

TANF Child-only Cases:

What are their needs and how can we serve them?

Kristen Joyce, Mathematica

Tuesday, July 30, 2019

Presentation Overview

- **Project overview and methods**
- **TANF child-only caseload size, composition, and trends**
- **Child-only case needs and service gaps**
- **Steps TANF programs can take to better serve these families**

ASPIRE

- **This presentation is based on findings from the Office of Family Assistance's Assisting Special Populations to Improve Readiness and Engagement (ASPIRE) project**
- **Insight Policy Research and Mathematica conducted a needs assessment of TANF child-only cases, including:**
 - Literature scan
 - Federal data analysis
 - Interviews with select state and local TANF programs
 - Discussions with subject matter experts

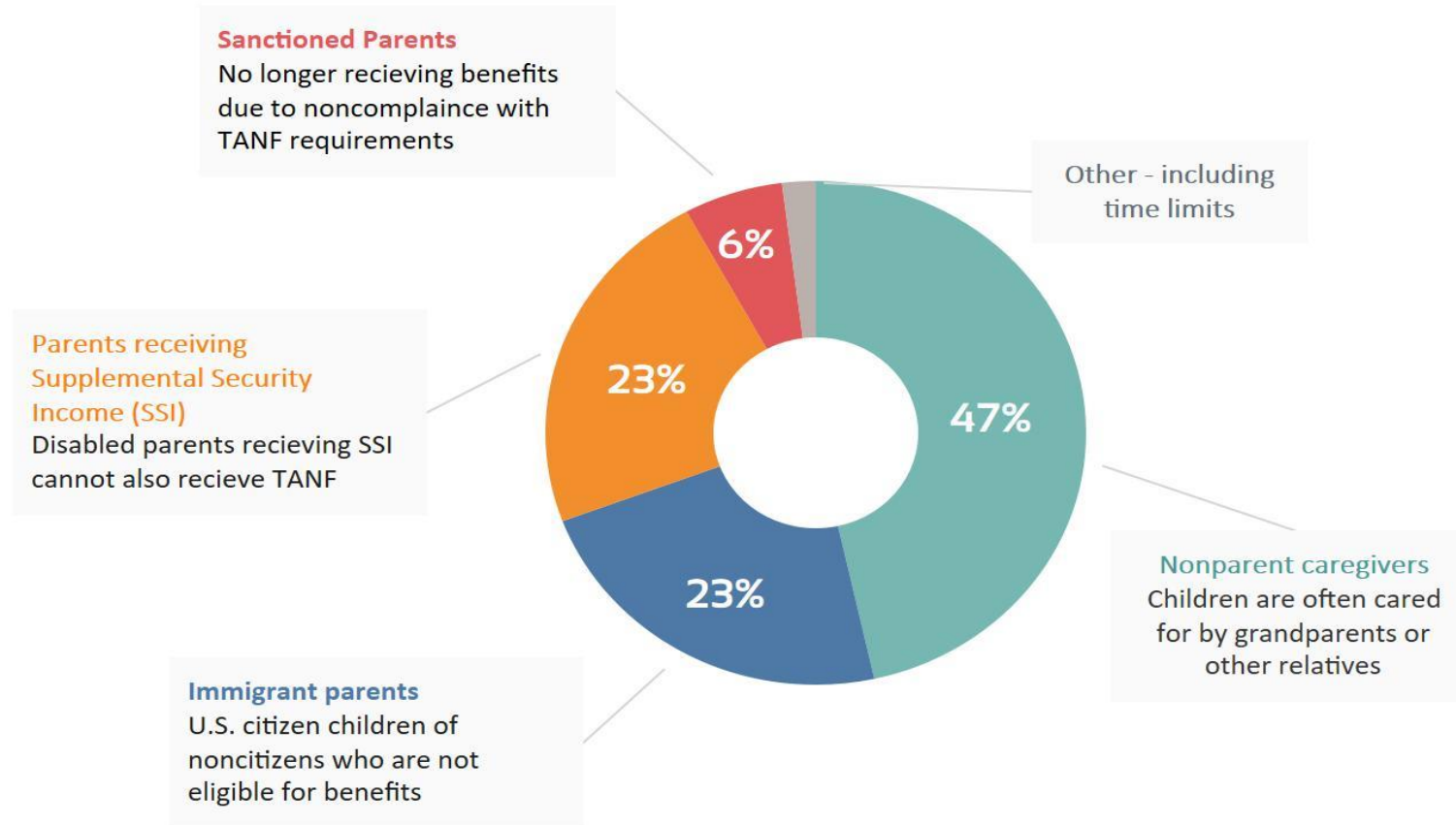


TANF child-only caseload size, composition, and trends

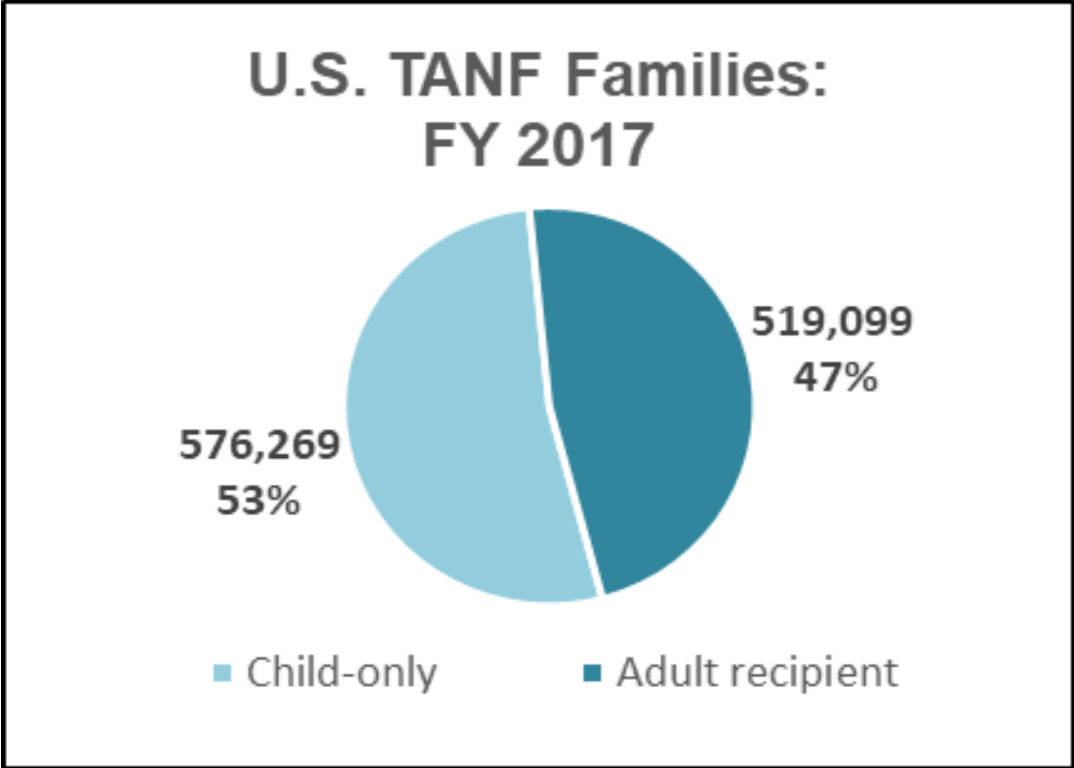
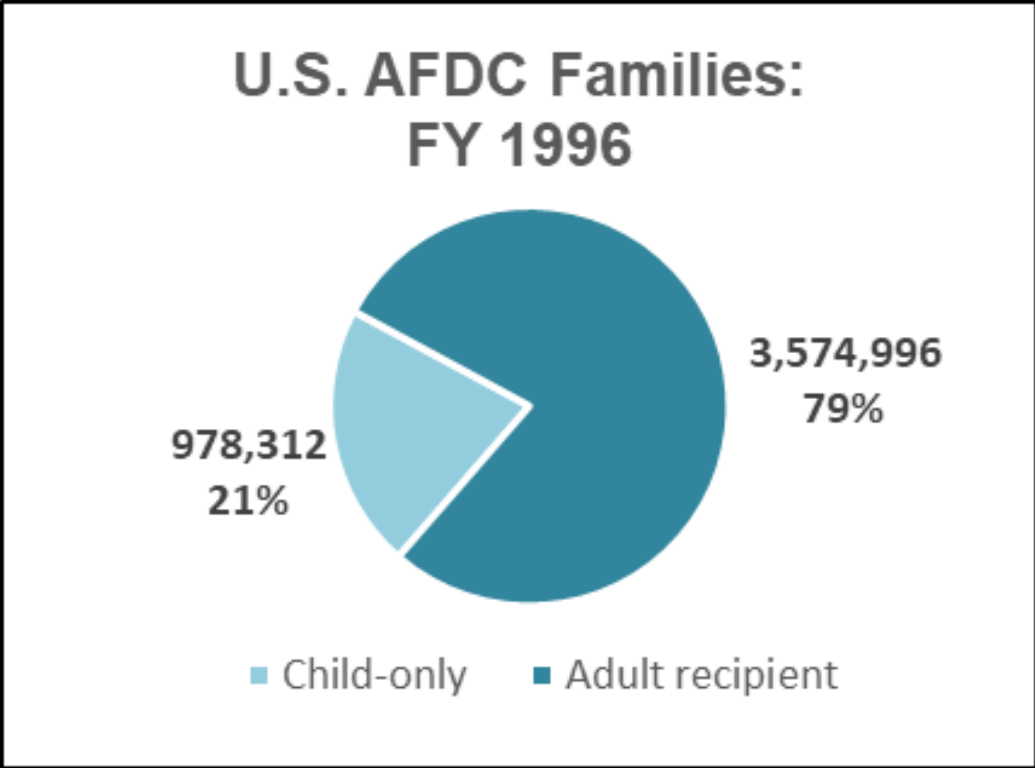
What is a TANF child-only case?

A TANF child-only case is one in which a parent is ineligible to receive TANF cash assistance, but his or her child(ren) are eligible, or one in which a child is living with another usually related adult who is ineligible to receive TANF cash assistance.

