


Silberman School of Social Work



Module Eight An Overview of Child Support



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Human Resources Administration
Department of Homeless Services

Office of Child
Support Services

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Learning Objectives

- Explain the federal child support assistance programs
- Explain the relationship between paying child support in general and positive child outcomes
- Describe the process of child support orders
- Identify barriers and strategies to involve fathers in child support programs
- Describe the role of New York City Office of Child Support Services (OCSS)



Small Group Discussion

What are some different perceptions of child support?



Historical Perspective on Child Support



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Child Support Enforcement Program

Broader range of services including:

1. locating absent parents
2. establishing paternity
3. establishing child support orders
4. reviewing and modifying child support orders
5. collecting child support payments
6. distributing child support payments
7. establishing and enforcing support for children's medical needs
8. reducing government debt owed by NCPs
9. connecting NCPs to employers



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Forms of Child Support

- Formal cash support: provided through a formal child support order
- Informal cash support: any financial contribution outside of a formal order
- In-kind support: any noncash good or service that directly provided (e.g. food, clothes, toys, medicines, school supplies, etc.)

Group Discussion

- What do you think are some benefits of child support?
- What are some unintended consequences of child support in low-income communities?

Child Support and Positive Child Outcomes



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Child Support Payments

- Reduce child poverty
- Promote parental responsibility and involvement (e.g. parents who make regular child support payments have more interaction with their children)
- Are positively related to measures of child well-being, such as cognitive skills, emotional development, and educational attainment

Process of Child Support Orders



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Obtaining a Child Support Order

- Opening a case
- Locating the noncustodial parent
- Identifying a legal father/establishing paternity
- Establishing a support order
- Collecting support

Barriers in Child Support Programs



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Barriers to Fulfilling Child Support Payments for Low-Income, Noncustodial Fathers

- High rates of joblessness
- Scarce resources
- Low-wage jobs or irregular employment
- High prevalence of multiple- partner fertility (this makes it particularly difficult to meet obligations to children and families in more than one household)
- Unrealistically high child support order amounts
- Preference of informal support to formal support
- Education
- Conflict with custodial parent



Specialized Populations



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Addressing Barriers

Put into place rules that:

- Set accurate support orders based on the specific case facts. This should help with unrealistic child support orders
- Prevent states from treating incarceration as “voluntary unemployment” and require them to proactively advise non-custodial parents of their rights to have their orders modified. This should help reduce the debts built up by incarcerated non-custodial parents.
- Require states to have a self-support reserve



Coley's Digital Story



Coley's Digital Story (cont.)

How would you begin to engage Coley in a discussion about child support?



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New York City Office of Child Support Services (NYC OCSS)

[Guest Speaker]



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NYC OCSS Mission

The Office of Child Support Services (OCSS) is part of the New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA), an agency of the City of New York. OCSS's mission is to put children first by helping parents provide for the economic and social well-being, health, and stability of their children.



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