Children’s Developmental Health, Policies and Practices:

Introductory remarks

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• Definition of children’s developmental health

• Policy and program domains addressing child well-being

• The importance of interactions across programs
A definition of children’s health
A definition of children’s health

Evolving from:

• Absence of disease

• A state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being

To: A resource that gives children

• the ability to interact with their surroundings and to respond to life’s challenges and changes and

• Optimize and maintain function over time
A definition of children’s health:
The extent to which individual children or groups of children are able or enabled to:

• develop and realize their potential,
• satisfy their needs, and
• develop the capacities that allow them to interact successfully with their biological, physical, and social environments.
Policy domains
Early Childhood Policy Domains:

- Parenting support
- Health care
- Early Childhood Education

Service delivery programs
Early Childhood Policy Domains:

- Parenting support
- Health care
- Economic Support
- Employment support
- Early Childhood Education

K-16 Education system
Employment support for parents

• Steady, well-paid employment for parents is the best “program” for kids

• Popular policy approaches
  • Earned Income Tax Credit
  • Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit
  • Parental leave policies
Family economic support

- EITC & CDCTC
- SNAP, TANF
- Child Tax Credit
  - in CA: $1,000 extra child tax credit for children under age 6, for families earning at least $1
Program synergies
How do programs interact with one another?

Are they *complements*, with multiplicative impacts?

Or are they *substitutes*, with the benefits of two programs being little more than either one of them?
Can combining programs be unusually effective?

1 + 1 > 2
Can combining programs be unusually effective?

For example:

1 + 1 > 2

Parenting-focused

Child-focused
Can combining program be unusually effective?

If programs *complement* one another

\[ 1 + 1 > 2 \]

If programs *substitute* for one another

\[ 1 + 1 < 2 \]
Can combining programs be unusually effective?

\[1 + 1 > 2\]

This turns out to be difficult to accomplish!
A recent meta-analysis finds:

\[ 1 + 1 = 1 \]

In the case of parenting components added to early education programs

A remarkable recent study finds:

$$1 + 1 = 1.2$$

In the case of early education and home visiting programs in Denmark...

Denmark rolled out high-quality early care centers and a nurse home visiting program quasi-randomly across municipalities between 1933 and 1960.

Impacts traced with Danish administrative data...

they examined children’s completed schooling, wages and mortality.

AND the completed schooling of the children of the children.
Rossin-Slater & Wüst (2019)

- By itself, the early education program produced large favorable impacts on all three outcomes and for second-generation schooling

- By itself, the home visiting program produced large favorable impacts on all three outcomes (but no second generation impacts)

- But the combination of the two added only about 20% to the benefits of one or the other

  \[1 + 1 = 1.2\]; both programs were effective but largely appear to be substitutes
Politically, perhaps,

1 + 1 can be > 2
A Roadmap to Reducing Child Poverty

The National Academies of
SCiences • Engineering • Medicine
## Impacts on Poverty and Government Cost

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Expand the EITC</th>
<th>Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit</th>
<th>Child Allowance</th>
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## Impacts on Poverty and Government Cost

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<th>Policy</th>
<th>Percent reduction in the number of poor children</th>
<th>Change in number of low-income workers</th>
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<td>Expand the EITC</td>
<td>-10%</td>
<td>+270,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit</td>
<td>-9%</td>
<td>+503,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Allowance</td>
<td>-24%</td>
<td>-60,000</td>
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### Impacts on Poverty and Government Cost

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<th>All 3 together</th>
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So let’s:

• View health as a resource for optimizing development
• Think broadly about policy domains
• Strive for synergies across programs