

Children’s Interagency Coordinating Council FY 2024 Report to Congress

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

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I. Background and Overview

A. Background

As part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023, Congress provided funding for the Children’s Interagency Coordinating Council (CICC). On page 1957 of the Explanatory Statement that accompanies the legislation,⁷ Congress instructed the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as follows:

“Children’s Interagency Coordinating Council.—The agreement includes \$3,000,000 for the Children’s Interagency Coordinating Council to foster greater coordination and transparency on child policy across agencies. The Council shall enter into agreement with NASEM [the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine] to prepare a report to Congress analyzing federal policies that have affected child poverty. The study should rely on the U.S. Census Bureau Supplemental Poverty Measure, among other sources of information. The Council will also examine and periodically report on a broad array of cross-cutting issues affecting child well-being.”

The CICC is informed by A Roadmap to Reducing Child Poverty,¹ published in 2019 by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM). Similar to scope of that report, the CICC focuses on all children, ages 0 to 17, in the U.S. Parents and caregivers have an important role in promoting child well-being and reducing child poverty. For those reasons, the CICC examines well-being issues and child poverty from a multi-generational perspective. On behalf of HHS, the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) is responsible for supporting and coordinating the work of the CICC.

B. Membership and Structure

The CICC is made up of ten federal departments, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Defense, Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, the Interior, Justice, Labor, and the Treasury and the Social Security Administration. These ten federal departments and agencies represent at least 140 federal benefits and programs that serve children and families. The CICC structure promotes engagement at multiple levels of leadership across each Department by creating a leadership structure that involves both federal appointees and a Coordinating Committee made up of senior career-level leaders to prioritize and direct council activities.

A key priority of the CICC in its first year was the engagement of people who have experienced poverty themselves to inform and support the work of the CICC. Beginning in January 2024, CICC launched a national recruitment seeking individuals with first-hand, direct experience with poverty as a child, parent, and/or caregiver to serve in the role of an expert consultant. From an applicant pool of more than 500 candidates, the CICC recruited 20 individuals to serve as expert consultants throughout FY 2024. More information about the recruitment process for expert consultants, including the eligibility criteria, can be accessed [here](#). Expert consultants engaged in a number of CICC projects, including, but not limited to, facilitating listening sessions, presenting at national events and Committee meetings, contributing to research and the quarterly newsletter, engaging in consultation, and participating in federal meetings and workgroups.

C. Goals and Priorities Overview for FY 2024

In its inaugural year, goals, priorities, and workstream areas were identified by the CICC to focus its collaboration and coordination efforts in FY 2024 and inform long-term planning. The CICC’s two 2024

¹National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2019. A Roadmap to Reducing Child Poverty. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/25246>.

focus areas were informed by insights from key informant interviews conducted in FY 2023, shared priorities among member agencies, and input from the pool of expert consultants.

1. Workstream 1: Shared Learning Effort

The CICC determined a key priority for the first year was to develop and execute a shared learning agenda to promote transparency and awareness of relevant child policy and efforts. This includes building knowledge from, with, and for federal and external partners, including individuals and communities with real, firsthand experience with poverty.

2. Workstream 2: Child Care as a Work Support for Families Experiencing Poverty

The CICC prioritized a second workstream to identify opportunities for federal collaboration and coordination. The CICC focused on exploring the challenges and opportunities related to child care as a support for economic stability for families experiencing poverty. This included increasing awareness of the federal landscape related to current child care efforts, including identifying available child care data, exploring child care access for children with disabilities, and understanding availability of and access to expanded/non-traditional hour child care.

II. Activities and Accomplishments for FY 2024

A. Workstream 1: Shared Learning Effort

To foster greater transparency across the member agencies, the CICC engaged in multiple activities to increase understanding and awareness of relevant federal child poverty and well-being efforts, needs, and opportunities. Each member agency was engaged to identify relevant topics and strategies to promote shared learning. The member agencies identified the following topics of cross-cutting interest for the FY 2024 year: food security, benefit access and utilization, employment and training, children's mental/behavioral health, child- and family-serving workforce, and well-being needs of children in non-parental care. To support this workstream, the CICC facilitated an internal knowledge exchange across nine member agencies, including parents. To promote public transparency of CICC activities, the CICC hosted a public knowledge exchange in partnership with three member agencies, disseminated four newsletters, and launched a new website landing page.