Three main types of child-only cases



Child-only: 53% of national caseload



But caseload varies widely by state

Child-only case category	National (% of TANF child-only caseload)	State low (% of state TANF child-only caseload)	State high (% of state TANF child-only caseload)
Percentage of all TANF cases that are child-only	53	Alaska (25)	Idaho (98)
Composition of child-only caseload			
Nonparent caregiver	47	Rhode Island (15)	Oklahoma (100)
SSI recipient parent	23	4 states (0)	Michigan (58)
Ineligible immigrant parent	23	10 states (0)	California (53)
Sanction	6	20 states (0)	New Jersey (19)
Other	2	15 states (0)	Rhode Island (17)

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance (2018).



Child-only case needs and service gaps

Nonparent caregiver cases

- **Adults**

- Older, often grandparents
- **Unmet service needs:** Parenting classes, support groups, child care, respite care, financial assistance for children's education, housing, transportation, and education

- **Children**

- Older than children in other TANF cases
- Higher needs than other TANF children, similar to children in foster care
 - Face mental health issues; educational difficulties; former abuse, neglect, and trauma
- **Unmet service needs:** Mental health counseling; financial assistance for after-school programs; educational and employment services

Ineligible immigrant parent cases

- **Adults**

- Similar to adults in adult recipient cases; live with children and work
- Lower educational attainment; low earnings
- **Unmet service needs:** Jobs, job training, and work supports; parenting support; respite care; basic needs, nutritional assistance, or housing; case management; navigation support; English as a Second Language services

- **Children**

- Similar in age to children in adult recipient cases
- May have fewer behavioral health issues and less involvement with child welfare and homelessness than other types

SSI parent cases

- **Adults**

- Older than adults in adult recipient cases
- Experiences with material hardship and hunger
- Lower educational attainment than adults in adult recipient cases
- **Unmet services needs:** Child care, health care, respite care, housing, funds for child's educational expenses, transportation, substance use treatment, parenting support

- **Children**

- Older than children in adult recipient cases
- Face behavioral and health issues; higher mental health needs than other TANF children; some experience with abuse and neglect or child welfare



Steps TANF programs can take to better serve child-only families

Review available data

- **Review data to understand child-only types and demographics**
 - OFA data on types of child-only cases: “Characteristics and Financial Circumstances of TANF Recipients”
 - State and local data on demographics; caseload by region or county
- **Consider linking TANF and child welfare data**
 - Example instructions for matching available from California’s Linkages website:
<http://www.cfpic.org/toolkit/assessment-planning-toolkit/program-design-road-map/creating-match-lists/>

Conduct a needs assessment

- **Gather information on child-only family needs from stakeholders**
 - Adult caregivers in child-only cases
 - TANF staff
 - Child welfare and other program/agency staff that serve the same or similar families
 - Local researchers
- **Data collection strategies: Interviews, focus groups, and surveys**
- **Gather information on contextual factors and program processes**

Identify services, resources, and gaps

- **Brainstorm what services could help meet identified needs**
 - Make brainstorming process broad; don't limit it to TANF and other known services
 - Then explore whether the services are available and what gaps exist
- **Potential services and resources include:**
 - Kinship navigator services
 - Financial support beyond the TANF grant
 - Education and employment services
 - Child care
 - Additional supportive services: Legal assistance, transportation, clothing, mental health services, respite care, support groups, and substance use disorder treatment

Forge partnerships

- **Partner with other government programs and service providers**
 - Help strengthen connections to other services
 - Solidify and streamline referral processes
- **Organize cross-training for staff across government programs**
 - Topics could include: child-only family needs, policies that affect them, and how government agency services overlap for them
 - Presentations on available services and resources
- **Seek opportunities to combine or secure additional funding**
 - Family First Prevention Services Act funding for kinship navigator programs

Provide case management

- **Implement more intensive case management for child-only families**
 - North Carolina:
 - Child well-being assessments and referrals
 - Specialized TANF social workers for nonparent caregiver cases in Mecklenburg, North Carolina
 - Idaho:
 - In-depth assessments of adults and children in nonparent caregiver cases
 - Case managers work with ineligible immigrant parent cases

Implement a CQI process

- **Use a continuous quality improvement process to help determine:**
 1. Whether the changes have helped meet the needs of these families
 2. How the changes may have affected staff
 3. Whether additional changes are needed
- **Example: Learn, Innovate, and Improve (LI²)**
 - Prototype an innovative solution on a small scale
 - Collect evidence on whether it works
 - Refine and strengthen the solution before expanding
- **Periodically revisit steps to be responsive to:**
 - New and changing funding opportunities
 - Changes in TANF child-only characteristics and needs

Questions?

For more information

Kristen Joyce, Mathematica

KJoyce@mathematica-mpr.com

Pamela Holcomb, Mathematica

PHolcomb@mathematica-mpr.com

Scott Cody, Insight Policy Research

SCody@insightpolicyresearch.com

Carol Mizoguchi, Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families

Carol.Mizoguchi@acf.hhs.gov