



# Exploring Cross-Domain Instability in Families with Children

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National Association for Welfare Research and Statistics Workshop  
July 31, 2017



## Background

- High levels of instability can have negative effects on child development and family wellbeing
- This study looks *across types of instability* children in families experience and at their cumulative nature
  - Labor and income, child health care coverage, residence/housing, and household/family composition
- It contributes to growing body of research on family instability



# Study Purpose

- Document nature and extent of “shocks” across interconnected domains of family life
  - Shocks = incidents of negative and substantial change
  - Analyze children in households of varying education levels, race-ethnicity, and geography
    - Education used to proxy socioeconomic status (SES)
    - Major race-ethnic groups, Census regions
- Lay groundwork for future research, including:
  - Cumulative instability and child wellbeing
  - Implications for human services programs
- Disclaimer: Descriptive not causal analysis



# Research Questions

- How frequently do children in households across education levels experience instability shocks?
- How does cumulative instability vary for children across household education levels?
  - Index of cumulative instability based on index used for Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) study
- What are the key findings by race-ethnicity and geography?



# Preview of Findings

- Many children experienced substantial levels of instability
- Substantial differences by education, race-ethnicity, geography
- Overall, Some College more similar to lower groups than to College Plus
- Some College group at highest levels of cumulative instability
- Black children in Some College households at highest cumulative instability; white children in College Plus at lowest
- Southern children in Some College households at highest cumulative instability; Midwestern children in College Plus group at lowest



# Study Design



## Data Source | 2008 SIPP

- Data from Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP)
- 2008 SIPP provides about five years of longitudinal data—2008 to 2013
- Data collected every four months, over 16 waves—up to 64 observations for each child
- Data on 14,767 children and their households—75% of SIPP children under 13 at baseline



# Data Source | 2008 SIPP

Education Level	Race-Ethnicity (% of Total and Number)					
	White, Non-Hispanic	Hispanic	Black	Asian	Other	Total
< High School	3% (436)	6% (888)	1.5% (220)	0.1% (19)	0.3% (44)	11% (1607)
High School	7% (1086)	5% (795)	3% (456)	0.4% (54)	1% (133)	17% (2524)
Some College	21% (3039)	7% (982)	6% (917)	1% (136)	3% (382)	37% (5456)
College Plus	25% (3760)	3% (399)	3% (383)	3% (403)	2% (235)	35% (5180)
<b>Total</b>	<b>56%</b> <b>(8321)</b>	<b>21%</b> <b>(3064)</b>	<b>13%</b> <b>(1976)</b>	<b>4%</b> <b>(612)</b>	<b>5%</b> <b>(794)</b>	<b>100%*</b> <b>(14767)</b>





# Measurement of Instability Shocks

## **Labor and Income**

Loss of full-time worker (35+ hrs)

Loss of household income (earnings + transfers) > 25%

Loss of household earnings > 25%

## **Child Health Care Coverage**

Loss of child's health care coverage

## **Residence/Housing**

Move by the child

## **Household and Family Composition**

Change in household composition (+/-)

Change in family composition (+/-)



# Index of Cumulative Instability

## 1. ACEs-like framework:

- Score of 0 or 1 for never or ever experiencing the shock
- Scores then summed for each child and analyzed by household education level and other characteristics

