

Unstable Early Care & Education Services for Child Welfare-Supervised Children: Risk Factor for Foster Placement?



CCEEPRC

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Working Together
for Safety, Permanency
& Well-Being



1. Safety

- Protection from abuse & neglect
- ***Children safely maintained in their homes whenever possible & appropriate***

2. Permanency

3. Well-being

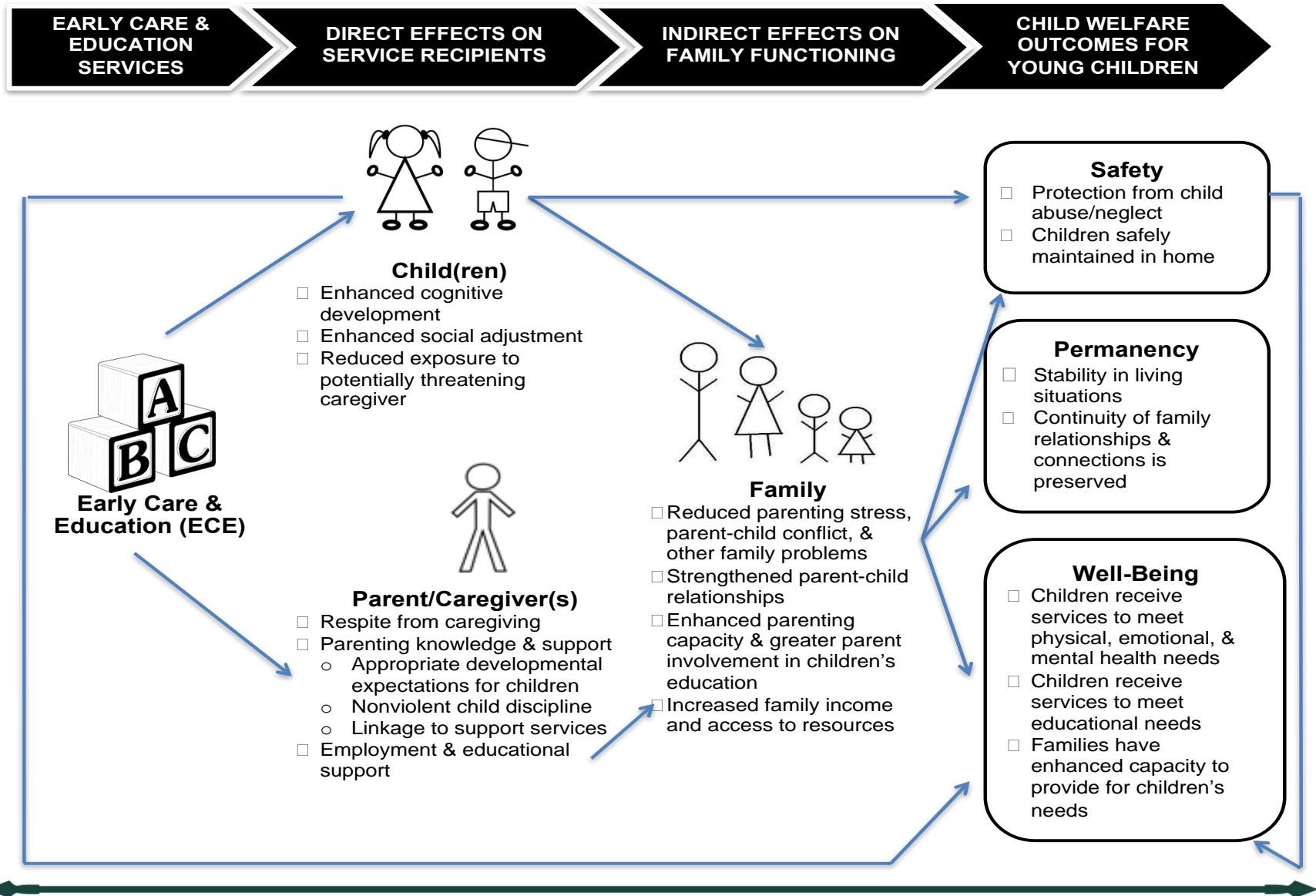


STUDY AIM: To determine if **stable ECE** services help maltreated children remain at home with their parents as opposed to being placed in foster care

RESEARCH QUESTION: To what extent does the continuity of ECE participation (*continuous, interrupted, or no participation*) affect the likelihood that 0-5 year olds reported to the U.S. child welfare system for suspected maltreatment will be placed in foster care?



