

# Caring for Babies: How State Subsidy Policies Can Support Continuity



**2011 National Smart Start Conference**

**May 4, 2011**

**Hannah Matthews**  
**Senior Policy Analyst**  
hmatthews@clasp.org  
(202) 906-8006

# Presentation Overview

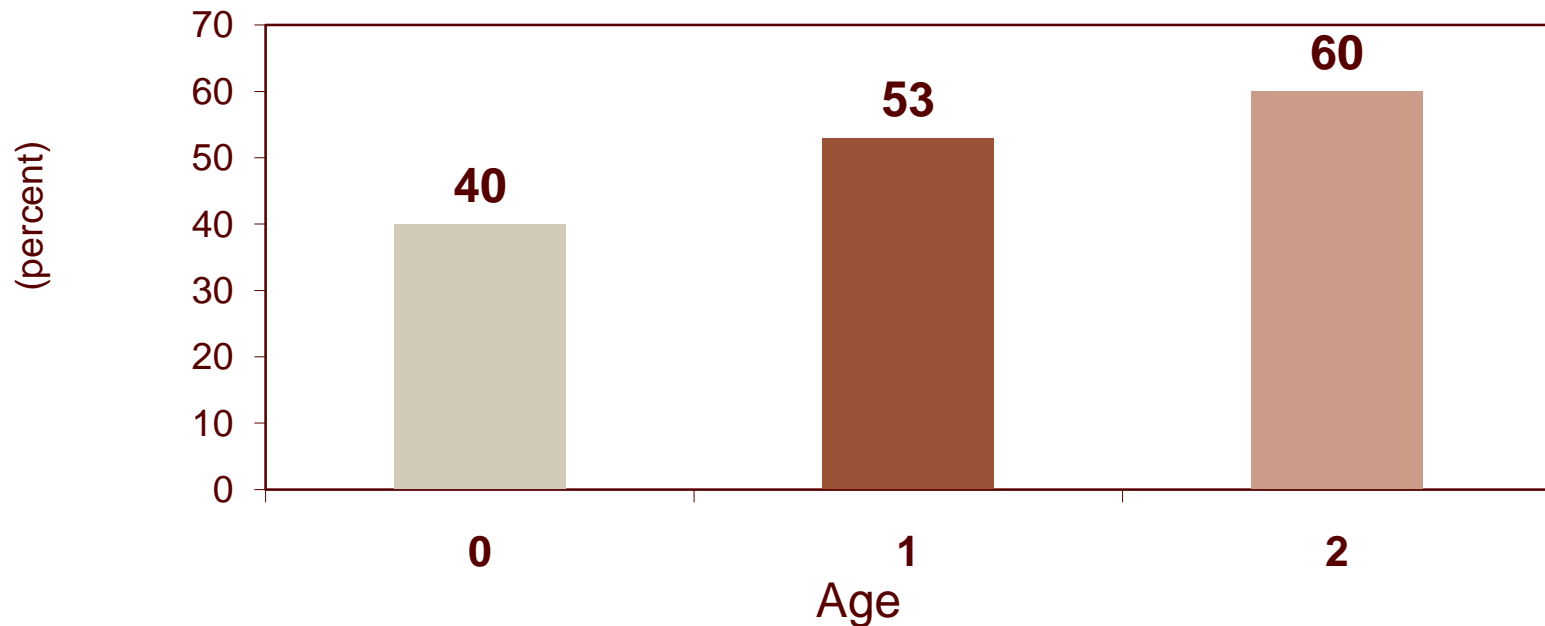
- Why focus on babies in child care?
- How can child care subsidy policies support continuity for babies and toddlers?
- Do your state's subsidy policies support stable, quality care for babies and toddlers?



