

Do Longer Eligibility Periods Lead to More Stable Care for Kids?

March 23, 2022

Webinar Series on

Measuring and Supporting Policy Changes: Lessons Learned by
CCDF Lead Agency–Research Partnerships

OPRE Report #2022-257

Housekeeping

- The webinar is being recorded; the recording, slides, and transcript will be shared.
- We have enabled closed captioning. Hide captions or adjust settings with the **Live Transcript** button at the bottom of your screen.
- We encourage your **questions** or **comments** in the chat box at any time:
 - Feel free to say hello, with name and place in the chat now.
 - We'll take clarifying questions after each panelist.
 - We'll have a longer discussion at the end.
 - You are muted now; raise hand during closing discussion to be unmuted.

Center for Supporting Research on CCDBG Implementation

Supported through the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) in the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and managed through a contract with the Urban Institute

Alysia Blandon, OPRE project officer

Julia Isaacs, project director; Teresa Derrick-Mills, deputy project director, Laura Wagner, project assistant

Goal: Support CCDF Lead Agencies in building research and evaluation capacity

Activities:

- [Building Child Care Research Capacity](#) through web events and written materials
- Supporting grant teams with CCDBG Implementation Research and Evaluation Planning and Implementation Grants



What We Will Cover Today

1. Child care stability
 1. Motivation [Crys O' Grady, Oregon Department of Education](#)
 2. Measuring changes in subsidy length [Julia Isaacs](#)
2. Emerging findings from
 1. Oregon
 2. Massachusetts
 3. Illinois
3. Questions and reactions
 1. [Crys O'Grady, Oregon Department of Education](#)
 2. You!