## 2. Based on 5 components:

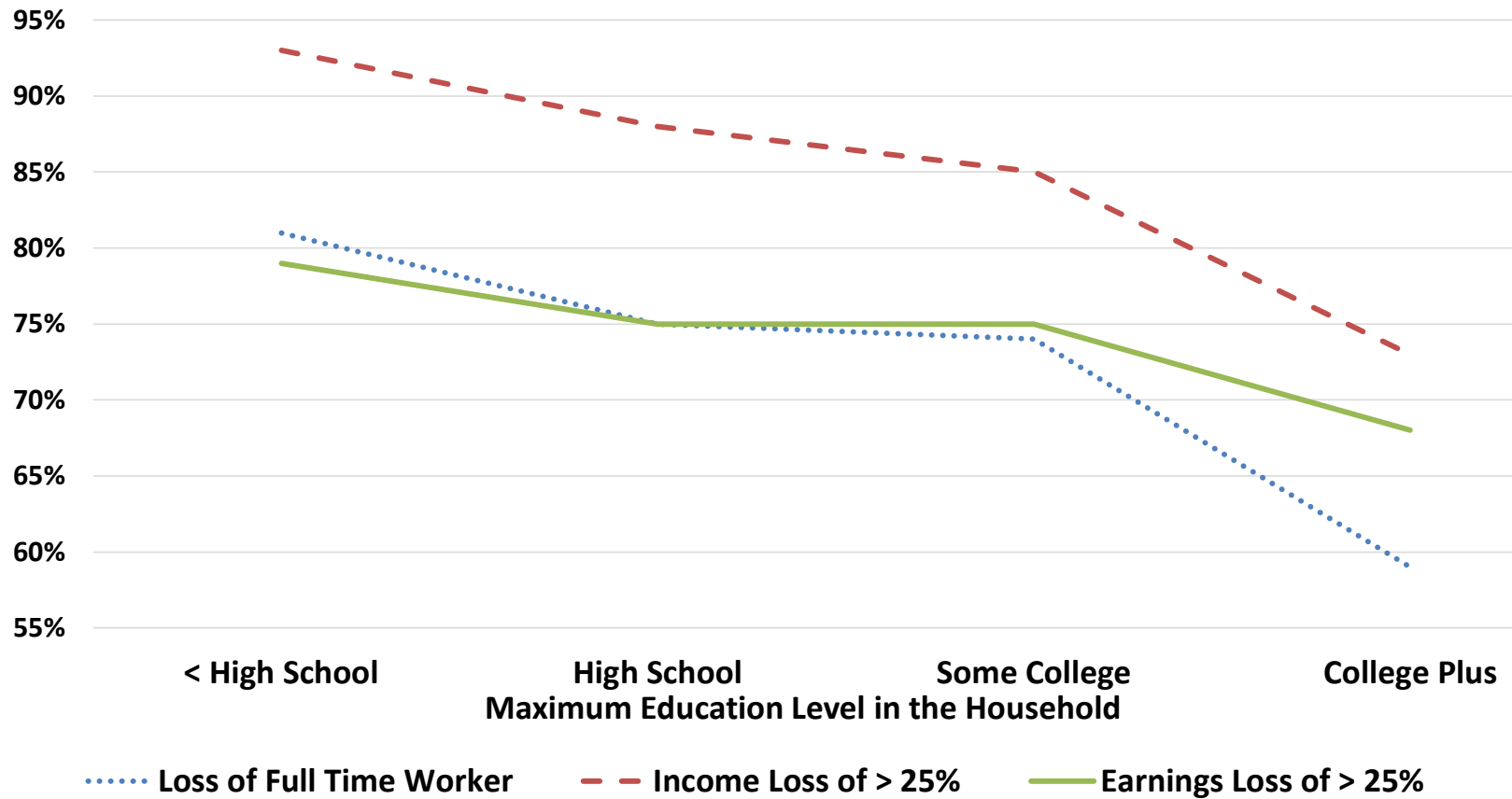
- Loss of full-time worker
- Loss of household income (earnings and transfers) of more than 25% relative to average for the entire period
- Loss of child's health care coverage
- Move by child
- Change in household composition (gain or loss)



