

Spring 2024: Family & Child Policy and Evaluation

Tuesday and Thursday 5:30 pm to 6:50 pm

Harris School of Public Policy
University of Chicago

Public Policy # 30602 PPHA
Teaching Asst: TBD

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Information about this course

Background and Goals

This class will explore how we define policy problems, how we determine what and how to evaluate, what we learn and do not learn from evaluation, and how we use evidence (or not) to advance policy. It will also explore ways to address policy advice using evidence in decision memoranda. After reviews of frameworks for problem definition and evidence summary, we will dive into two child and family policy issues: child welfare (identification of child maltreatment and the use of out of home placement) and teen and unintended pregnancy prevention.

Prerequisites

Basic understanding of U.S. social policy programs and program evaluation

Student assignments and grading

In each class we will review readings and discuss how these readings relate to the topics of interest and to other policy topics. We will use discussion and interactive exercises where possible to draw out themes and questions. *It is important to attend every class and participate fully. One quarter of your grade will be based on this.*

The grade in the course will be based on the following:

Three Short Policy Decision Memos 25% each
Late memos will be graded down 1/3 letter grade for each day late.

Class participation in discussion 25%

Decision Memos – Short papers (3 – 5 pages) focused a substantive topic covered in class. These papers will reflect on the definition of a policy problem, the use of evidence to assess next steps, and a policy recommendation.

Class Participation – This course is small to facilitate group discussions. Participation, in terms of providing feedback, insights, and questions, is expected. Please read all assigned readings before the class session. Class will begin with questions from the readings and participation is expected.

Instructor Office Hours

Send an email to schedule a Zoom meeting or in person meeting downtown.

Teaching assistant(s) and/or graders

TBD

Teaching and learning in person, dual-modality, and/or remote environments

Class attendance in person (and participation in class discussion) is required. Slides may be available after class by request for any excused absence.

General Resources Available to Students

Include any texts and links as desired:

- [Harris Academic Support Programs and Handbook](#)
- [Student Wellness](#)
- [University Learning Resources](#)

Harris School and University of Chicago Policies

Include any text and links as desired to highlight or emphasize issues related to academic integrity, disability accommodations, diversity and inclusion, and video and audio recordings.

- [Harris School Policies](#)
- [University General Policies](#)
- [University Academic Policies](#)
- Policies on audio and video [recordings](#) and [deletion](#).

Course Schedule

The course will meet Tuesdays and Tuesdays from 5:30 to 6:50 pm.

Readings, topics, and schedules

Books we will draw on

Barbara Nelson, *Making an Issue of Child Abuse*, University of Chicago Press.

J.W. Kingdon. *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*. Harper Collins College Publishers.

Ron Haskins and Greg Margolis. *Show Me the Evidence*. Brookings.

Isabel Sawhill. *Generation Unbound: Drifting into Sex and Parenthood without Marriage*.
Brookings

Section 1: Frameworks on how policy problems are defined and how research is used in policy making

Week 1 March 19-21

Introduction to the course, problem definition in policy making, understanding what programs are trying to accomplish

Paul Cairney, *Three habits of successful policy entrepreneurs*,
<https://paulcairney.files.wordpress.com/2018/04/cairney-2018-three-habits-of-successful-policy-entrepreneurs.pdf>

John A. Hoornbeek and B. Guy Peters, *Understanding policy problems: a refinement of past work*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14494035.2017.1361631>

Kingdon, J. W. (1995). *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, Chapters 1, 3 and 4

Developing a logic model (in class)

Week 2 March 26-28

State of evidence-based policy, evidence synthesis, and meta-analysis

Burtless, G. (1995). "The Case for Randomized Field Trials in Economic and Policy Research," *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (Spring, 1995), pp. 63-84.
<https://pubs.aeaweb.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1257/jep.9.2.63>

Cottingham, P., Maynard, R., Stagner, M. (2004). Synthesizing Evidence on the Impacts of Programmes and Policies in Education, Crime and Justice, and Social Welfare: Practical Recommendations Based on 14 Test-bed Reviews. *Evaluation and Research in Education*, 18(1&2).
https://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1030&context=gse_pubs

Haskins and Margolis, *Show Me the Evidence*, Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 8.

Types of evidence summaries (meta-analysis, NAS/IOM reports, literature reviews, evidence maps)

Explore web sites for evidence-based programs.

What Works Clearinghouse: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention - Blueprints:
<https://www.blueprintsprograms.org/>

Center for Disease Control – Effective Programs
<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/AdolescentHealth/registries.htm>

Campbell Collaboration <http://www.campbellcollaboration.org>

Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research <https://clear.dol.gov/>

Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearing House <https://preventionservices.acf.hhs.gov/>

Evidence gaps maps <https://www.3ieimpact.org/evidence-hub/evidence-gap-maps>

Section 2: Child Welfare Policy and Evaluation

Week 3 April 2-4

Problem definition and viable solutions in child welfare

Nelson, B. (1984). *Making an issue of child abuse: political agenda setting for social problems*, University of Chicago Press: Chicago.

