

Child Welfare & TANF Reauthorization

New Era of Social Policy: Time Limited Assistance

- TANF: 60 month lifetime limit and personal responsibility requirements.
- Adoption & Safe Families Act: Requires states to seek termination of parental rights (with some exceptions) after 15 months.

Overview of TANF:

- Time limited assistance
- No entitlement
- Work & personal responsibility requirements
- Sanctions for non-compliance
- Requirements for minor teen parents
- Distinction between assistance and non-assistance
- Funds available for wide array of services

Purposes of TANF:

- provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their homes or in the homes of relatives;
- end the dependency of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage;
- prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and establish annual numerical goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies; and
- encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families

Child Welfare References in 1996 Welfare Law

- Required continuation of foster care & adoption assistance programs
- Tied IV-E eligibility to AFDC criteria
- Required consideration of kinship care
- Permitted foster care payments to for-profit institutions
- Funded national longitudinal study on child maltreatment

Snapshot of Current TANF Situation:

- TANF is more than cash assistance
- TANF caseloads have declined dramatically, though since March they have risen in 33 states
- Child poverty has decreased, but not as rapidly as caseloads

Broad Overview of Impacts on Children:

- Positive outcomes appear to be tied to increases in family income, not simply employment
- Even when family incomes increase, there is some evidence that adolescents have negative outcomes

TANF Reauthorization:

Where are we?

Administration's Proposal?

- Flat funding of TANF & MOE – no inflation adjustment
- “Strengthen work requirements”
- Job training cuts – when don’t count carryover funds
- Gets more of the child support collected to families
- Family formation fund - \$100 million
- Flat funding on child care
- Will examine federal child welfare financing

Bills Introduced:

- Act to Leave No Child Behind
- Mink Bill
- Cardin Bill
- Woolsey Bill

TANF Reauthorization & Child Welfare:

What issues are critical to child welfare?

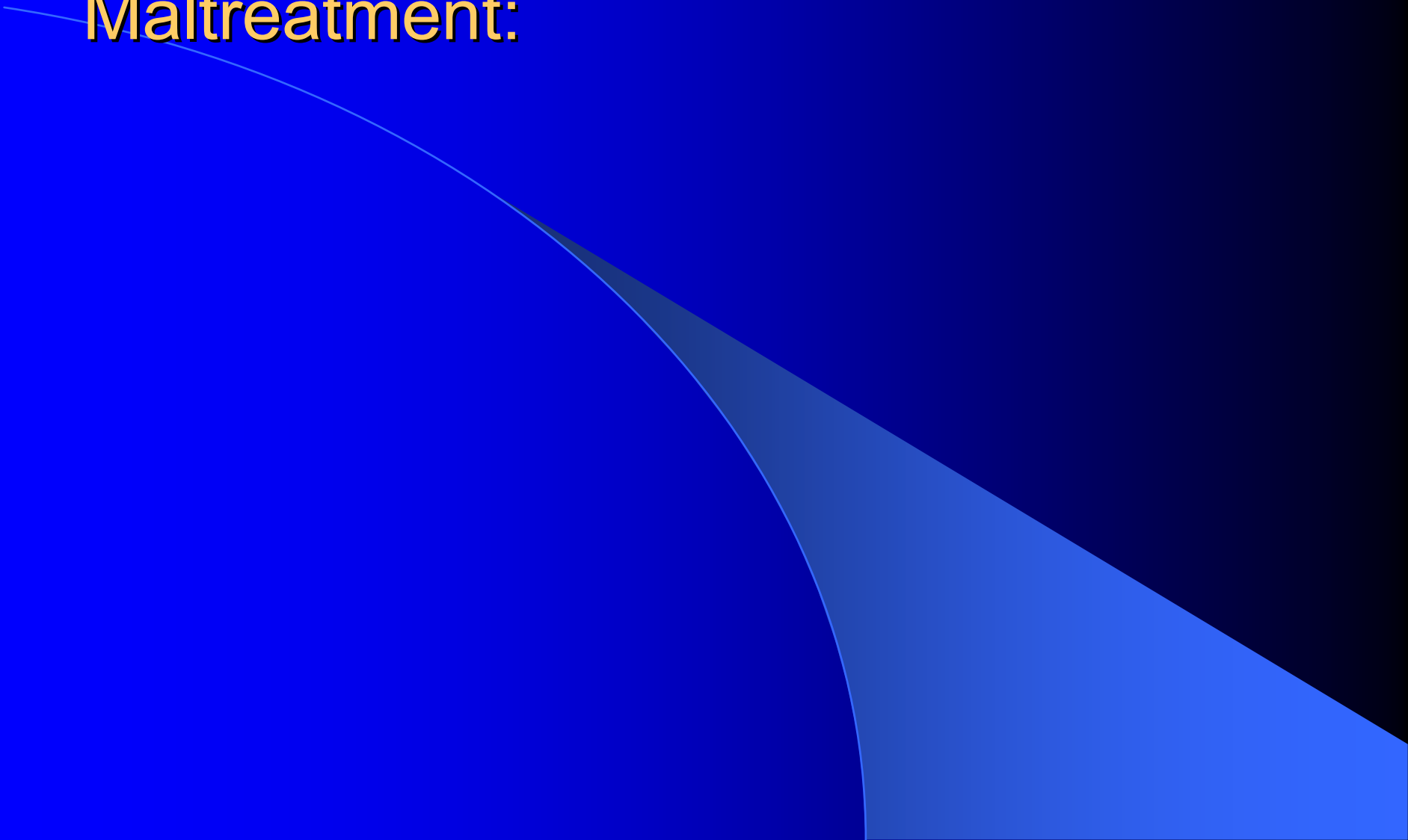
Four Key Questions re: Child Welfare:

- Have TANF requirements affected the incidence of child maltreatment?
- Has the block grant structure affected the funding available for child welfare services?
- Has TANF implementation affected the delivery of services to vulnerable families?
- Has TANF affected the supports and services available to kinship care families?

What are the Connections Between Child Welfare and TANF?

- Connection between poverty and maltreatment
- Connection between single parent families and maltreatment
- Overlapping needs of families: substance abuse, mental health, domestic violence, poverty
- Kinship care families served by both systems
- Structural overlap of the two systems

TANF & the Incidence of Child Maltreatment:

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What Do National Data Tell Us?

- Substantiated maltreatment rates *decreased* from 1993-1999
 - 14.7 per thousand in 1995
 - 11.8 per thousand in 1999
- Foster care caseloads continued to *increase*
 - 483,000 in 1995
 - 588,000 in 2000

What Do AFDC Studies Tell Us?

- A study of AFDC recipients in Chicago found grant reductions without subsequent work *doubled the risk of involvement with CPS*, compared to those who steadily received benefits and did not work.
- Another study in Cuyahoga County, Ohio found that mothers who experienced grant reductions & worked were *reunified nine times more slowly* than those who received benefits steadily and did not work.

What Do Waiver Studies Tell Us?

- An evaluation of Delaware's AFDC waiver found that the proportion of the experimental group with *substantiated maltreatment* was *45% higher* than the controls.
- Seemed to be driven by neglect (*61% increase*) & to be concentrated among the most disadvantaged families.

What Does Other Research Tell Us?

- A study that used state level data found that as the **share of single *working* mothers increased** so too did the rates of **neglect**.
- The same study found that states with **more generous welfare benefits** tended to have **lower rates of substantiated neglect**.
- A 12 state study found evidence of **more “inadequate supervision”** cases under TANF. While only one state was able to quantify the increase, that state reported a **150% increase** in such cases.

Bottom Line About TANF & Risk of Maltreatment:

- The relationship between welfare receipt, work and child maltreatment is complex
- The full impact of TANF remains unknown
- There is reason to be concerned

TANF & Child Welfare Funding Levels

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How Might 1996 Welfare Law Affect Child Welfare Funding?

- Increase funding due to TANF flexibility and dropping caseloads?
- Decrease funding due to cuts in Title XX?
- Decrease or increase funding due to elimination of Emergency Assistance program and grandfather clause?
- Decrease funding due to links with AFDC & SSI eligibility criteria?

How Might TANF Funding be Used for Child Welfare?

