

Is there an association between home evictions and child welfare engagement?

Tang, S., Bowen, D. A., Chadwick, L., Madden, E., & Ghertner, R. (2022). Are home evictions associated with child welfare system involvement? Empirical evidence from national eviction records and child protective services data. *Child Maltreatment*, 29(1), 66-81. doi:10.1177/10775595221125917

What can we learn from this study?

Research suggests that housing insecurity increases the risk of child abuse and neglect. Families with low incomes that struggle to meet children's basic needs, such as housing, therefore are at greater risk of child welfare involvement. This study examines the relationship between housing insecurity (specifically, home evictions) and child welfare system involvement to understand the impact of evictions on the rate of foster care entries.

Study details

- **Population:** Screened-in children in all 50 states and the District of Columbia
- **Data sources:** 2010-2016 National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS); 2000-2016 Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS); Eviction Lab at Princeton University; American Community Survey
- **Methodology:** Bivariate choropleth mapping; Statistical analysis using Stata15; Fixed-effect linear regression models
- **Dates:** 2000-2016

What are the critical findings?

- For every 1 eviction per 100 renter-occupied homes, **there was a 1.3% increase in the rate of screened-in child maltreatment reports and a 1.6% increase in foster care placements**, whereas at the same time, there was only a 0.6% increase in eviction filings.
- Home eviction rates were shown to have the **greatest impact on screened-in child maltreatment reports for white and Black children**. Findings indicated a **1.2% increase in screened-in reports for white children compared to a 1.8% increase among Black children**. Among Latino children, there was no significant association between eviction rates and screened-in child maltreatment reports.
- The association between evictions and foster care entries by racial/ethnic group indicated that out-of-home placement rates were **greatly associated with eviction rates for Latino and Black children**, with an 8.1% increase in placements among Latino children and a 5.4% increase among Black children.

Why is this important to our work?

Too often, families with low incomes, especially families of color, become involved with the child welfare system due to issues stemming from poverty, such as housing instability — even when child maltreatment or an imminent risk of harm is not present. Understanding the relationship between foster care entries and housing instability is critical for preventing unwarranted child protective investigations and foster care placement, and to develop and implement policies and practices that effectively address families' housing and other concrete needs. Child protection agencies must continually work to parse out home evictions as a risk factor while exploring opportunities to coordinate with other systems of care to provide families facing eviction with safe and affordable housing, as well as other [economic supports](#).

This summary synthesizes the findings from a single research report. To learn more, see: [How can supportive housing help improve outcomes for families in the child welfare system?](#) and [What do we know about the impact of homelessness and housing instability on child welfare-involved families?](#)

For additional information, see the [article abstract](#) or contact KMResources@casey.org