

Addressing Social Determinants of Health in Early Life: Policy Implications and Opportunities

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Overview

- Recap extent of SES-related risks to healthy development
- Review effective, non-clinical interventions for reducing risks and improving health of young children and their families
- Consider the adequacy of social investment in the healthy development of economically disadvantaged young children
- Underscore importance of coordinating and integrating services to accelerate progress

A Robust Definition of Child Health*

The Institute of Medicine Committee on Evaluation of Children's Health defined child health in terms of **functional capabilities** and **optimal development**:

...the extent to which individual children or groups of children are able or enabled to

(a) develop and realize their potential,

(b) satisfy their needs, and

(c) develop the capacities that allow them to interact successfully with their biological, physical, and social environments

*IOM, Board on Children, Youth and Families. *Children's Health, The Nation's Wealth: Assessing and Improving Child Health*. Washington, DC: NAP, 2004.

Prevalence of SES-related risks to children's healthy development

- Economic disadvantage is prevalent among American families with children, especially those with young children
- Of the 75 million children under 18 yrs in the U.S., 31 million—42%—live in families with incomes < 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL)*
- Almost 10 million of these low-income children are younger than 5 years (46% of the under-5 cohort)
- More than 5 million children under age 5—1 in every 4—live in impoverished families, 60 percent of which are headed by a single parent

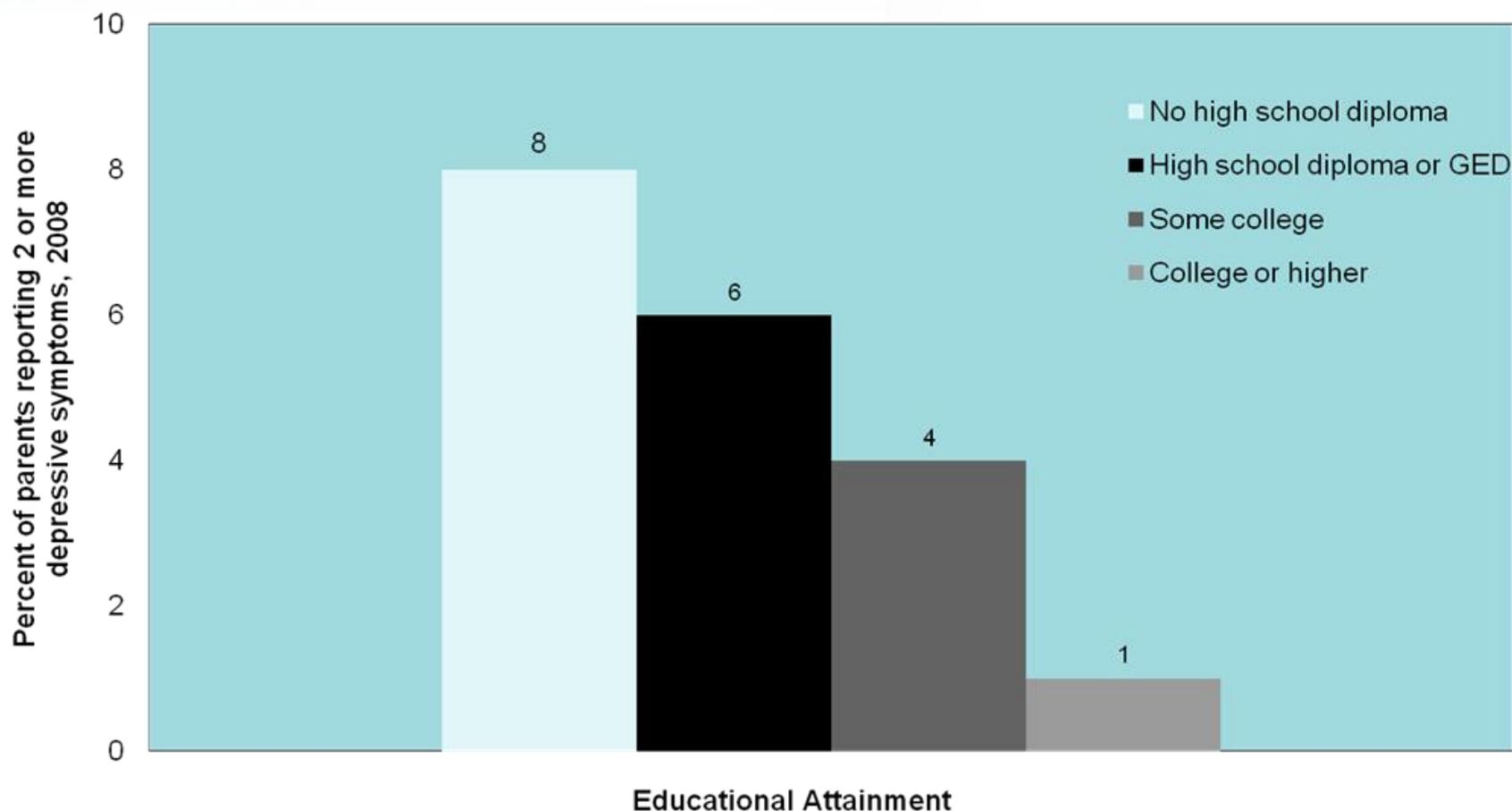
*March 2010 Current Population Survey data

Coincidence of Risks to Healthy Development

- Socioeconomic and demographic risk factors to healthy child development
 - Poverty
 - Single-parent household
 - Low parental educational attainment
 - Large family size
 - Inability to buy or own a home
- Two-thirds of American children experienced none or just one of these conditions, while 7 percent experienced 4 or all 5 of them.*

*Moore K et al., 2006 A sociodemographic risk index. *Soc Indic Res* 75(1):45-81.