# Findings by Household Education

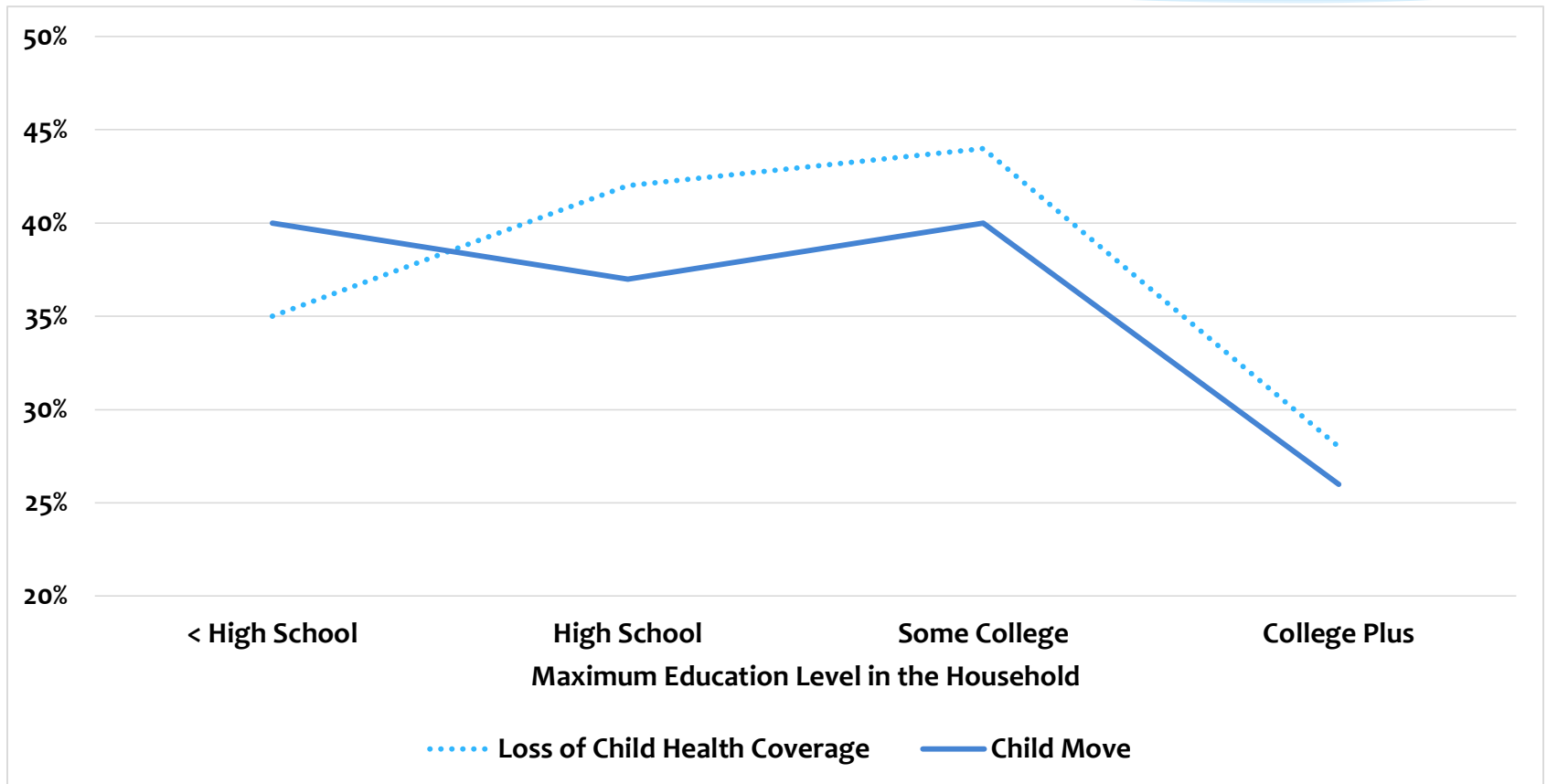


# Proportion of Children in Households Experiencing Economic Instability (2008-2013)



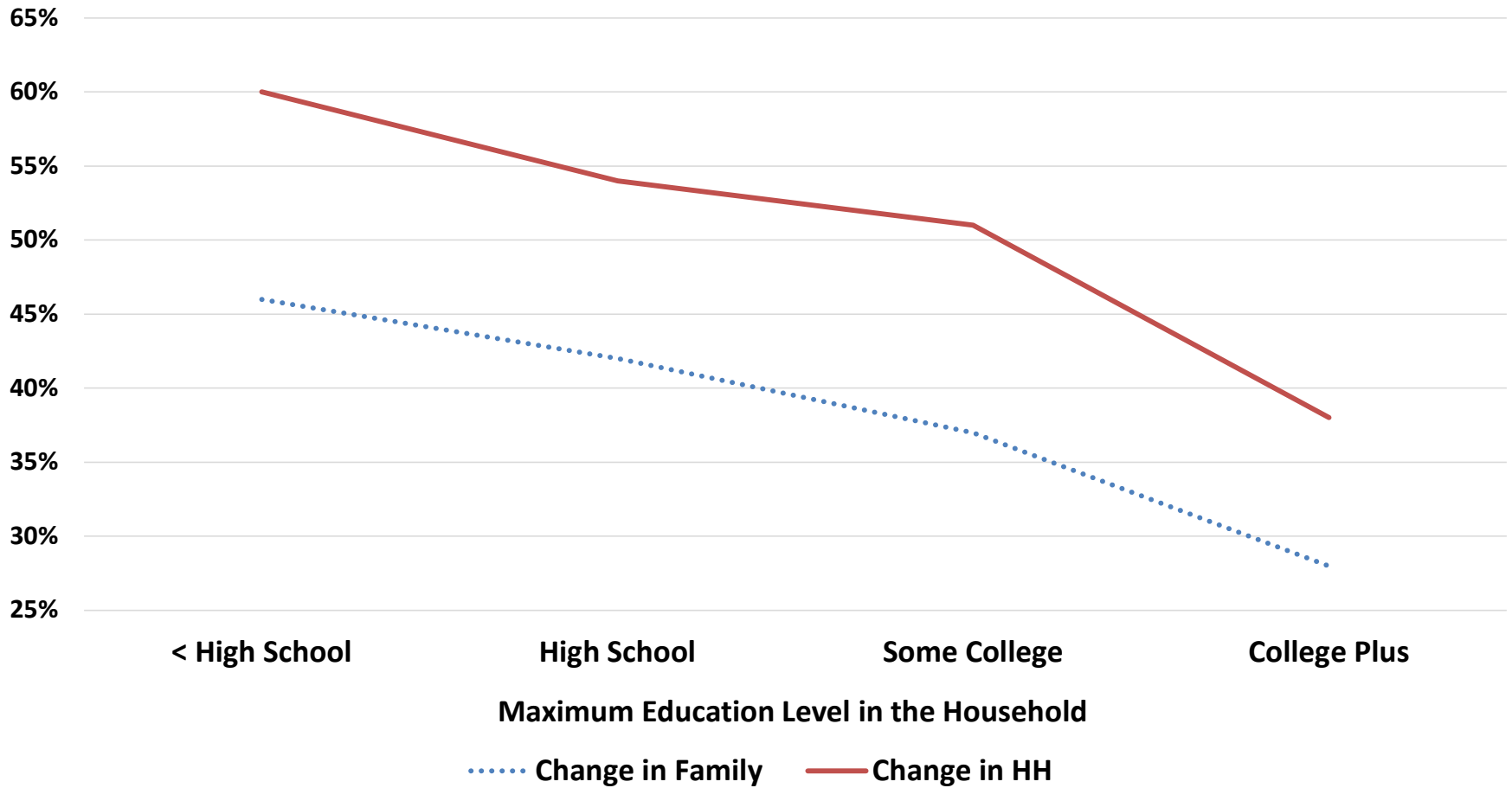


# Proportion of Children in Households Losing Child Health Care Coverage or Moving





# Proportion of Children Experiencing Change in Household or Family Composition





# Average Number of Times Children Experienced Shocks by Education Level, All Children

Education Level	Loss of Full-Time Worker	Income Loss of > 25%	Earnings Loss of > 25%	Loss of Child Health Coverage	Child Move	Change in Family	Change in Household
< High School	1.9	16.4	11.7	0.5	0.7	0.7	1.3
High School	1.7	14.0	10.0	0.6	0.6	0.7	1.2
Some College	1.5	12.8	9.4	0.7	0.7	0.6	1.1
College Plus	1.1	10.1	8.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.7

**Note:** All estimates in the first three education categories are distinguishable from the College Plus category at the 0.01 level of statistical significance.