1. Kick-Off Event

In November 2023, a kickoff event was held for the CICC at the HHS headquarters in the District of Columbia. The event was also livestreamed for invitees not in the area; the recording is available [here](#). The kickoff event began with opening remarks providing a summary of the child poverty data, followed by a presentation on NASEM's A Roadmap to Reduce Child Poverty (2019), which noted that there are many evidence-based child poverty reduction approaches. The first panel featured a variety of nonfederal perspectives, including researchers, a practitioner, a family advocate, and a state administrator. This panel highlighted the importance of engaging families with real, firsthand experience in addressing child poverty and improving well-being. Panelists also noted the importance of involving fathers, providing direct economic supports for families, and asset building. A second panel focused on federal efforts related to child poverty and well-being, highlighting work led by the Departments of Agriculture, Labor, and the Treasury, as well as HHS.

2. Convening Related Interagency Groups

In April 2024, the CICC identified and hosted a convening with 21 federal interagency groups that relate to child policy. The purpose of this meeting was to encourage communication and information sharing across interagency groups and promote shared learning, identify opportunities to strengthen shared

work, increase efficiencies, and avoid duplication of efforts. Each interagency group provided information on its composition and focus. The CICC is the only federal interagency group that focuses on all children, up to age 18, and focuses on the coordination of federal child policy, with a particular focus on well-being and poverty. The CICC continues to coordinate and share updates on the CICC with other interagency groups.

3. Coordinating Committee Meetings

Beginning in July 2024, the Coordinating Committee of senior-level career leaders from across member agencies devoted time at each meeting to present relevant policies, programs, research, and tools on topics of interest. Member agencies presented on one or more topic areas: employment and training programs, the child and family serving workforce, and children in non-parental care. Parents also presented on the topic areas and emphasized the importance of engaging family, youth, and communities to inform collaboration and coordination efforts and investing in prevention and peer support. Following each presentation, Coordinating Committee members and parents engaged in discussion to identify intersecting efforts and opportunities for collaboration and coordination.

4. Newsletters

In February, July, August, and September of 2024, the CICC disseminated newsletters to provide updates on CICC activities, including a feature article on a CICC topic of interest and highlighting relevant federal agency efforts and interagency collaboration. ASPE coordinated across all the member agencies to prioritize the topics of interest and to develop and refine content for each newsletter. The CICC released two 2024 special edition newsletters in February and September, which featured an event recap of the kick-off event and July knowledge exchange, respectively. The CICC also released two feature topic newsletters in May and August, which focused on child food security and children's mental health, respectively. The newsletters were disseminated widely, with a growing subscriber list of more than 500 people and average open rate of 62.75 percent, well above industry benchmarks.

5. Knowledge Exchange

In July 2024, the CICC held a public knowledge exchange titled *Improving Benefit Access and Utilization for Children and their Families Experiencing Poverty*. The event was hosted by HHS, in partnership with the Department of Labor and Social Security Administration. This knowledge exchange was moderated by federal leaders and featured panel presentations from researchers, state leaders, and parents with firsthand experience with poverty who identified challenges and discussed strategies related to benefit access and utilization. The panelists identified stigma, administrative burden, and benefits cliffs as barriers to access and utilization and emphasized the importance of listening to families and communities to better understand needs, inform strategies, identify efficiencies, and implement solutions. The event had more than 200 live attendees and a copy of the event recording can be accessed [here](#).

6. Website

In September 2024, a public landing page for the CICC was launched on the youth.gov website. The landing page compiles relevant CICC materials, including previous Reports to Congress, quarterly newsletters, public event recordings, information about expert consultants with firsthand experience with poverty, and research on child poverty and well-being. The landing page can be accessed [here](#).

B. Workstream 2: Child Care as a Work Support

CICC member agencies also focused on learning about child care as a work support. In the context of the CICC, child care is intended as a broad term to include a range of child care services, including early

childhood programs, as well as afterschool and out-of-school time activities for school-age and older children that enable parents to work.