# Why Focus on Babies and Toddlers in Child Care?

# Many babies and toddlers are in child care

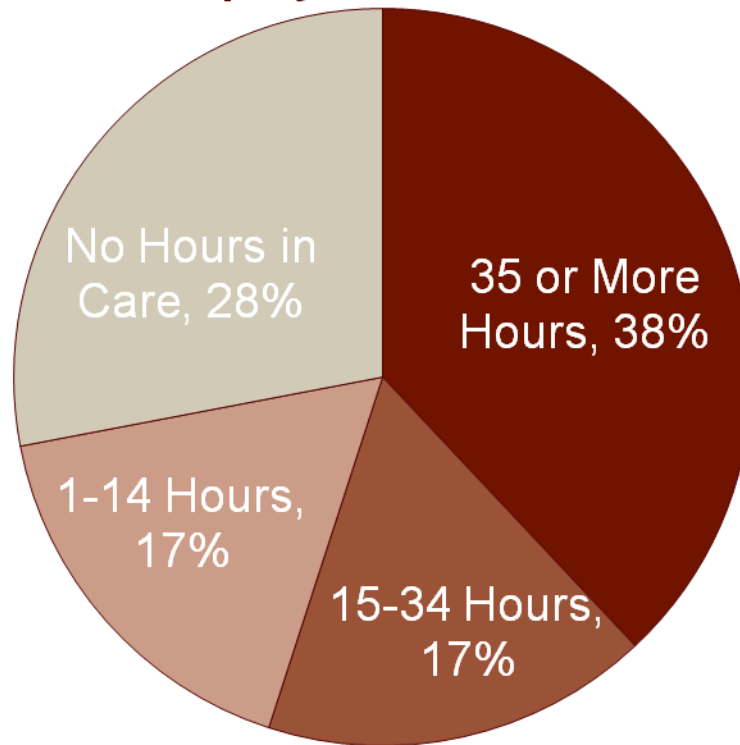
## Percentage of Children in Care by Age



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Program, National Household Education Survey 2001.

# Babies are in child care for many hours...

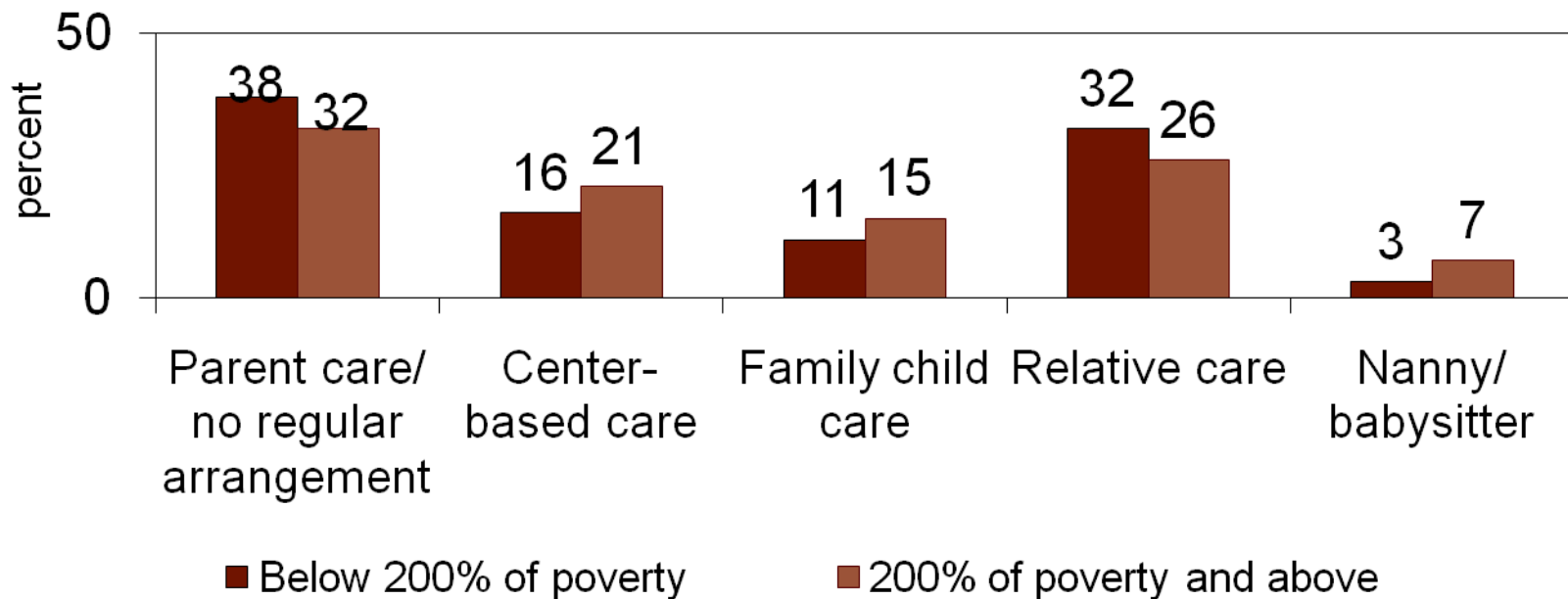
Hours Spent in Nonparental Care by Children Under 3 with Employed Mothers, 2002



