A Portrait of Service Use Among New York City Families with Children

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# Childhood Disparities are Well-Established

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Poor Children</th>
<th>Nonpoor Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent Health</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Room Visits</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Disability</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional/Behavioral Difficulty</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade repetition</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsafe at School</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Insecure</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Earnings at 30</td>
<td>$30,500</td>
<td>$52,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrested Before 30</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>14%</td>
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</tbody>
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Poverty Tracker

• Two Samples (n ~ 6,000), with more to come; ~1,500 with a child under 18
• Not just challenges, but needs and service gaps
• Help seeking and receipt of help
• Classified by poverty status: Poor, Low-Income, and Higher-Income families
Child-Service Needs

• 6 months after baseline (and 30 months to come):
  • In the past 6 months, was there a time when one you needed help for any of your children, such as help with… (Please select all that apply.)
  • 1. Academic performance or school readiness
  • 2. Finding safe, affordable child care or after-school care
  • 3. Behavior issues or acting out
  • 4. Emotional or developmental Issues
  • 5. Anything else? (PLEASE SPECIFY):
     __________________________________________________________
     __________________________________________________________
What Happened Next?

- where did you go to get that help?
  - what was the primary reason you decided not to seek help?
- did your situation get better, get worse, or stay the same?
- would you say that you got all, some, or none of the help you needed?
- did your situation get better, get worse, or stay the same?
Reported Need for Child-Related Problems by Income

- **Any Problems**: 43% (<100% of SPM Income Line), 41% (100-200% of SPM Income Line), 31% (200% + of SPM Income Line)
- **Academic**: 21% (<100% of SPM Income Line), 22% (100-200% of SPM Income Line), 18% (200% + of SPM Income Line)
- **Child Care**: 19% (<100% of SPM Income Line), 16% (100-200% of SPM Income Line), 9% (200% + of SPM Income Line)
- **Behavior**: 11% (<100% of SPM Income Line), 15% (100-200% of SPM Income Line), 10% (200% + of SPM Income Line)
- **Emotional/Developmental**: 13% (<100% of SPM Income Line), 12% (100-200% of SPM Income Line), 10% (200% + of SPM Income Line)
Help Seeking

- 72% sought help for all child problems
- 18% did not seek help; 10% sought for some
- Help seeking did not differ much by poverty status:
  - 68% of the poor
  - 75% of the low-income group
  - 71% of the higher-income group

- 79% of White, Non-Hispanic
- 75% of Black, Non-Hispanic
- 66% of Hispanic/Latino

- 73-75% of Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens
- 64-68% of Bronx, Staten Island
Reasons Respondents Did Not Seek Help

- I didn't know where to go: 16%
- I couldn't afford it: 16%
- I wanted to take care of the problem myself: 16%
- I tried to get help in the past & it didn't work: 12%
- I didn't have time: 9%
- I was already getting help: 6%
- I was worried what other people would think: 1%
Reasons by Income Group

- Poor: I didn’t no where to go
- Low-Income: I didn’t have time
- Higher-Income: I wanted to take care of it myself
Reported Receiving All of The Help Needed with Child-Related Problems by Income Level

- <100% of SPM Income Line: 42%
- 100-200% of SPM Income Line: 29%
- 200% + of SPM Income Line: 39%
Reported Problem Improvement by Income Level

- <100% of SPM Income Line: 63%
- 100-200% of SPM Income Line: 53%
- 200% + of SPM Income Line: 60%
Conclusions

• More than a quarter of New Yorkers whose children needed help did not seek help for at least one of those problems. Help seeking did not differ dramatically by income, though low-income families exhibit the highest level of help-seeking.

• The top three reasons for not seeking help were: “I didn’t know where to go,” “I couldn’t afford it,” and “I wanted to take care of the problem myself.”

• In contrast to poor and higher-income families, low-income families (those between 100 and 200% of the poverty line) were the least likely to get all of the help they needed for their child-related problems and to see those problems improve, indicating a potential service gap.