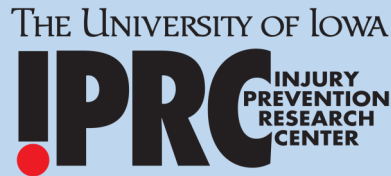


# Child Maltreatment Prevention

POLICIES INCREASING  
ELIGIBILITY FOR CHILD CARE  
SUBSIDIES

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*The University of Iowa Injury Prevention Research Center (UI IPRC) evaluated how states' policies shaping financial access to childcare subsidies relate to rates of child maltreatment. We used the National Child Abuse & Neglect Data System (NCANDS) to derive states' annual rates of child maltreatment and the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Policy Database to obtain four policy components determining families' financial access to child care subsidies.*

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## KEY FINDINGS

- Financially accessible child care subsidies may reduce instances of child maltreatment, particularly child abuse.
- Lower than expected rates of child maltreatment are predicted in states with policies that make it less difficult to qualify for child care subsidies by:
  - \*Having higher income eligibility levels
  - \*Not applying asset tests for eligibility
  - \*Having copay exemptions for families in poverty
  - \*Counting fewer sources of public support sources towards a family's income when determining eligibility

*(See back page for definitions)*

Within federal limitations, states can restrictively define conditions for child care subsidy eligibility and allowable benefits. Because of state-imposed restrictions, **only one in seven** potentially eligible children per federal guidelines receives childcare support.



Created by Setyo Ari Wibowo  
from the Noun Project

## What is child maltreatment?

Child maltreatment is an inclusive term for child neglect, physical abuse, emotional abuse and sexual abuse.

Effective prevention of child maltreatment prevents harms that persist across a lifespan, affecting a victim's physical and mental health, cognitive development, academic achievement, employment status, economic status, substance use behaviors, and violent/criminal behaviors. These harms can also affect the victim's family and generations to come.

## Why does income matter?

Children in families with low socioeconomic status are more than five times as likely to experience child maltreatment than those in families with high socioeconomic status. Therefore, policies that shape families' economic security have been looked to as ways to reduce child maltreatment.

Research has shown that minimum wage policies help improve a family's economic security and reduce rates of reported child maltreatment.

However, minimum wage policies do not remove certain key barriers to working like access to affordable child care. Access to child care increases parents participating in the workforce, which decreases financial hardship and improves economic security.

**Our research: Lower than expected rates of child maltreatment are predicted in states with policies that make it less difficult to qualify for child care subsidies by:**

- ➔ **Having higher income eligibility levels:** A \$100.00 increase in the income eligibility levels for families to qualify for child care subsidies was significantly associated with an expected decrease in the substantiated rate of child sexual abuse [IRR = 0.991, p = 0.04].
- ➔ **Not applying asset tests to determine eligibility:** States that apply an asset test (which makes it more difficult for families to qualify for the child care subsidy program) to determine a family’s eligibility for child care subsidies was associated with higher expected rates of substantiated abuse than states that did not have an asset test [IRR = 1.039, p = 0.09]. **Iowa has an asset test for eligibility = Not good**
- ➔ **Having copay exemptions for families in poverty:** Having copay exemptions for families in poverty (which would make it easier for families to participate in the child care subsidy program) was significantly associated with lower expected rates of substantiated child maltreatment [IRR = 0.843, p = 0.01]. **Iowa has copay exemptions for families in poverty = Good**
- ➔ **Counting fewer public support sources towards a family’s income when determining eligibility:** For every one-source increase in the sources of financial aid that counted towards a family’s income (making it more difficult to qualify for the childcare subsidy program), there is a predicted increase in rates of substantiated maltreatment [IRR = 1.037, p = 0.001], and substantiated abuse [IRR = 1.119, p = 0.009]. **Iowa does not count public aid towards eligibility = Good**

As of 2018, **IOWA had the 12th highest** annual state rate of substantiated child maltreatment at 1.63%.

