016	0.021	0.016	0.021
County fixed effects	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Year fixed effects	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Standard error clustered at county	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Standard error clustered at year	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mother-level demographics	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
State-level demographics	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Notes: This table reports estimates from linear probability models of termination of parental rights (TPR) within 36-60 months, corresponding to Table 2. Models are estimated separately for mothers with and without a father-to-mother child support order. The analytic sample includes 19,048 mothers whose children remained in OHC for at least 30 days. Coefficients represent percentage-point changes in the probability of reunification. All models include county and year fixed effects, mother-level demographic characteristics (mother's race, age, number of fathers, number of children, oldest father's age, oldest child's age, binary indicator of youngest child being 1 or less, highest father's OHC prior 12 months income), and county-level demographic controls (county-year substantiation and unemployment rate). Income change is measured as the proportional change in total cash income between the pre-OHC and during-OHC periods, defined as (income during OHC–income pre-OHC)/income pre-OHC, and categorized to capture large losses, moderate losses, stability, and gains. Second models of each category uses mothers with no income in both periods as the reference group. Standard errors are two-way clustered at the county and year levels. The mean of the dependent variable is reported for reference. Significance levels: + p<0.10, * p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001.