
Child Care Stability and Child Development

Taryn Morrissey

American University

Child Care Policy & Research Consortium

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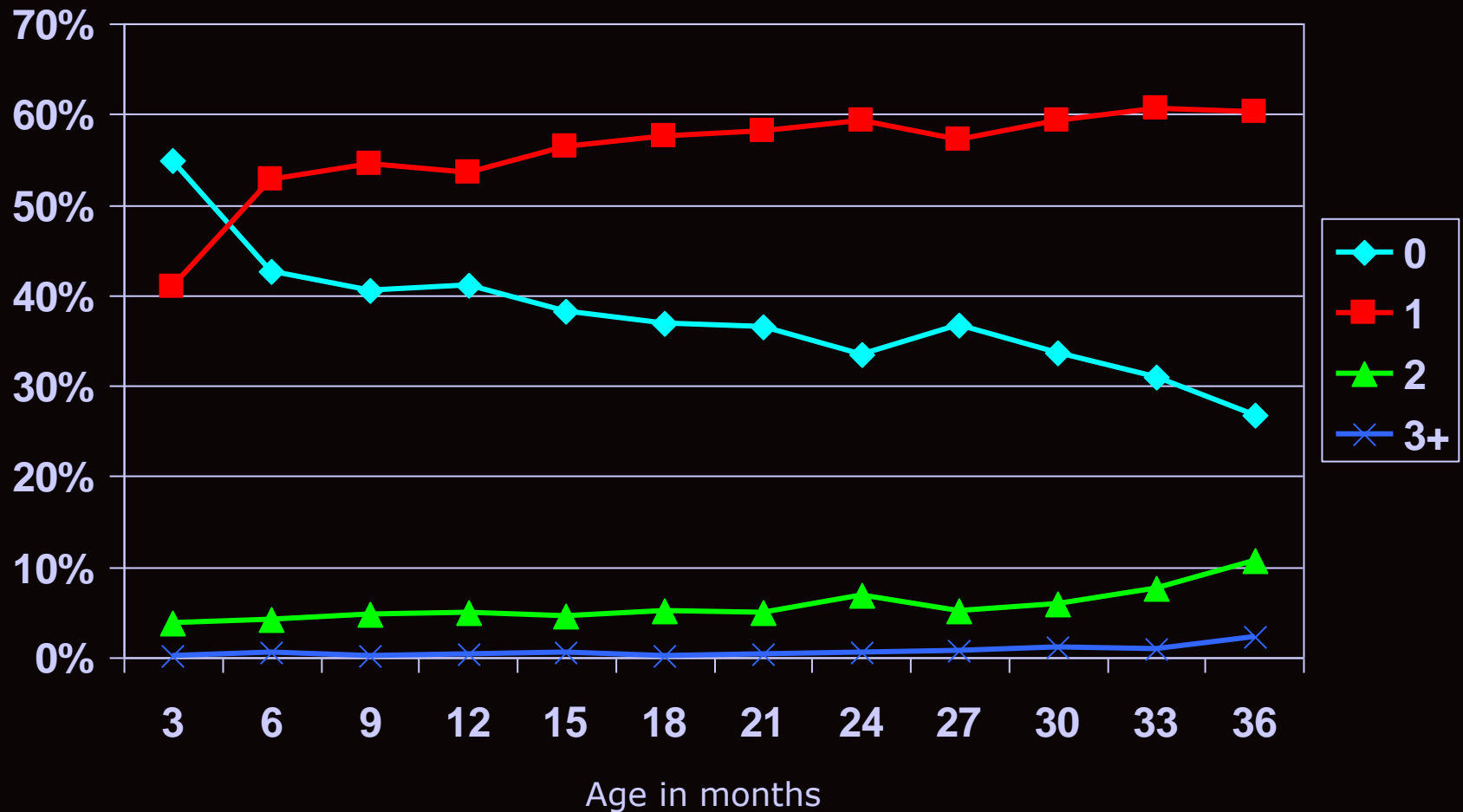
Patchworks of Care: A Day in the Life of a Hypothetical 4-year-old

Time of day	Multiple arrangements	Within-arrangement daily instability at a center
8:30am – 11:30am	Morning pre-K program	Morning pre-K teacher, classroom 1
11:30am – 2:30pm	Grandparents' home	Afternoon teacher, classroom 2
2:30pm – 5:30pm	Home with babysitter	Second afternoon teacher