Source: Jeffrey Capizzano and Regan Main, *Many Young Children Spend Long Hours in Child Care*, Urban Institute, 2005. Analysis of 2002 NSAF Data.

# ...and in a variety of settings

## Primary child care arrangements for children birth to 3 with employed mothers



Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Jeffrey Capizzano and Gina Adams, *Children in Low-Income Families are Less Likely to be in Center-Based Care*, Urban Institute, 2003.

# Quality Matters for All Children

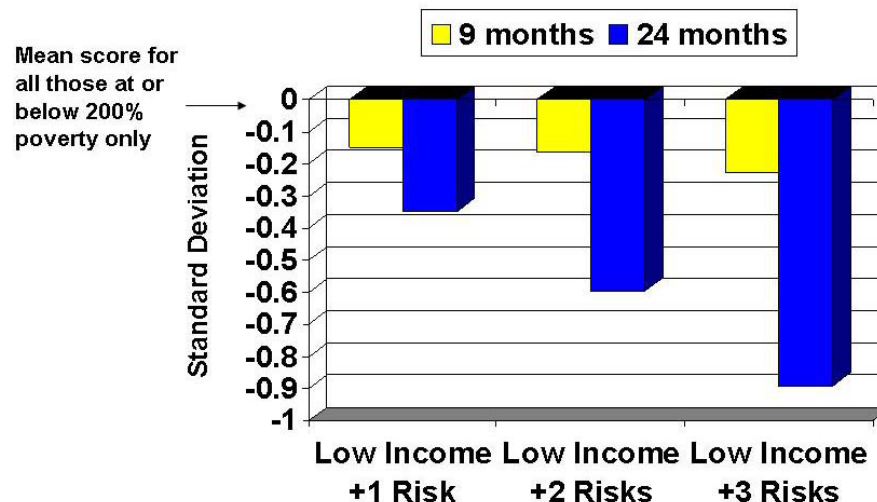
- Quality child care helps children across all developmental domains
- Negative impacts of low quality care are more likely felt among more disadvantaged children
- And especially for babies...



# Disparities Begin to Emerge Early

- Disparities in children's cognitive, social, behavioral, and health outcomes begin as early as 9 months.
  - Disparities grow larger by 24 months
  - Disparities are present by family income, race/ethnicity, home language and maternal education.