## Average Number of Shocks by Education Level, Only Children Experiencing

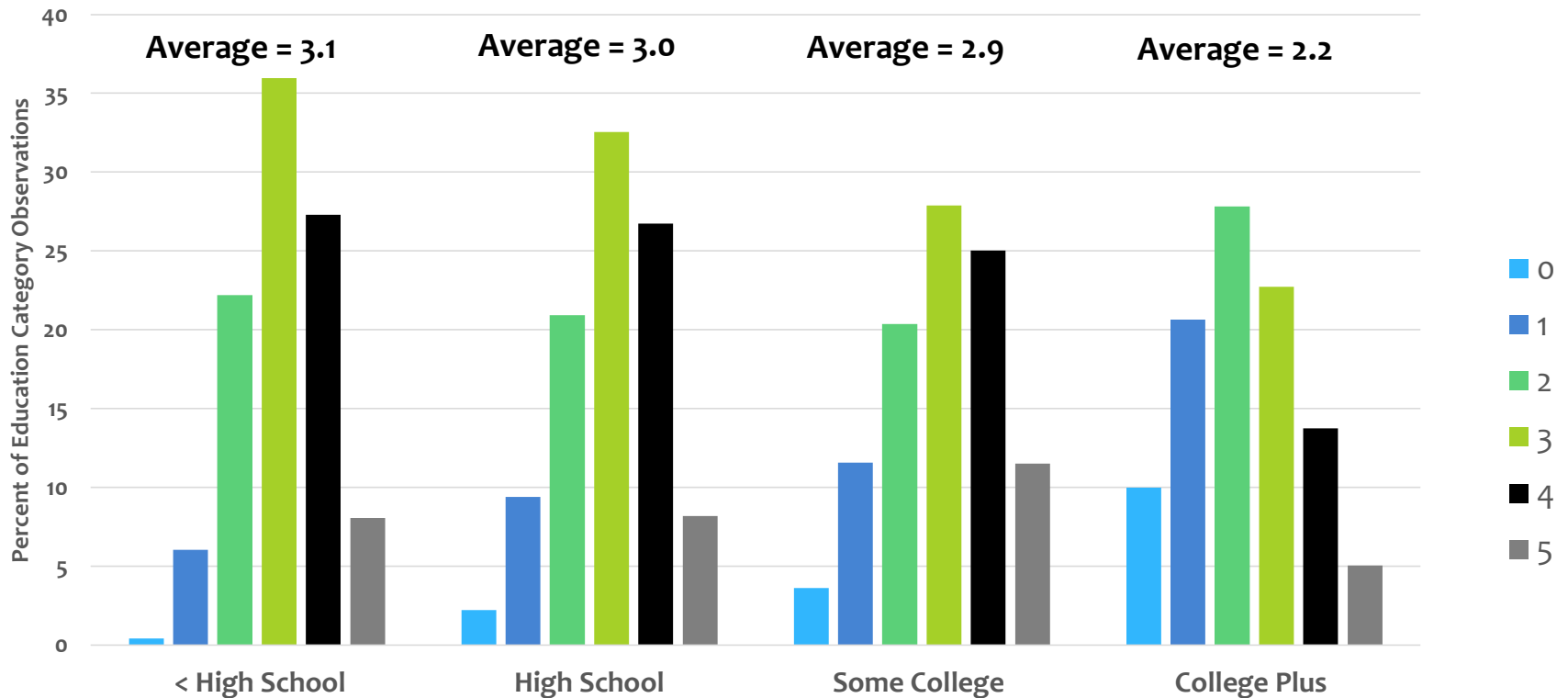
Education Level	Loss of Full Time Worker	Income Loss of > 25%	Earnings Loss of > 25%	Loss of Child Health Coverage	Child Move	Change in Family	Change in Household
< High School	2.4	17.7	15.0	1.4	1.7	1.6	2.2
High School	2.3	15.9	13.2	1.5	1.7	1.6	2.2
Some College	2.1	15.1	12.6	1.6	1.8	1.6	2.2
College Plus	1.9	13.8	12.6	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.8

**Note:** For earnings loss and loss of child health coverage, estimates for the College Plus group are statistically indistinguishable from those for lower education groups (High School and Some College for earnings loss, and Less than High School and High School for loss of child health coverage).