- Could fill gaps in child welfare system.
- Could supplant state spending.
- Could provide substantial levels of spending, even if not supplanting.

We Know States are spending TANF funds on child welfare activities:

- Home-visiting
- Parenting education
- Family preservation
- Family Support
- Substance abuse treatment
- Subsidized guardianships & other kinship services

The Extent of State Supplanting is Unclear:

- GAO study compared state spending in '94-95 to '99-00
- 9 of the 10 states supplanted state funds (not necessarily child welfare)
- 8 of the 10 states increased or maintained spending under a very broad definition of social services – including child welfare, mental health, substance abuse, juvenile justice and health care for non-elderly poor

The Extent of TANF Spending on Child Welfare Unclear:

- Federal data reporting only indicates broad categories of spending.
- Less than 5% of expenditures from the 2000 block grant (\$891 million) were made pursuant to the grandfather clause – not clear how much was for child welfare.
- Wide variation among states

Service Delivery to Vulnerable Families:

Collaboration between TANF and
Child Welfare Agencies

Some Collaborative Efforts are Underway:

- Compatible data systems
- Cross-training
- Joint case planning
- El Paso County, Colorado – common system – child welfare as anti-poverty program and TANF as child maltreatment prevention program

Collaborative Efforts Don't Appear Widespread:

- One survey in early 1999 found only 10 states had capacity to link the two data systems
- The collaborative efforts did not appear to be “long-term, systematic, or comprehensive”
- Urban Institute study suggests efforts may be increasing
- Some advocates are concerned about such collaboration

TANF & Kinship Care

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Kinship Care Represents a Significant Share of Out-of-Home Placements:

- In 2000, 5.4 million children lived in relative-headed households
- 39% (2.1 million) lived only with relatives – no parents present
- The proportion living only with relatives increased by 53% between 1990-1998

Kinship Families Are Served by TANF and Child Welfare:

- TANF cases – 9.4% of child recipients live in households headed by relatives – roughly 500,000 kids
- Child-only TANF cases – roughly 421,000 of the kids living in relative-headed TANF households
- Foster care cases – 29% of children live with relatives – between 170,000 –200,000 kids

Some States Are Recognizing The Unique Needs of Kin Caregivers:

- By creating exemptions to TANF work requirements
- By creating exemptions to TANF time limits
- By developing special kinship care or subsidized guardianship programs

Exemptions to TANF Work Requirements:

- 27 states allow work exemptions for caregivers of a certain age— generally age 60
- 6 states allow work exemptions for non-parent caregivers
- 1 state allows work exemptions for caretakers of child at risk of placement

Exemptions to the TANF Time Limit:

- 17 states exempt caregivers of a certain age (generally 60) from the time limit.
- 6 states exempt non-parent caregivers from the time limits
- 2 states exempt certain caregivers from the time limit if the child is at-risk of placement
- 5 states extend the time limits for similar reasons

TANF or MOE funded Subsidized Guardianship and Kinship Care Programs:

- Some require legal guardianship, some don't
- Some require child welfare adjudication, some require finding of risk, some require neither
- Some provide financial assistance equivalent to foster care payment, some provide benefit between foster care payment and TANF grant
- Some provide services and non-financial supports

Reauthorization Recommendations:

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Child Maltreatment & TANF Recommendations:

- Include poverty reduction as a purpose of TANF
- Consider outcome measures that include child well-being
- Conduct more research regarding welfare reform's impact on the incidence of maltreatment, particularly neglect

Funding Issues & Recommendations for TANF Reauthorization:

- Maintain the funding level of the block grant and MOE, with inflation adjustments
- Implement safeguards against supplantation
- Improve financial reporting requirements

Collaboration Issues for TANF Reauthorization:

- Encourage more coordination – e.g. joint case planning
- Recommend counting barrier removal activities towards federal participation rates
- Improve sanction processes & protect families
- Require states to describe collaboration efforts in state plans.

Kinship Care Recommendations for TANF Reauthorization:

- Eliminate the time limit for relative caregivers
- Allow states to exempt relative caregivers from work requirements, if needs are assessed and addressed
- Require states to describe how they will address the unique needs of kinship care families in state plans

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