Motivation

Crys O' Grady

Child Care Policy Analyst and

CCDF Lead Administrator

Oregon Department of Education



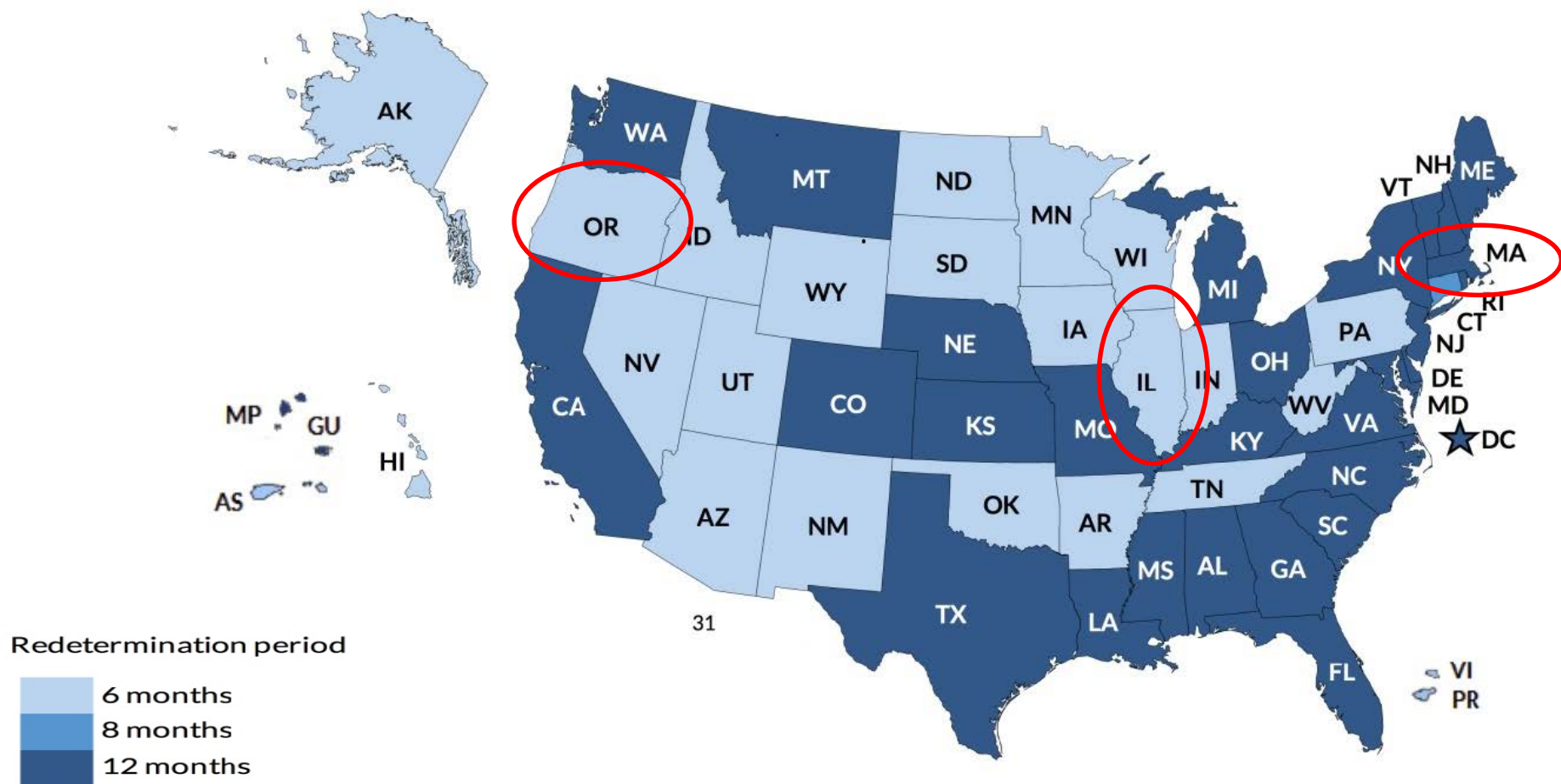
Measuring policy change

- Do we expect more stability after the CCDBG reauthorization policy changes?
- Do we see longer “spells” for any of the following?
 - Eligibility period
 - Time frame when a family is *authorized to use* child care subsidy
 - Also called authorization, reauthorization, or redetermination period
 - Subsidy spell
 - Time frame when a family *actually uses* child care subsidy
 - Main measure of subsidy stability
 - Spell with provider
 - Time frame when the child is with same provider
 - Main measure of continuity of care arrangements

Measuring subsidy spells

- Measure *subsidy spell*, or length of time each family receives its subsidy, for thousands of families in the program records
- Compare spell length for two groups of families (pre- and post-policy change)
 - Using *median spell length*
 - *The simple midpoint if you lined up all families from shortest to longest spells*
 - *The point at which half the families have left program, half are still receiving subsidies*
 - Using *duration (survival) analysis*
 - *A complex way to analyze how long it takes until the spell ends*
 - *Shown as a curve, showing percentage of families leaving at 1, 2, ..6,.12, 18, etc. months*
 - *The point where 50 percent of families have left is the same as the median spell length*
- Methods explained further in *COMMON CHALLENGES IN THE STUDY OF CONTINUITY OF CHILD CARE SUBSIDY PARTICIPATION* (Davis, Grobe, and Weber 2012)

Eligibility (or Redetermination) Period Policies (2014)



Source: Urban Institute CCDF Policy Database

Family subsidy stability in Oregon before and after CCDBG Reauthorization

Megan Pratt, Laurie Houston, & Bobbie Weber
Oregon State University



Oregon State
University

Did the implementation of 12-month reauthorization with 3-month job search improve stability for child care subsidy participating families?



- Oregon has a history of unstable subsidy participation for families.
- Oregon implemented 12-month Reauthorization with 3-month job search policies for families during FFY 2017.



Comparing spells before and after policy change



FFY 2015–2016

Pre–Policy Change

Family's first spell started in FFYs 2015 or 2016.



FFY 2017

Implementation year

Unclear which policy family started under.

Data from this year excluded from analyses.



FFY 2018–2019

Post–Policy Change

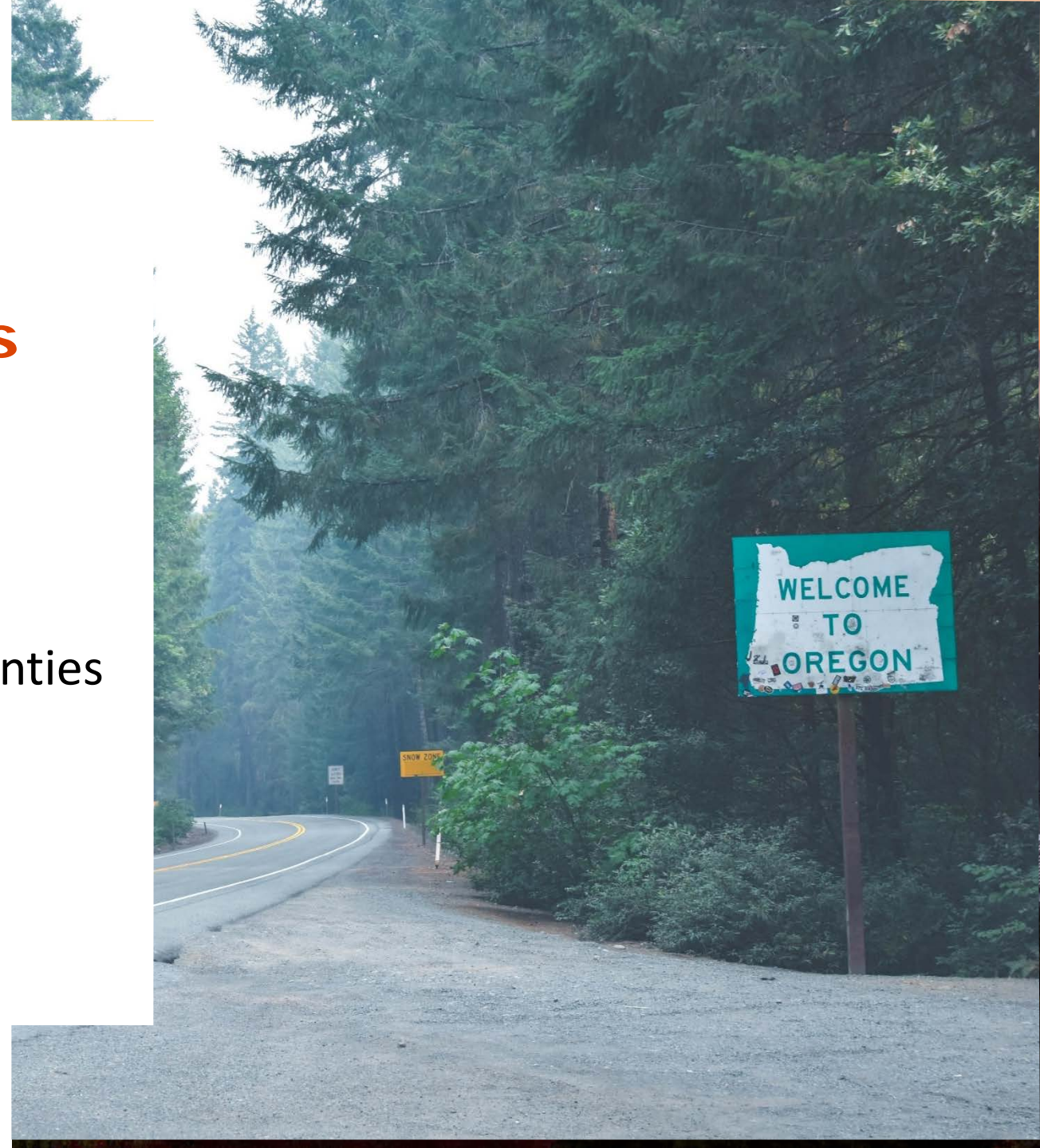
Family's first spell started in FFYs 2018 or 2019.