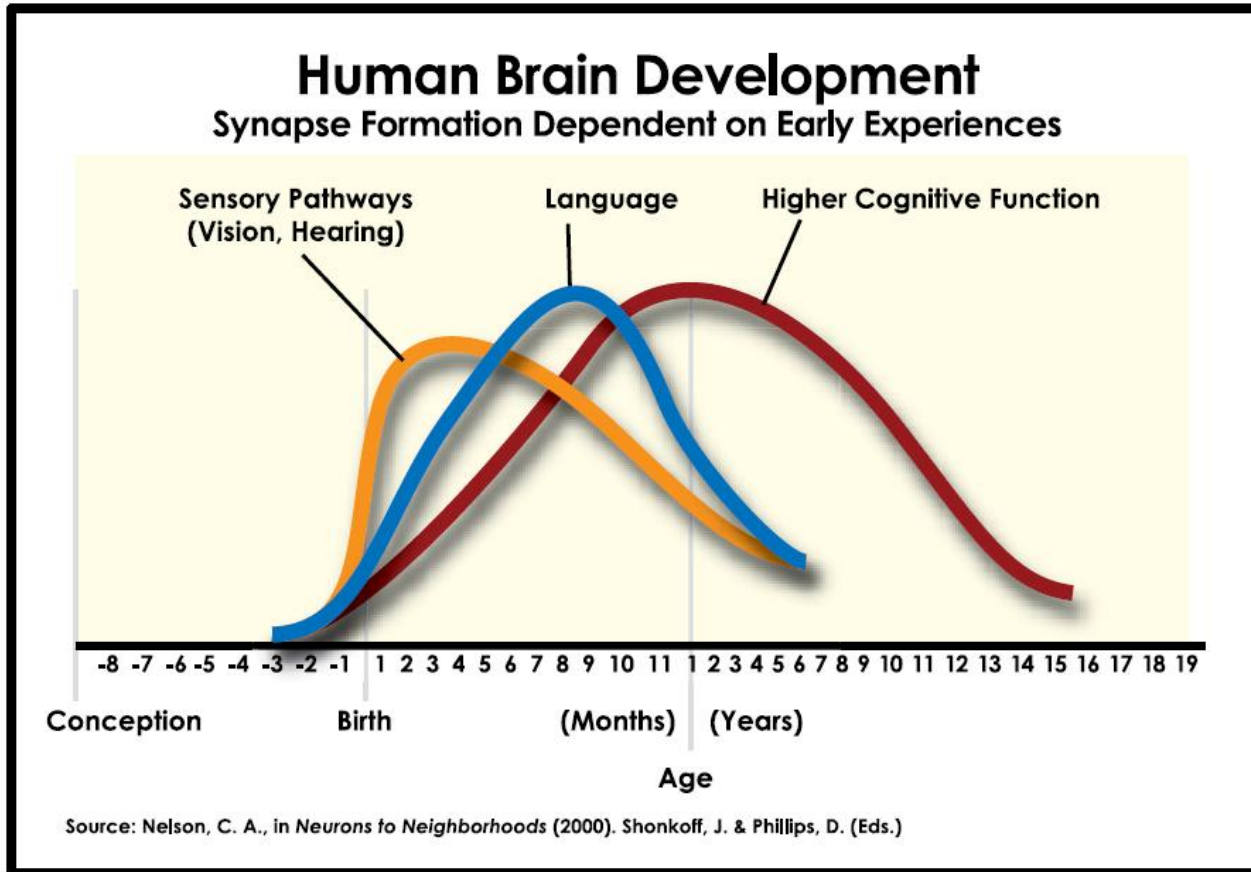
Disparities on the Bayley Cognitive Assessment Among Those At or Below 200% Poverty at 9 and 24 Months, by Cumulative Risk



Source: Child Trends, *Disparities in Early Learning and Development: Lessons from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study – Birth Cohort (ECLS-B)*.