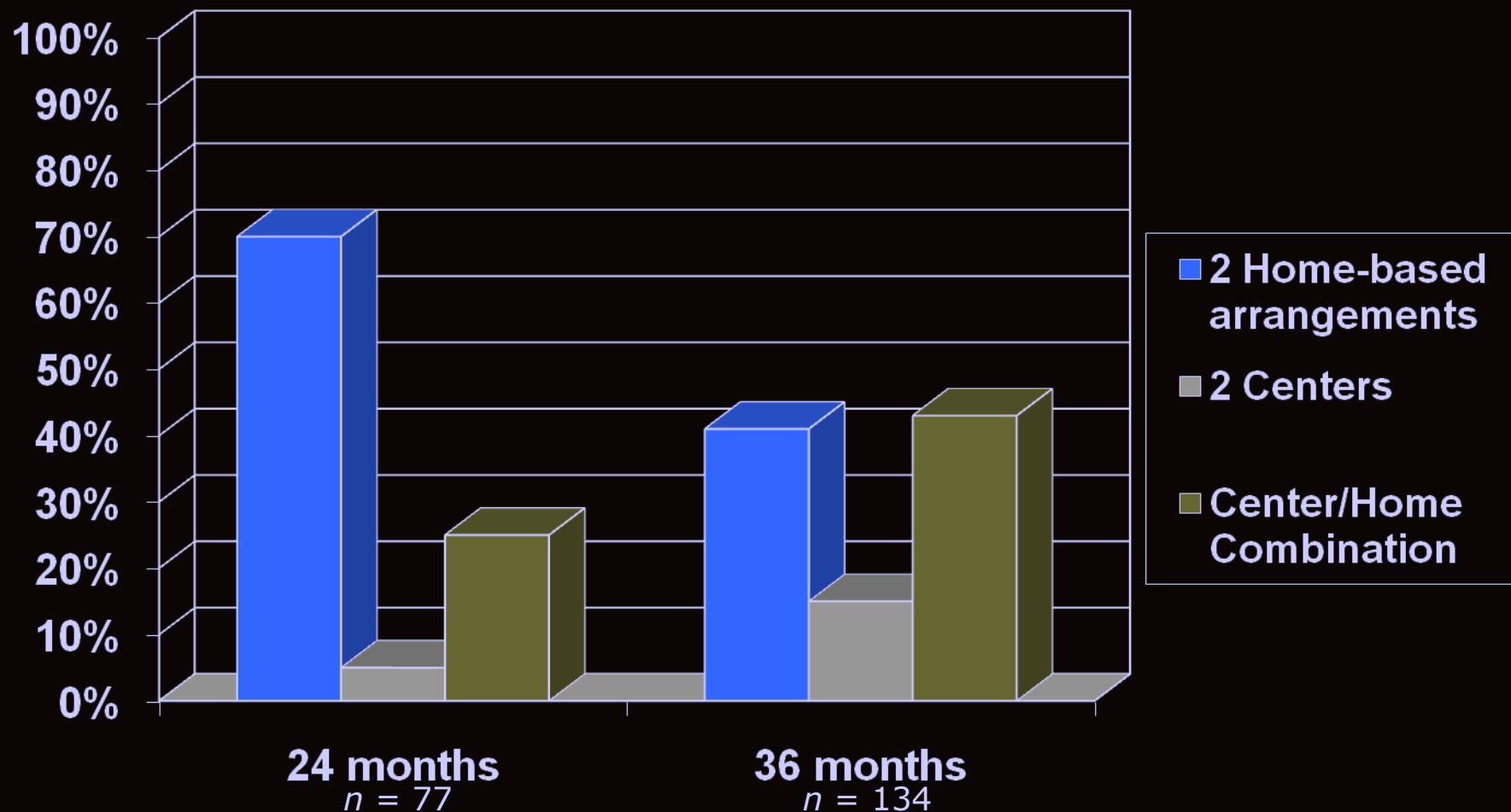
Patchworks of Care: 7 months in the Lives of 3 Hypothetical 4-year-olds

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Child 1	Center1	Center 1	Grand-parent Center 1	Center 2	Center 3	Center 3	Aunt
Child 2	Family care home	Family cc home Pre-K	Pre-K	Pre-K	Pre-K Uncle	Pre-K Center	Center
Child 3	Center 1 Teacher 1	Center 1 Teacher 1	Center 1 Teacher 2	Center 1 Teacher 3	Center 1 Teacher 3	Center 1 Teacher 3	Center 1 Teacher 4

of Nonparental Child Care Arrangements Among Children in NICHD SECCYD



Combinations of Care Types Among Children in 2 or More Arrangements



Hours in Each Arrangement

	<i>Primary</i>	<i>Secondary</i>	<i>Tertiary</i>
24 months	31.6 (1 - 96)	12.6 (1 - 61)	3.9 (1 - 16)
% 1-5 hrs/wk	5%	25%	45%
36 months	30.2 (1 - 80)	10.8 (1 - 99)	8.7 (1 - 60)
% 1-5 hrs/wk	8%	32%	48%

Note: Mean hours are shown. Ranges are in parentheses.

Morrissey, 2009

Research and Measurement Issues

- Datasets often confound 2 types of child care stability:
 - Multiple arrangements (concurrent)
 - Long-term stability (over time)
- Relatively little is known about:
 - Within-arrangement stability, across a day or over time (prevalence or impacts)
 - Annual patterns of instability - summer care
- Potential selection bias

Child Care Instability and Child Development

■ Daily instability

- Unpredictable routines, structure, and frequent teacher turnover linked with poorer child well-being and teacher-child interactions (De Schipper et al., 2003)

■ Multiple arrangements

- Greater #s of concurrent arrangements linked with poorer child behavior (De Schipper et al., 2004(a), 2004(b); Morrissey, 2009) and cognitive outcomes (Tran & Weinraub, 2006)

■ Long-term instability

- Greater #s of arrangements before kindergarten linked with poorer behavior (Loeb et al., 2004; NICHD ECCRN, 1998)

Some evidence that exposure to diverse settings is beneficial for children

- Children whose mothers and child care providers used different control strategies exhibited fewer behavior problems (Erwin et al, 1993)
- Children who experienced high levels of discontinuity in play objects at child care and at home displayed more cooperative social play and autonomy (Provost, 1994)
- Infants and toddlers displayed greater distress but fewer behavior problems immediately following a transition to a new classrooms and caregivers within a single center (Cryer et al., 2005)

Future Research Questions

1. How can we collect better data on child care stability?
2. How can we distinguish planned, developmentally appropriate child care changes/instability from unintentional or unpredictable changes?
3. Does the intentionality and predictability of child care changes moderate the effects of child care instability on child development?
4. What mechanisms underlie the links between child care instability and child development?
5. How do child and family characteristics moderate the impacts of child care stability?
6. How has the current economic downturn affect child care stability, and child well-being?
7. What policy changes can better support stability from the child's perspective?