Parental depression and educational attainment



Source: Analyses by Child Trends of 2008 National Health Interview Survey data.

Evidence-Based Interventions for Infants and Young Children at Higher Risk for Developmental Problems

- (Leaving aside critical core set of *clinical* services for pregnancy and childbirth and for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers)
- Family supportive services
 - Home visiting
 - Parent education and training
- Comprehensive early childhood development programs
- Child care services
 - Financial subsidies
 - Quality improvements
- Family income supplementation

Supports for Families with Infants and Young Children

- Home visiting
 - Visitors can be nurses, social workers, counselors, trained nonprofessionals
 - Most consistently positive results in high-intensity programs (>1 year, at least 1 visit/week)
 - Associated with improved parenting and children's socio-emotional and cognitive development and less risky adolescent behaviors
 - On average home visiting programs for at-risk mothers and children yield savings of >\$2 for every dollar invested

Supports for Families with Infants and Young Children

- Information, education and training for parents
 - Resource directories and referrals for health care, child care, education and developmental assessments
 - Informal peer support groups
 - Social marketing/media campaigns to reinforce normative behavior management techniques
 - Parenting classes and individual or group counseling
- Triple—P: Program model of tiered interventions based on risk achieved countywide reductions (> 1 S.D.) in child maltreatment, out-of-home placements and hospital injury reports related to maltreatment*

*Prinz RJ et al. 2009. Population-based prevention of child maltreatment: the US Triple P system population trial. *Prevention Science* 10 (1):1-12.

Comprehensive Early Childhood Development (ECD) Programs

- Model programs incorporate health-related components such as developmental assessments, immunizations, and dental services; parental engagement and education, high-quality nutrition
- ECD programs often lack the resources and staff to provide full array of services
- Evaluations of comprehensive ECD programs report modest gains in school readiness, cognitive abilities and social skills (~0.3 of a S.D.)
- Longer follow-up studies find that although early cognitive gains fade out in the primary grades ECD program participants have higher rates of high school completion, higher incomes, greater economic self-sufficiency, and lower rates of involvement with criminal justice system*
- These outcomes are associated with better health

*Heckman J. 2007. The economics, technology and neuroscience of human capability formation. PNAS 104 (33): 13250-55

The Numbers are in Child Care: Affordability and Access

- Over half of all low-income children under age 5 are in non-parental care for more than 30 hours/week
- Just 1 in 10 of the 5.6 million low income children under age 3 are served by Early Head Start, HS, or benefit from CCDBG subsidies
- Over past 10 years State provider payments under CCDBG have declined relative to market rates
- The number of legally operating child care spaces (also used by school-age children) is 1 million fewer than the 12 million children under age 6 in child care
- Poor families spend ~1/3 of their income on child care; families with incomes >200% FPL spend about 7%

The Numbers are in Child Care: Quality Improvement

- State requirements for home- and center-based child care are often inadequate to ensure quality
 - 21 states have no minimum education requirements for teachers in centers
 - 28 states do not regulate family child care providers with 3 or fewer children
- The average hourly earnings⁽²⁰⁰⁸⁾ of a child care worker (\$11.32) are less than two-thirds of private industry average for non-supervisory workers; median annual wage: \$17,440
- Scholarships and wage supplements (T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE\$) sponsored by Child Care Services Association and States, boost educational levels of workers and increase retention

ARRA and Post-ARRA Federal Investments

- One-time increases in the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act:
 - Early Head Start-\$1.1 billion
 - Head Start-\$1 billion, with \$100 m designated for State Early Childhood Development Councils
 - Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG)-\$2 billion
 - WIC-\$500 million
- CCDBG budget authority:
 - \$2 billion in FY 08
 - \$4.1 billion in FY 09 (ARRA funds to be spent over FY 09/FY 10)
 - \$2.1 b in FY 2010
 - \$?? In FY 2011 (\$2.8 billion [House] \$3.1 billion [Senate])
- Original 1996 authorization of CCDBG has never been renewed—quality/performance reforms await reauthorization

Family Income Supplementation

- Cash or in-kind benefits—food, housing, medical services and child care—associated with better child health, development and academic achievement
- WIC, school lunch and breakfast, and home energy assistance (LIHEAP) both reduce family financial burdens and are positively related to child well-being
- Experimentally designed income supplement programs both in the US and abroad have demonstrated positive child health or developmental impacts
 - Opportunity NYC-Family Rewards
 - Preliminary results: students increased school attendance, test scores in high school, used ER services less and dental services more

*Riccio J et al. 2010. www.mdrc.org/publications/549/overview.html

More Effective Services to Ensure Young Children's Healthy Development

- Federal initiatives to promote services integration
 - Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS): Small grants to States for trans-agency collaborations in early childhood service systems
 - Proposed Early Learning Challenge Fund: competitive grants to states to improve child care and ECD program standards and quality
- State models
 - NC's Smart Start program supports systems integration through local ECD councils
 - Commonwealth Fund's Assuring Better Child Health and Development (ABCD) program supports states efforts to improve developmental services and linkages between primary care and other service providers
- We have building blocks for more effective systems to support healthy child development
- Must elevate healthy child development as a national priority to make investments commensurate with needs and to spur integration of ECD services

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