Gutowski, Christy. (2012). *Problems for DCFS child abuse hotline: Less than 40% of callers reach a specialist on first attempt; others must leave messages*. Chicago Tribune
<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/ct-met-dcfs-hotline-20120708,0,2545583.story>

Hyunil Kim, MSW, Christopher Wildeman, PhD, Melissa Jonson-Reid, PhD, MSW, and Brett Drake, PhD, MSW *Lifetime Prevalence of Investigating Child Maltreatment Among US Children*, Am J Public Health. 2017;107:274–280. doi:10.2105/AJPH. 2016.303545

<file:///C:/Users/mstagner/OneDrive%20-%20Mathematica/Documents/Kim%20et%20al%20lifetime%20child%20maltreatment.pdf>

Week 4 April 9-11 First assignment given, due April 19 at 5 pm.

Family prevention, policy and evaluation

Doyle, J. (2006). *Child Protection and Child Outcomes: Measuring the Effects of Foster Care*. Seminar at the University of California San Diego.
<https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/aer.97.5.1583>

Policy Levers for Preventing Child Maltreatment, National Council of State Legislators,
<https://www.ncsl.org/human-services/policy-levers-for-preventing-child-maltreatment>

Berger and Slack, *Contemporary U.S. Child Welfare System(s): Overview and Key Challenges*
https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0002716220969362?casa_token=GuwIALtMMwAAAAAA:fWpMD1Hc8BBydqwi3eqHvaetkbbSngQn1VV2bJ0GlspkPaMtA20uc2b7hLeOkjBRRAY0j-7YBg

Evaluation of Family Preservation and Reunification Programs: Final Report.
<http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/evalfampres94/Final/index.htm>.

Family First Prevention Services Act full text

<https://www.congress.gov/115/bills/hr253/BILLS-115hr253ih.pdf>

<https://preventionservices.acf.hhs.gov/>

Week 5 April 16-18

Predictive analytics in child welfare: can better use of data help target? where in the pipeline?

Pecora, Peter. What is a well-functioning child protection agency? <https://www.casey.org/what-is-well-functioning-child-protection-agency/>

Jeremy D. Goldhaber-Fiebert and Lea Prince. Impact Evaluation of a Predictive Risk Modeling Tool for Allegheny County's Child Welfare Office.

<https://www.alleghenycountyanalytics.us/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Impact-Evaluation-from-16-ACDHS-26-PredictiveRisk-Package-050119-FINAL-6.pdf>

The future of the system

<https://upendmovement.org/>

<https://www.drjohndegarmofostercare.com/blog/defund-what-the-fallacies-of-the-defund-child-welfare-movement-guest-post-by-tom-rawlings>

Assignment 1 due 4/19 at 5 pm

Decision Memo – Child Welfare

Section 3: Teen and Unintended Pregnancy Prevention

Week 6: April 23-25

Problem definition and viable solutions in teen and unintended pregnancy

Teen pregnancy has declined significantly <https://www.npr.org/2023/01/08/1147737247/teen-pregnancy-rates-have-declined-significantly>

Mosher, W. D., Jones, J., & Abma, J.C. (2012). Intended and Unintended Births in the United States: 1982–2010. National Health Statistics Report. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhsr/nhsr055.pdf>

Nelson, et al. Associations of Unintended Pregnancy With Maternal and Infant Health Outcomes: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36318133/>

Week 7: April 30-May 2

Michele Troutman, Saima Rafique & Torie Comeaux Plowden. Are higher unintended pregnancy rates among minorities a result of disparate access to contraception? <https://contraceptionmedicine.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40834-020-00118-5>

Sawhill, *Generation Unbound*, Chapters 2-5.

David, H. (2006). Born unwanted, 35 years later: The Prague study. *Reproductive Health Matters*, Vol. 14, No. 27, pp. 181-190.

Contraceptive deserts <https://powertodecide.org/node/842>

“Powerful Contraception, Complicated Programs: Preventing Coercive Promotion of Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives”, Olivia Cappello, *Guttmacher Policy Review*, vol 24, 2001

“Estimated reductions in unintended pregnancy among Delaware Title X family planning clients after a contraceptive access intervention”, Welty and Manlove, *Sexual & Reproductive Health*, Dec 17, 2018

Week 8 May 7-9

Teen sex, sex ed, abstinence education, policy and evaluation

Rector, R. (2002). *The Effectiveness of Abstinence Education Programs in Reducing Sexual Activity Among Youth*. Backgrounder, No. 1533, The Heritage Foundation: Washington DC www.heritage.org/library/backgrounder/bg1533.html

Scher, Lauren, Rebecca A Maynard, Matthew Stagner. *Interventions intended to reduce pregnancy-related outcomes among adolescents*. Campbell Systematic Reviews, 2006: 12. ADD URL

Oringanje C, Meremikwu MM. (2010). Interventions for preventing unintended pregnancies among adolescents (Review) *The Cochrane Library* 2010, Issue 1 <http://apps.who.int/whl/reviews/CD005215.pdf>

Trenholm, C. et al, (2007). *Impacts of Four Title V, Section 510 Abstinence Programs: Final Report*. Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. Policy Research. <http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/publications/pdfs/impactabstinence.pdf>

Recent RFP for evidence-based Teen Pregnancy prevention programs

http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/grant-opportunities/assets/funding_announcement_04012010.pdf

Assignment 2 due 5/10 at 5 pm CT

Decision Memo –Teen/Unintended Pregnancy

Week 9 Additional policy area TBD

Assignment 3 due 5/24 by 5 pm CT

Final Decision Memo