Integrating Systems: Improving Access to Better Serve Families

CLASP
policy solutions that work for low-income people

2011 STAM Meeting

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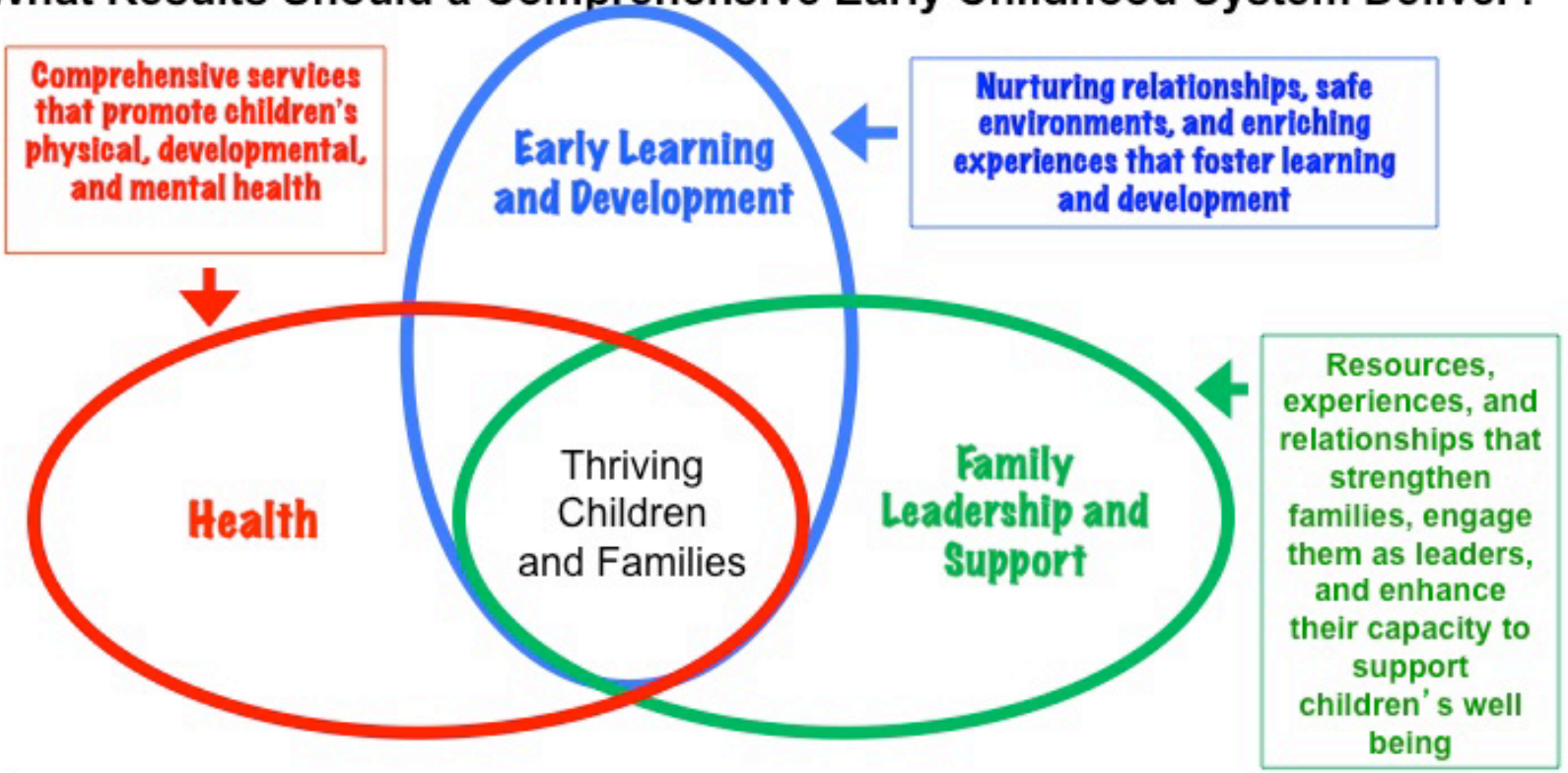
November 16, 2011

What Results Should a Comprehensive Early Childhood System Deliver?



Values and Principles Optimally, a comprehensive early childhood system will:

- Reach all children and families, and as early as possible, with needed services and supports
- Genuinely include and effectively accommodate children with special needs
- Reflect and respect the strengths, needs, values, languages, cultures and communities of children and families
- Ensure stability and continuity of services along a continuum from prenatal into school entry and beyond
- Ease access for families and transitions for children
- Value parents as decision makers and leaders
- Catalyze and maximize investment and foster innovation