# Distribution of Instability Domains Among Children, by Education Level

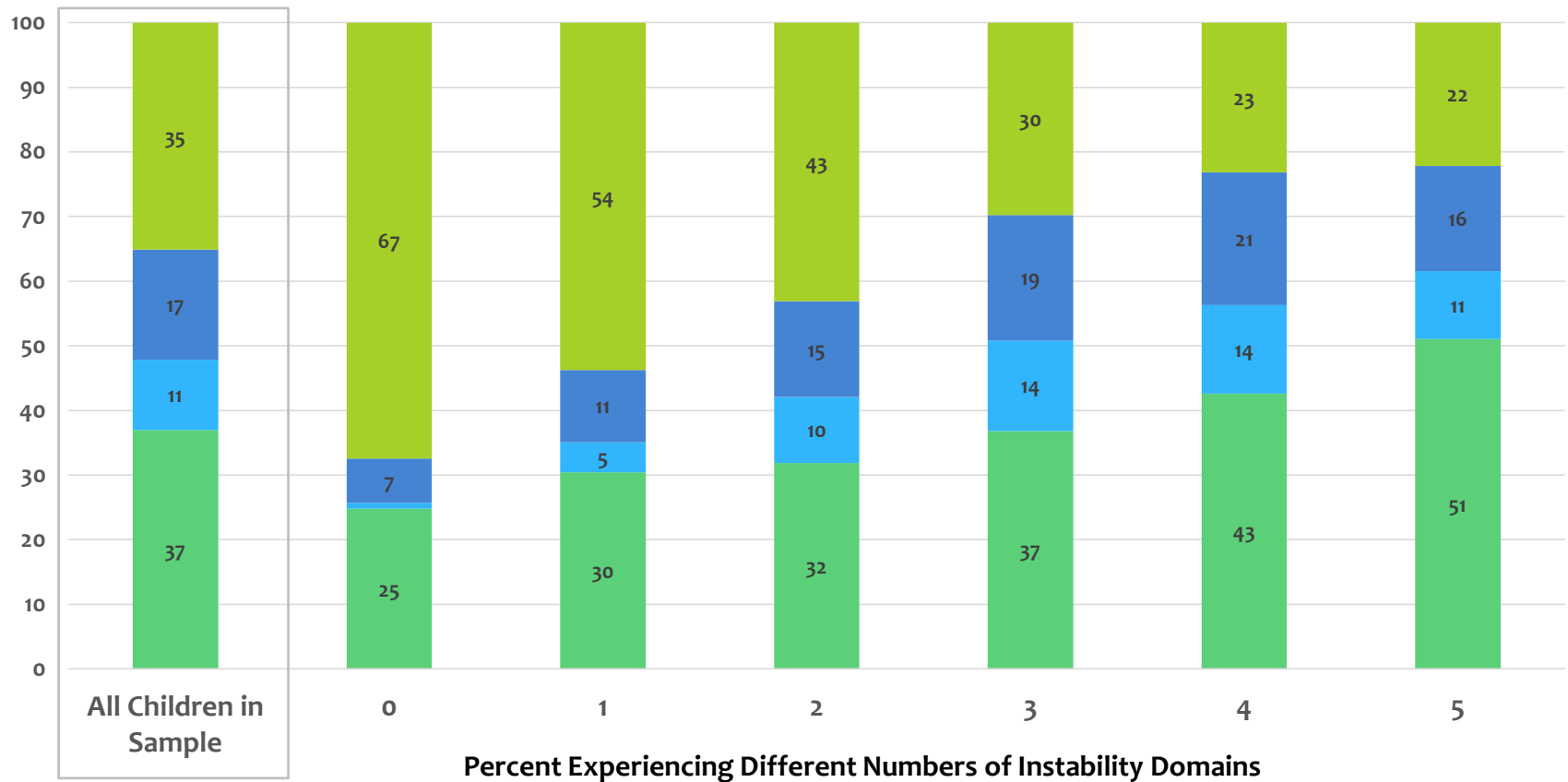


Note: The height of each bar reflects the proportion of children experiencing the corresponding number of instability domains during the study period.