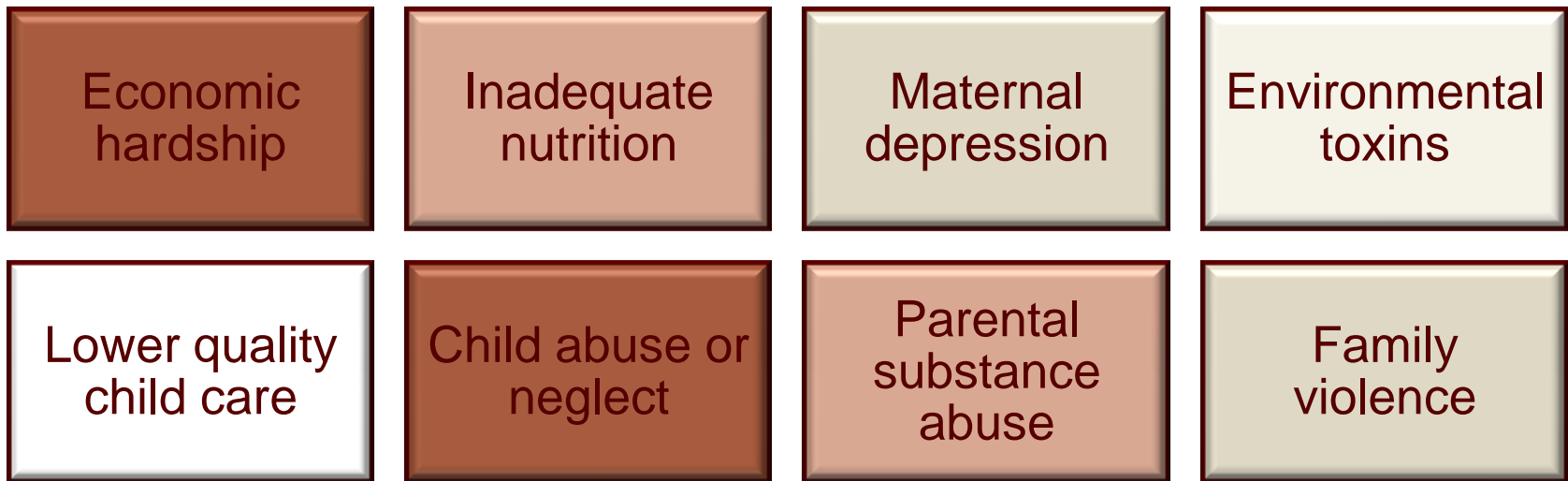


# ... and Grow Over Time



# High Quality Child Care is Especially Important for Children At Risk

- Research finds that these factors put babies and toddlers at risk for impaired development:



Source: National Center on Children in Poverty

# What Do Babies in Child Care Need?

Healthy and safe environments in which to explore and learn.

Nurturing, responsive providers and caregivers they can trust to care for them as they grow and learn.

Parents, providers, and caregivers supported by and linked to community resources.

Their families to have access to quality options for their care.

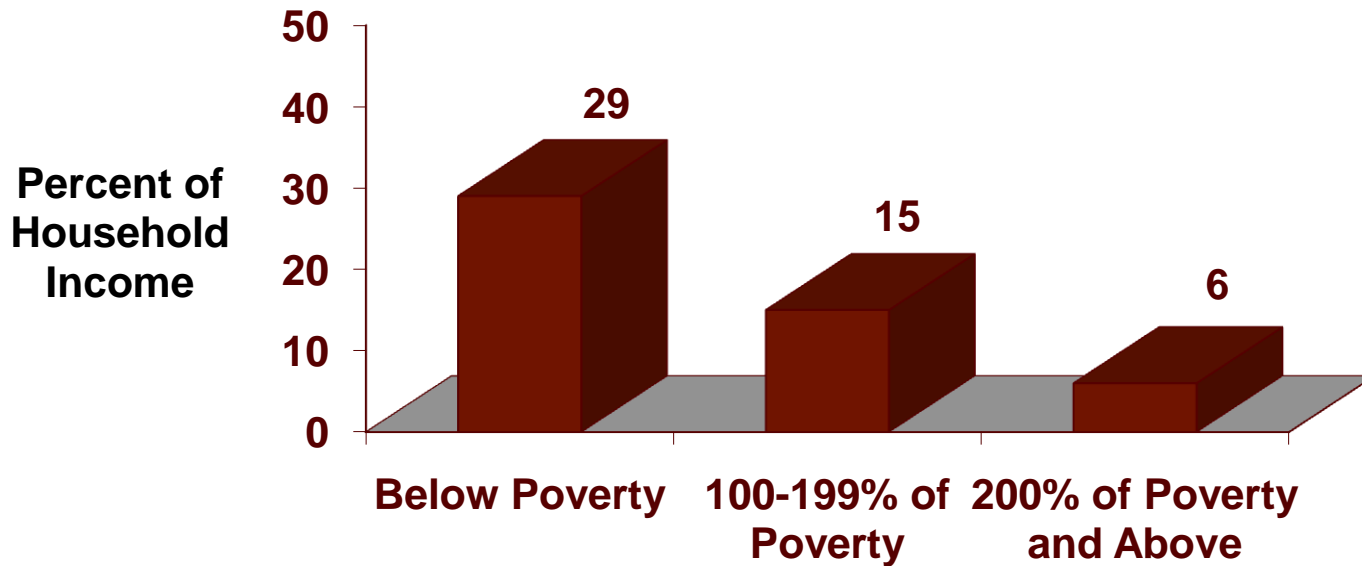
CLASP's Charting Progress for Babies in Child Care Policy Framework, [www.clasp.org/babiesinchildcare](http://www.clasp.org/babiesinchildcare)