The CICC aimed to explore challenges and opportunities related to child care to enable families experiencing poverty to achieve and maintain economic security. In addition, the CICC identified the need to include expanded/non-traditional hour child care and child care access for children with disabilities as additional topics for exploration. The CICC's engagement with other relevant interagency councils determined that understanding child care needs among school-age children was a knowledge gap and opportunity. The CICC convened dozens of federal subject matter experts across seven member agencies, initiated two literature scans, and hosted listening sessions with more than twenty parents and caregivers who have firsthand experience with poverty.

1. Coordinating Committee Meeting

In July 2024, each member of the Coordinating Committee provided a high-level overview of key ways the federal government can promote or support the provision of child care, particularly with a focus on families experiencing poverty. An expert consultant with real, firsthand experience with poverty presented to the Coordinating Committee; she highlighted the importance of parent voice and choice, flexible child care options, and other workforce supports. Member agencies highlighted federal policy, funding, research, and data that facilitates and informs the provision of child care, with focused attention on enhancing quality, affordable, and accessible child care; increasing workforce support to direct care staff; and providing flexible child care options, including employer-sponsored, home-based, and campus-based care.

2. Federal Child Care Data Meeting

In August, the CICC held a meeting with federal subject matter experts across six member agencies, and the Department of Commerce (which is not a CICC member agency but is undertaking relevant work), to increase awareness and use of the federal landscape on available child care data. Each Department submitted information about the available child care data sources in advance of the meeting. The information was compiled and shared in advance to foster discussion, explore data gaps/limitations, and identify opportunities for better federal collaboration and coordination in data collection, sharing, and dissemination. Federal subject matter experts identified more than 20 data sources and intersecting federal data elements, including but not limited to, child care supply and utilization, population and demographics of served families, child care program participation and effectiveness, cost and funding, workforce, child care arrangements, and care access for children with disabilities.

3. Child Care Access for Children with Disabilities

The CICC worked to increase awareness on child care access for children with disabilities, particularly for those from families experiencing poverty. There is limited information assembled in one place on federal efforts that support access to child care and out-of-school time services for children with disabilities, particularly those ages 5 to 17. The CICC began an environmental scan to identify themes, gaps, and opportunities related to out-of-school time activities focused on school-age children with disabilities. The CICC also hosted a listening session with parents and caregivers of children with disabilities to better understand the needs, challenges, and opportunities to enhance child care access. Finally, the CICC hosted a meeting with parents and federal subject matter experts across six member agencies, plus the Department of Commerce, to identify federal research, resources, and efforts related to child care for children with disabilities. Federal subject matter experts identified more than a dozen federal mechanisms, including, but not limited to, policy, technical assistance, funding, data, workforce development, and family focused resources.

4. Expanded/Non-Traditional Hour Child Care

The CICC aimed to increase awareness of needs and opportunities related to expanded/non-traditional hour care for children, particularly for families experiencing poverty. Many parents and caregivers work jobs that require child care providers to have expanded and non-traditional hour schedules (e.g., evenings, early mornings, after school, overnight, and weekends). The CICC partnered with a parent consultant to conduct a literature review to identify relevant research and resources related to increasing the availability, accessibility, and affordability of non-traditional hour child care. The CICC also convened two listening sessions with parents and caregivers with school-age children to understand needs, challenges, and opportunities related to expanded and non-traditional hour child care, including afterschool and out-of-school time care.

Finally, the CICC also convened a federal workgroup across six member agencies, as well as the Department of Commerce, focused on increasing awareness on the federal landscape related to non-traditional hour care access for families with low income. The workgroup gathered information on programs that offer child care during non-traditional working hours, including before and after school, evenings, weekends, 24/7 care, and care during shoulder hours (i.e., early morning and evening). The workgroup also identified data sources and research products that demonstrate demand for non-traditional hour care, characteristics of families who need this care and providers who offer it, and types of supports needed to maintain and grow the supply of non-traditional hour care.

C. Research

1. Child Poverty and Well-Being Research

In FY 2024, several research projects were initiated to inform and support the overarching CICC goals. These projects examined cross cutting child poverty and well-being issues and findings that will be shared on the new CICC webpage.