# Distribution of Instability Domains Experienced, by Education Level

Some College < High School High School College Plus

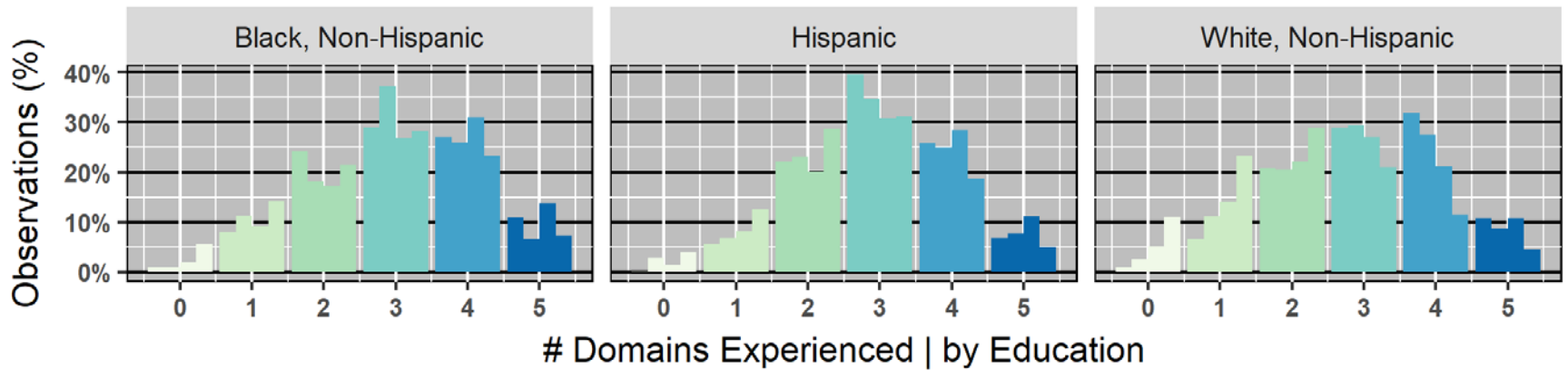
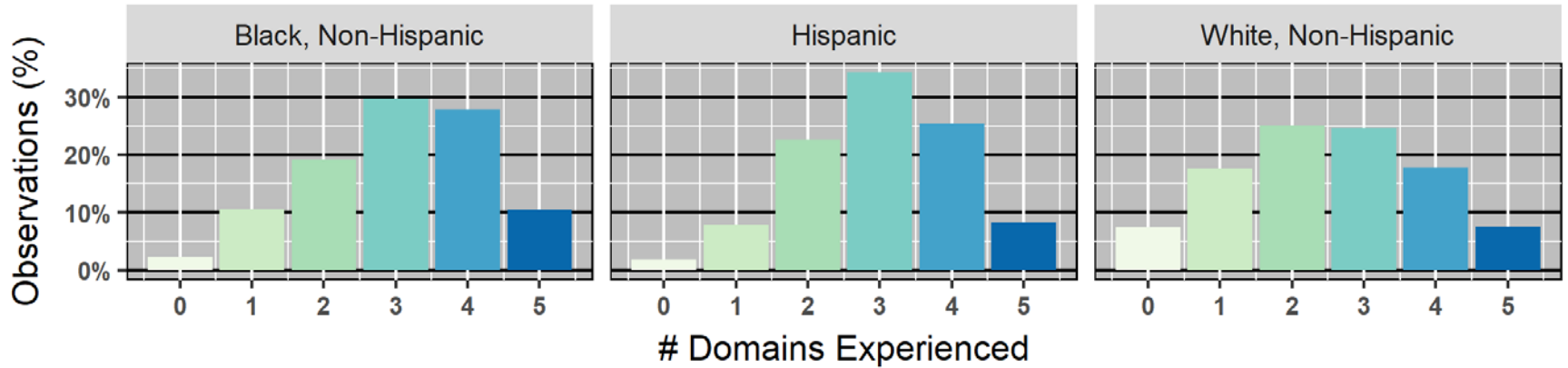