# Child Care Stability is Critical for Babies and Toddlers

- Stable care arrangements support healthy development for babies and toddlers.
  - Stable arrangements support secure attachment with caregivers.
  - Frequent changes in care arrangements are stressful for babies.
- Babies in low-income families are particularly vulnerable to child care instability
  - Families have difficulty accessing stable, quality care.

# Child Care is Costly for Poor Families

Monthly Child Care Expenditures of Families with Employed Mothers as a Percent of Household Income



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *Who's Minding the Kids? Child Care Arrangements: Winter 2002*. 2005.

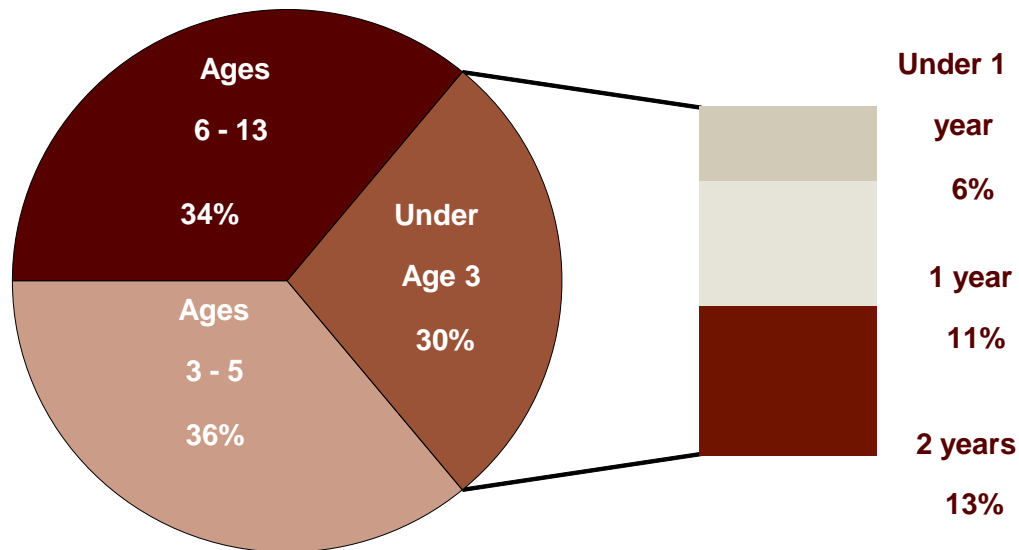
# Child Care Subsidies Support Family Economic Stability

- Access to child care subsidies increases the likelihood that parents are employed, and that they may remain employed for longer periods of time.
- Parents who receive child care subsidies appear to have longer periods of employment and higher earnings.