- **Improving Child Support Effectiveness for Low Income Families**
This project explored potential child support policy responses to increase the effectiveness of the program for low income families, including improving linkages to intersecting programs. The project included an environmental scan, an expert convening to learn from state and local human services program leaders, researchers, community organizations and parents themselves, and a summary brief of the suggestions that developed at the convening. The suggestions from the expert convening were also used to develop set of research ideas to improve the ability of the child support program and intersecting programs to address child poverty and child wellbeing.
- **Understanding Trends in Children’s Program Participation and Non-Participation**
This project modeled and summarized children's eligibility and participation rates in 2022 for the ten major federal safety net programs that assist families struggling with economic stability.
- **How Federal Programs Support Child and Family Well-Being**
This project documented efforts to promote child and family well-being and encourage federal agencies, offices, and programs in more effectively integrating child and family well-being into their work. This included a literature synthesis, key informant interviews, case studies, and focus groups with beneficiaries of federal programs and benefits.
- **Roadmap to Reducing Marginal Tax Rates and Benefit Cliffs**
This project utilized TRIM3, a microsimulation model, to develop and assess social safety net policy changes to reduce the number of low- and moderate-income families experiencing high marginal tax rates from earning increases.

2. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine

Based on congressional guidance, in FY 2023, the CICC contracted with NASEM to conduct a consensus study to assess the impact of the 2021 federal Child Tax Credit (CTC) and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) on the level of poverty for children. In FY 2024, NASEM has solicited and considered public comment on child poverty, the CTC, and EITC, including input from people with firsthand experience with poverty. NASEM's study will address the following questions:

- What are the impacts of the federal Child Tax Credit and the Earned Income Tax Credit in 2021 on the level of poverty for all U.S. children and the level of poverty for specific populations of U.S. children?
- How was the Child Tax Credit implemented in 2021? How did the implementation of the program impact participation and, therefore, its effectiveness for reducing child poverty?
- Among children in different racial and ethnic origin groups and in immigrant families, and other populations of interest, such as children in urban and rural areas, how did the implementation of the Child Tax Credit in 2021 facilitate or reduce program access and therefore its effectiveness for reducing child poverty?
- What changes to the tax rules and requirements and the procedures for administering the Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit, if adopted, would further reduce the number of U.S. children in poverty?

III. Anticipated Activities for FY 2025

A. Assessing FY 2024 Workstream Activities

Moving into its second year, the CICC will review the learnings from all the workstream activities in FY 2024 to inform new and ongoing collaboration and coordination activities in FY 2025 and beyond.

B. Knowledge Exchange: Child Care as a Work Support

The CICC will be hosting a virtual knowledge exchange on December 4, 2024, focused on highlighting private and public child care investments to promote economic mobility for families experiencing poverty. This event will be hosted by HHS, in partnership with Department of Defense and the Department of Commerce. This event will feature parents and leaders in the federal, state, and private sectors. The presenters will explore investments such as tax incentives, cost-sharing models, and after-school programs, including strategies for supporting parents and caregivers with varying needs, such as working non-traditional hours or caring for children with disabilities. The recording is available [here](#).

C. Newsletter

The CICC plans to continue to disseminate quarterly newsletters. The CICC's [November](#) newsletter will highlight key learnings from the CICC's FY 2024 child care efforts, including federal resources and interagency efforts.

D. Needs and Opportunity Assessment

As the CICC moves into FY 2025, the CICC plans to engage both non-federal and federal partners to better understand the most pressing issues affecting child poverty and well-being and inform a needs and opportunity assessment for the CICC's work moving forward.

E. CICC Funded Research

In FY 2025, new research projects would be considered to inform and support the overarching CICC goals.

F. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Findings

Information on past and anticipated events related to this NASEM study can be found [here](#). NASEM expects to release its findings in fall 2025.

Conclusion

As described in this report, the CICC has conducted many activities in FY 2024 to increase transparency on relevant child policy and well-being issues and identified opportunities for future federal interagency collaboration and coordination. These activities include engaging parents, developing, and executing a shared learning agenda, exploring challenges and opportunities related to child care, coordinating with other interagency groups, conducting research on related topics, and increasing transparency on child poverty and well-being issues through public engagement efforts. In FY 2025, the CICC will continue to engage federal agencies and other partners to further develop the CICC's activities, structure the work, and continue collaboration and coordination efforts.