

# Can reductions in child poverty impact involvement with child protective services?

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## What can we learn from this study?

In 2019, the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) released [A Roadmap to Reducing Child Poverty](#), which included four policy proposals to reduce the number of children living in poverty. A growing body of research indicates that poverty during childhood has a direct and indirect impact on child welfare involvement. The aim of this study was to build off this research and simulate the reductions in child protective services involvement and foster care placements that are likely to result from implementation of the NAS policy packages. In addition to the introduction of the child allowance, the proposed policy packages include reforms to the Earned Income Tax Credit, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, and federal minimum wage.

### Study details:

- **Population:** Children and families in 50 states and the District of Columbia
- **Data source:** Current Population Survey (CPS-ASEC); National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) data
- **Methodology:** NAS Methodology, bounded estimates
- **Dates:** 2013-2017

## What are the critical findings?

Reducing child poverty based on three of the NAS policy packages will lead to reductions in child welfare system involvement.

- The number of child protective services **investigations would be reduced between 11.3% and 36.4%**, depending on the policy package, resulting in about 386,000 to 1.2 million fewer investigations per year.
- **Reductions in the number of investigations would reduce racial disproportionality**, with an estimated reduction in child welfare involvement of 18.7% to 42.8% for Black/African American children and 13.3% to 47.6% for Latino/Hispanic children.
- An estimated **16,000 to 23,000 fewer children would be removed from their homes and placed in out-of-home care** each year.

## Why is this important for our work?

Poverty alone does not constitute neglect or necessitate child welfare involvement, and access to basic necessities is fundamental to the well-being and economic success of every family. The findings from this study elevate the importance of providing families living in poverty with economic and community-based supports as a better alternative to child welfare system involvement. Studies show that families use economic supports for essentials like food and rent.

This summary synthesizes the findings from a single research study. Please see related resources: [How do economic supports benefit families and communities?](#), [Do states with refundable Earned Income Tax Credits have lower rates of children involved in foster care?](#) and [Can policy changes reduce child poverty?](#)

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