# How Can Subsidy Policies Support Continuity?

# Infants and Toddlers in CCDBG

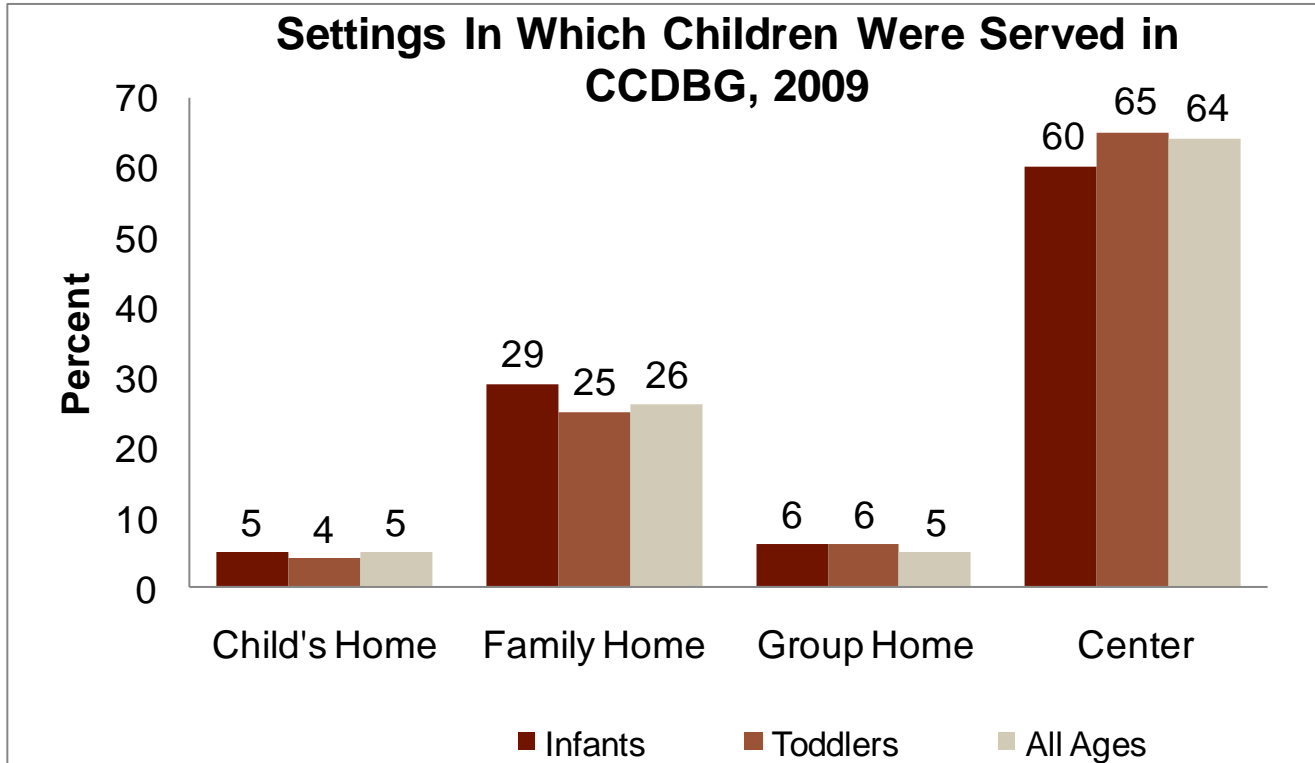
**Ages of Children Served in CCDBG, 2009**



Source: CLASP report, *Infants and Toddlers in the Child Care and Development Block Grant: 2009 Update*



# Infants and Toddlers in CCDBG



Source: CLASP report, *Infants and Toddlers in the Child Care and Development Block Grant: 2009 Update*

# How Can Subsidy Policies Support Continuity?

- Child care subsidies may expand child care access for low-income families.
- Child care subsidy policies may promote stable, quality infant/toddler child care.
  - Loss of subsidy = loss of child care for many families
- Policies that reduce families' burden will likely support higher take-up and longer duration of subsidy use.

# How Can Subsidy Policies Support Continuity?

- Subsidy policies can be designed to:
  - Help families obtain and maintain subsidies.
  - Help families access more child care options
    - Payment levels can allow families to access high-quality infant/toddler care.
    - Payment methods can support financial stability for child care providers.

# Help Families Obtain and Maintain Subsidies

- Provide information to families with young children on child care subsidies and quality child care.
  - Consider the languages and cultures of families with infants and toddlers in your community.
- Simplify the application and enrollment process and coordinate with other public benefit programs.