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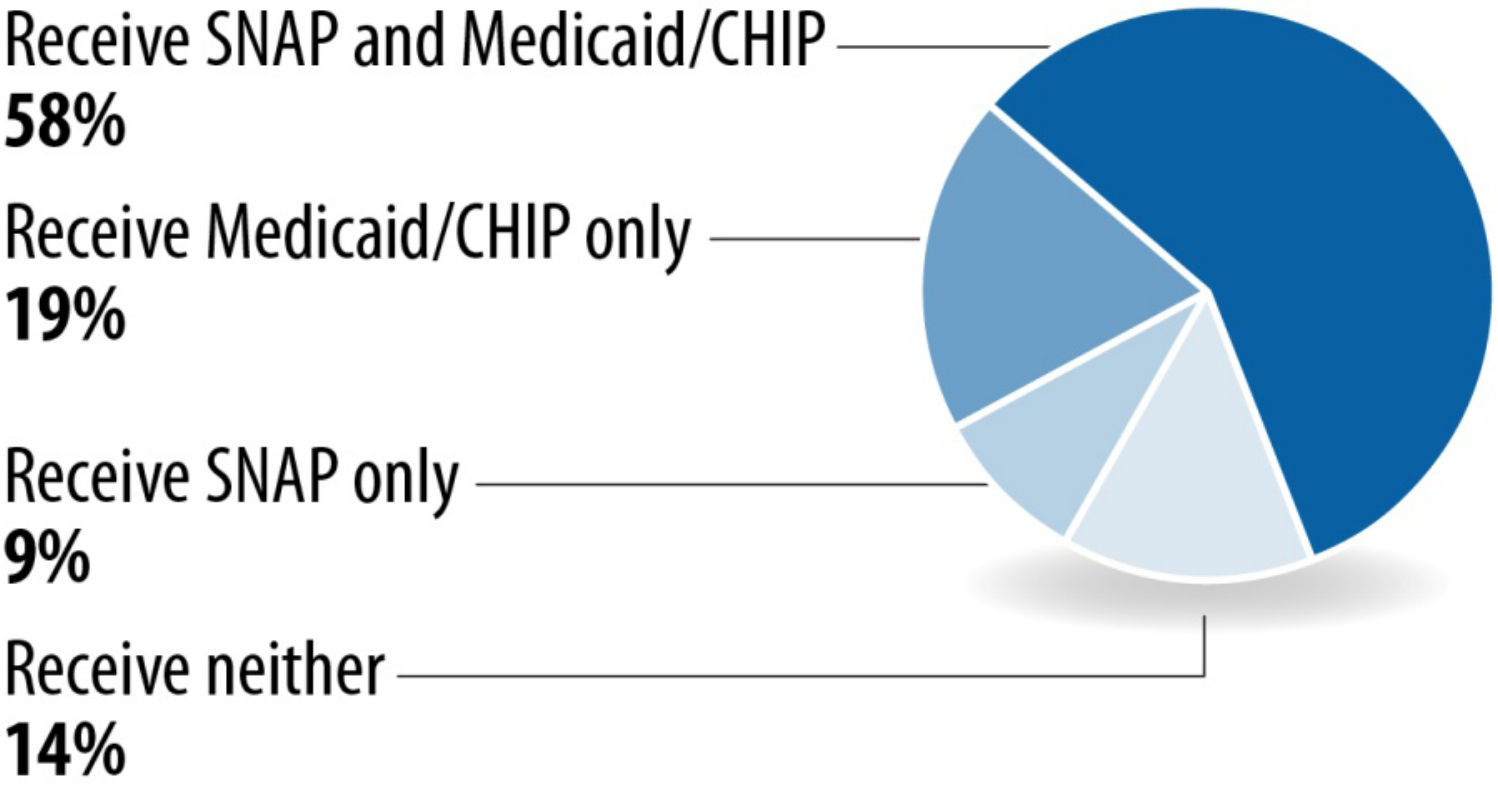
Many Children Likely Eligible for SNAP and Medicaid/CHIP Fail to Receive One or Both Supports (2009)



Note: Program participation among citizen children with family income below the poverty level and no reported health insurance. The data should be viewed with caution.
Source: CBPP analysis of a Survey of Income and Program Participation.

Promising Practices

- A simple pathway to a package
  - Screenings
  - Cross program matches for outreach
  - Worker prompts
- Limiting in-person requirements
  - Reducing documentation requirements
  - Phone and internet
- Simplifying renewals/improving retention
  - Improving reporting rules
- Business Process Reengineering
  - Process assessment for the package
- Using data to provide feedback loop

Work Support Strategies:
Streamlining Access, Strengthening Families

A Place for Child Care

- Goal = including child care subsidy programs in a coordinated system on work supports
  - Similarities and differences with other systems
  - Increasing access to SNAP, Medicaid for child care families/waiting lists
  - Making the child care application process easier for families
- Child Care subsidy programs are highly flexible with few federal rules on eligibility, intake, renewal (redetermination), etc.
- Smaller caseloads have led to misconceptions about the child care system and its lack of coordination with other systems
- The uniqueness of work requirements

Oregon: One-Stop Shops, Program Alignment

- Administrative rules, forms and branch processes are integrated and simplified as much as possible.
- 95% of ERDC clients also receive SNAP; that is where the effort is concentrated
- The TANF employment program (JOBS) uses the same child care provider requirements, approval and payment processes.
  - Responsibility for both child care programs resides in one central unit.

Oregon Keeps It Simple

	ERDC SRS (Simplified Reporting System)	CRS (Change Reporting System)
When changes must be reported:	By the 10th of the month following the month of occurrence	Within 10 days of occurrence
Certification periods:	Up to 12 months	Up to 6 months
What income changes need to be reported:	Income goes above 130% FPL (SNAP countable income limit)	Changes in hourly or salary rate of pay or source of income
Address changes need to be reported when:	Not required to be reported	Residence or mailing address changes
Changes in employment need to be reported when:	There is loss of employment	Starting, changing or losing a job
Changes to filing group need to be acted on:	When a parent of a child or unborn or spouse of the caretaker moves in	All filing group changes

Steps to Integration: A Child Care Lens

- Understanding your clients and service patterns
- Understanding Your Organizational/Administrative Context
  - Child care eligibility/case management functions
  - Provider functions
  - Implications for linking/integrating benefits

Steps to Integration: A Child Care Lens (continued)

- Walking Through the Process
  - Application
  - Eligibility Verification (relevant both for initial and ongoing verification)
  - Authorization period and reauthorization
  - Change reporting
  - Helping clients solve problems
- Developing a cumulative picture of challenges

Challenges

- Difficult to align end dates when families receive multiple benefits. Changes in household composition and unstable employment disrupt medical coverage and filing units.
- Changes reported for one program may affect eligibility/benefit level for another.
- Regulations from three federal agencies (DHHS, CMS, FNS) conflict.

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