# Preview of Findings by Race-Ethnicity



# Distribution of Instability Domains Among Children, by Race-Ethnicity and Education

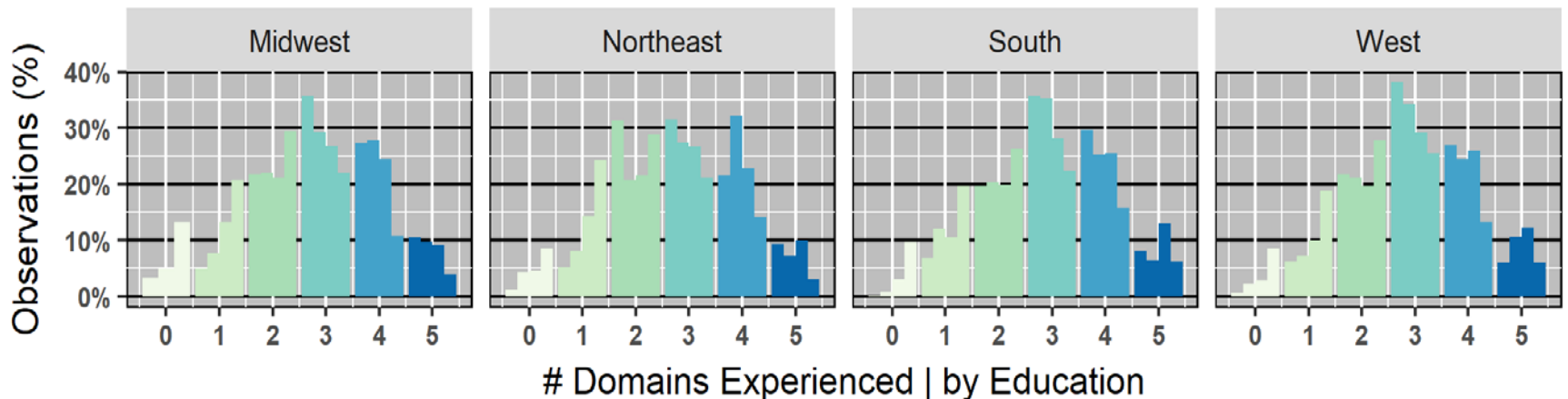
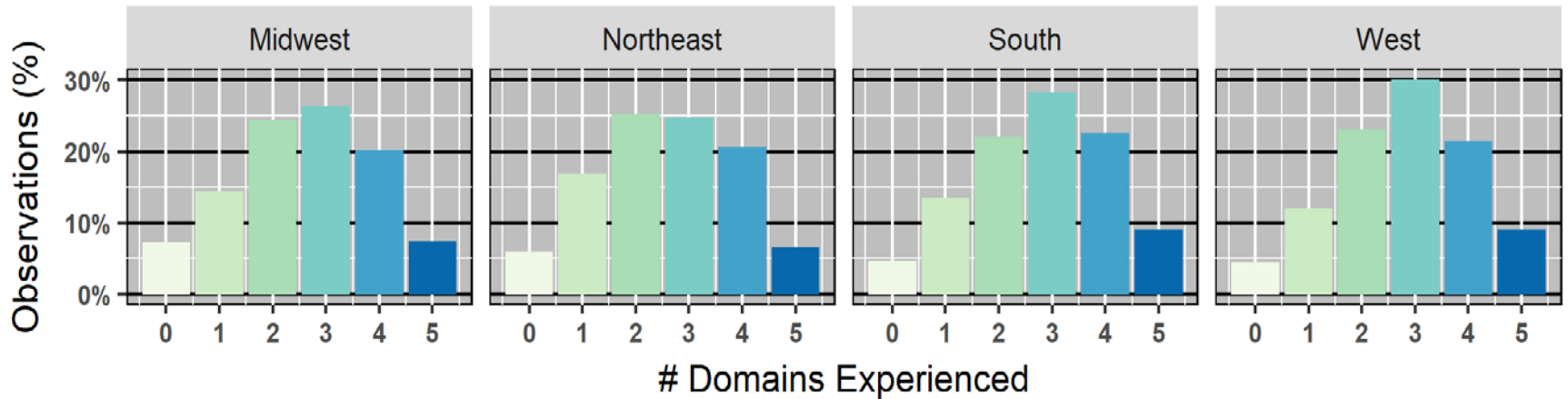




# Preview of Findings by Geography



# Distribution of Instability Domains Among Children, by Geography and Education





## Next Steps

- Brief with findings by education level out shortly
- Additional briefs in progress:
  - Variation by race-ethnicity
  - Variation by geography (Census region and division)
  - Analysis of the Some College group



**Questions or comments??**

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