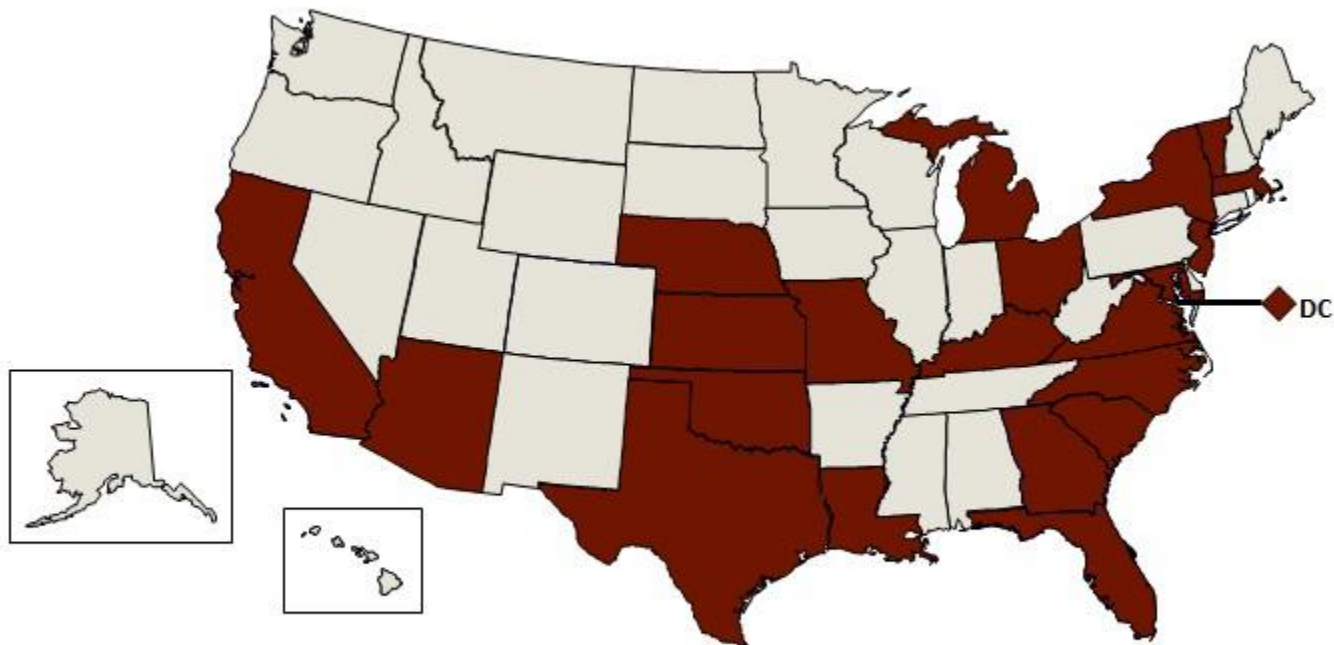


# Help Families Obtain and Maintain Subsidies

- Extend eligibility periods
  - Extend subsidy eligibility to 12 months for all children, or at least to children in EHS/child care partnerships or target families with stable work histories.
- Limit interim reporting
  - Require only minimal reporting of household changes
  - Only adjust subsidies for few, significant changes.

# Twenty-two states set *maximum* subsidy eligibility at 12 months

■ = STATES WITH 12-MONTH ELIGIBILITY



Source: National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center (NCCIC), *CCDF Eligibility Rules*, 2009

# Help Families Access More Child Care Options

- Provide adequate funding to providers to support infant/toddler care
  - In 2010, only 6 states had rates equal to or higher than the 75th percentile of current market rates for child care.
- Increase provider payment rates to centers and family homes that implement quality infant/toddler care
  - Pay higher rates for infant/toddler care that meets established standards (i.e. EHS, accreditation)
  - Pay higher rates to providers implementing strategies that benefit infants/toddlers (i.e. continuity of care models)
  - Contract directly with providers for high-quality infant/toddler care.

# Do your state's subsidy policies support access to stable, quality infant/toddler care?

*CLASP's Child Care Subsidy Policies Tool*

<http://www.clasp.org/babiesinchildcare/tools>



# Contact Information

Hannah Matthews  
hmatthews@clasp.org  
202-906-8006

Christine Johnson-Staub  
cjohnsonstaub@clasp.org  
202-906-8005



[www.clasp.org/babiesinchildcare](http://www.clasp.org/babiesinchildcare)