Goals of the Presentation

- To make the research case for focusing on early childhood policy, especially for low-income children
- To highlight findings from Improving the Odds for Young Children (ITO)
- To show how you can use the ITO database and state profiles
- To seek feedback on how we can make these resources more useful

Defining Key Terms

- **Young Children**: All children before their 6th birthday.
- **Poverty**: Household income at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL), or $17,170 for a family of three in 2007.
- **Low-Income**: Household income at or below twice the federal poverty level, or $34,340 for a family of three in 2007.

The Research

**Poverty is associated with adverse outcomes**

- Poverty can:
  - Impede children’s cognitive development and their ability to learn
  - Contribute to behavioral, social, and emotional problems
  - Cause and exacerbate poor health among children
  - Effects of poverty on children’s health & development depend on the timing, duration, and intensity of poverty in childhood.
  - The risks posed by poverty appear to be greatest among children who experience poverty when they are young and among children who experience persistent and deep poverty.

The Research

*Early experiences determine whether a child’s brain architecture will provide a strong or weak foundation for all future learning, behavior, and health*

- The interaction of genes and experience shape the architecture of the developing brain.
- Once the architecture is built, it cannot be changed, and behavior becomes more difficult to change.
- Stable and stimulating environments help create a sturdy foundation for later school achievement, economic productivity, and responsible citizenship.

The Research

**The gaps show up early in life**

- At age 4, children below the poverty line are 18 months below the developmental norm for their age, and by age 10, the gap is still present.
- By third grade, children with well-educated parents know 12,000 words—3 times as many as children with less-educated parents.
- Early school failure is highly correlated with later school failure and poor employment outcomes in adulthood.
The Research

**Exposure to multiple risks compounds the chances of poor child outcomes**

Young children’s exposure to multiple risk factors, 2006

- 0 Risk: 54%
- 1-2 Risks: 31%
- 3+ Risks: 16%

These risks include: lives in poverty, with a single parent, in households where both parents have less than a high school education, in families with parents who do not speak English well or at all, and/or two parents with no paid employment.


Improving the Odds for Young Children

- Is intended to
  - Sharpen the debate on effective state policies to promote early childhood development
  - Create a national dialogue
- Is based on
  - 50 state data bases, and is not definitive list of what states should be or are doing
- Provides
  - State-specific profiles
  - A national overview of the state of the states, including recent trends
  - 50-state data tables for comparisons across the states
  - A baseline to monitor trends

Underlying Principles

The three-legged stool of early childhood development:
1. quality health care
2. quality child care and early learning opportunities
3. nurturing and economically secure parents

- Families earning less than 200 percent of the poverty level may struggle to meet the basic needs of their children.
- State policy choices matter, and can help level the playing field.
- Research should inform state policies

I. Highlights: Health and Nutrition

- 41 states provide access to public health insurance for young children in low-income families.
- But many children who are eligible for Medicaid are not receiving the dental and health screenings that are consistent with pediatric practice and can prevent or reduce future problems.
- Only six states allow children who are at-risk for developmental delays to receive early intervention services.

I. Medicaid/SCHIP Income Eligibility, 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Children (0-5) 2006</th>
<th>Working parents 2006</th>
<th>Children (1-5) 2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>200%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>160%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nevada</td>
<td>200%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>160%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>200%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>160%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>185%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>160%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>185%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>160%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>250%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>250%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data presented as a percentage of the federal poverty level (FPL).

Income eligibility in Colorado, Kansas, and Washington represent a separate SCHIP program.

References:

II. Highlights: Early Care and Education

- 16 states provide access to child care subsidies for young children in low-income families.
- State child care licensing requirements are not promoting nurturing, high quality care.
  - Although 23 states have child care licensing standards that require infants and toddlers to be assigned a consistent primary care provider.
  - 8 states meet recommended standards for staff/child ratios and maximum class sizes for eighteen-month-old children in child care.
  - 14 states meet the recommended licensing standards for four-year-old children in child care.
III. Highlights: Parenting and Economic Security

- More than half the states are using minimum wage and tax policies to support family economic security.
  - 31 states have increased the minimum wage.
  - In 15 of the 42 states that taxed family income in 2006, a family of three was not exempt from paying state income tax when family income was below the poverty level.

- Few parents, and even fewer low-income parents, can afford to stay home with their newborn and establish a strong relationship.
  - 6 states provide paid medical/maternity leave.
  - 28 exempt single parents receiving TANF with a child under age 1 from the work requirement.
  - 18 reduce the work requirements for single parents with children under age 6.

National Findings: The Big Picture

- Income eligibility for health insurance and child care subsidies is uneven across states.
  - Only 15 states provide access to both health insurance and child care subsidies for families earning at 200% of the poverty level.

  ...and within states
  - 47 states have a higher income eligibility threshold for young children’s health insurance than for child care subsidies.
  - In Missouri, the threshold is almost three times higher for health insurance (300 percent of poverty for young children) than for child care subsidies (110 percent of poverty for a family of three).

Medicaid/SCHIP Income Eligibility, Ages 1-5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Children (0-4)</th>
<th>Working parents</th>
<th>Children (1-5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td>200%</td>
<td>107%</td>
<td>200%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>235%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>235%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>185%/133%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>400%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td>200%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>133%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data presented as a percentage of the federal poverty level (FPL).

Sources:

While most low-income children have access to health insurance, their parents do not.
Medicaid-insured children are not receiving their well-checks.

Improving the Odds for Young Children

Access to Early Childhood Programs is Limited (2005)

For More Information
OR
Suggestions on How to Improve the Database:

Helene Stebbins
stebbins@nccp.org

Dr. Jane Knitzer
knitzer@nccp.org

http://nccp.org/projects/improvingtheodds.html

SIGN UP FOR NCCP’S UPDATES!