WHY ECE MIGHT PREVENT PLACEMENT



- CWS-supervised children in Oregon who **remained in their parents homes instead of being placed in foster care** were more likely to have received child care subsidies (Lipscomb et al., 2012).
- States with more ‘accommodating’ CCDF rules for children in CWS had, on average, **fewer child removals from their parent’s care** than other states (Meloy, Lipscomb & Baron, 2015).



- Research on non-child welfare samples suggests that **stability is an important moderator of ECE outcomes**, amplifying positive effects on child development (Bratsch-Hines, Vernon-Feagans, & the Family Life Project Key Investigators, 2013; Bratsch-Hines Mokrova, Vernon-Feagans, & the Family Life Project Key Investigators, 2015; De Schipper, Tavecchio, Van IJzendoorn, & Linting, 2003; Morrissey, 2009; Pilarz & Hill, 2014; Ruprecht, Elicker, & Choi, 2016).
- Research on ECE stability with child welfare samples/outcomes sparse & mixed
 - 4-yr olds who with interrupted ECE were almost 3x more likely to be reported to CWS than 4-yr olds with continuous ECE or no ECE before age 8 (Li et al., 2011).
 - Duration of child care subsidy receipt unrelated to the likelihood of experiencing foster placement disruption (Meloy & Phillips, 2012)



- **DATA SOURCE:** National Survey of Child & Adolescent Well-being II (NSCAW II), nationally representative sample of children referred to CWS for suspected maltreatment
- **SAMPLE:** $N = 863$ children 0-59 months old & living with a permanent caregiver at wave 1
- **DESIGN/ANALYSIS:** Multivariate weighted logistic regression of continuity of ECE at wave 1 and risk of foster placement at wave 2



- **DEPENDENT VARIABLE:** Placed in foster care at wave 2 (yes/no)
- **INDEPENDENT VARIABLE:** ECE Stability/Continuity (3 levels)
 - *Continuous ECE Receipt:* At wave 1 permanent caregivers reported regularly receiving 'child care' during previous 12 months & still receiving regular care
 - *Interrupted ECE Receipt:* At wave 1 permanent caregivers reported regularly receiving 'child care' in previous 12 months but no longer receiving regular care
 - *No ECE:* Permanent caregivers reported not regularly receiving 'child care' during previous 12 months and not receiving care currently



- **Child welfare characteristics**
 - Maltreatment type
 - Substantiation status
 - Foster placement risk based on prior child welfare system involvement
 - Foster placement risk based on child/family characteristics
- **Child characteristics:** age, sex, race/ethnicity
- **Caregiver/household characteristics:** education, employment status, % federal poverty level



	Continuous Care Model			Interrupted Care Model		
	Odds Ratio	Std. Error	<i>t</i>	Odds Ratio	Std. Error	<i>t</i>
ECE Continuity						
Continuous Care (v. Interrupted & None)	0.85	0.51	-0.27			
Interrupted Care (v. Continuous & None)				4.37	2.94	2.19*
Prior CWS Involvement Risk Factor Score	1.54	0.24	2.76**	1.46	0.19	2.99**
Child Age in Yrs	0.63	0.13	-2.25*	0.60	0.11	-2.87**
Other Race (v. White)	0.17	0.12	-2.44*	0.17	0.11	-2.69**
Caregiver HS Educated	2.32	0.98	2.01*	2.78	1.48	1.92
100-200% FPL (v. >200% FPL)	9.52	9.40	2.28*	10.69	10.59	2.39*

- **Interrupted ECE may be a risk factor for foster placement, perhaps because it reflects unmet ECE need**
 - Interruption of ECE services could increase family & parenting stress, withdraw a needed source of parenting support, cause children to act out, and/or increase the amount of time that children spend with parents, any of which might elevate the risk of child maltreatment, which can lead to foster placement.
- **Or interrupted ECE may be symptomatic of an unmeasured family factor(s) that both disrupt ECE participation and increase foster placement risk** (e.g., housing instability, job loss, child behavior problems).
- **Should assess the ECE service history and needs of families with young children who enter the CWS, paying attention to the continuity of ECE services used**



OTHER THOUGHTS?



THANK YOU!

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A copy of the *Benefits of Early Care & Education for Children in the Child Welfare System* research-to-practice brief can be found at:
<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/benefits-early-care-education-for-children-in-the-child-welfare-system>

