

Family security: Supporting parent's employment and children's development ^[1]

New Safety Net Paper 3, Urban Institute

Author: Boots, Shelley Waters, Macomber, Jennifer and Danziger, Anna

Source: Child Care & Early Education Research Connections

Format: Report

Publication Date: 1 Jul 2008

AVAILABILITY

- Full paper in pdf ^[2]

Description:

Since the passage of welfare reform in the United States more than a decade ago, the new safety net's mainstay has been enabling parents to work. Today, 7 in 10 low-income families have at least one working parent. While the competing priorities of family and work are front and center in the lives of parents, in the policy world issues of parental work and children's developmental needs are frequently in separate spheres. Too often, public discourse on how to encourage work among low-income families never touches on what growing children need to develop and succeed.

In this paper the authors focus on the needs of children in low-income working families and put forth a new policy framework that integrates and supports work and children's development. Drawing on a vast literature on children's well-being and development, the authors assert that children have four key needs—stability, health, nurturing, and activity—that must inform any policy approach intended to support and encourage parental work. The proposed Family Security policy framework rests on a summary of these four key needs. Through this lens, three policy options are proposed that allow parents to work and meet their children's needs: making quality child care affordable, offering parental leave time to care for children, and providing low-income people with comprehensive family services.

Tags: poverty ^[3]

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