FFY = Federal Fiscal Year



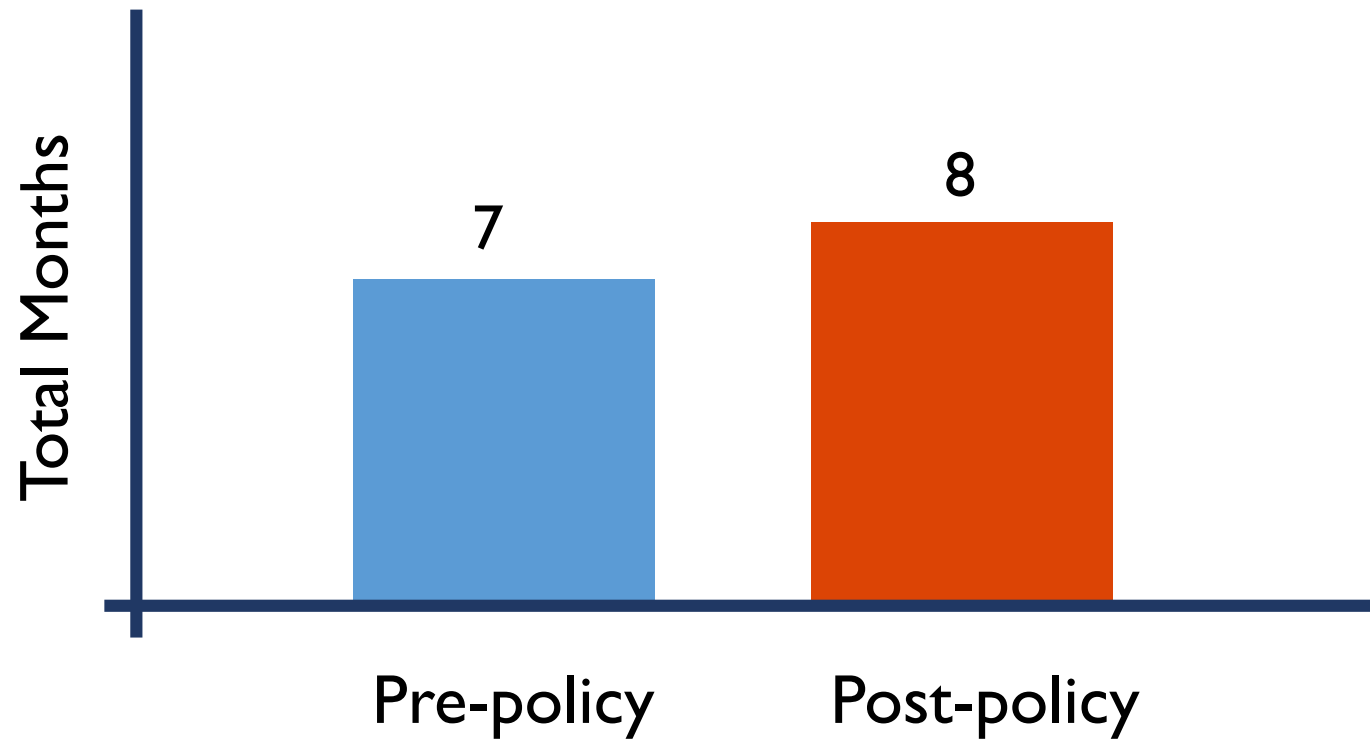
Characteristics of children and families

- Single parents
- One or two children
- 1 in 3 children of color
- 1 in 7 live in non-metro counties
- Post-policy age composition
 - More infants and toddlers
 - Fewer school-age children



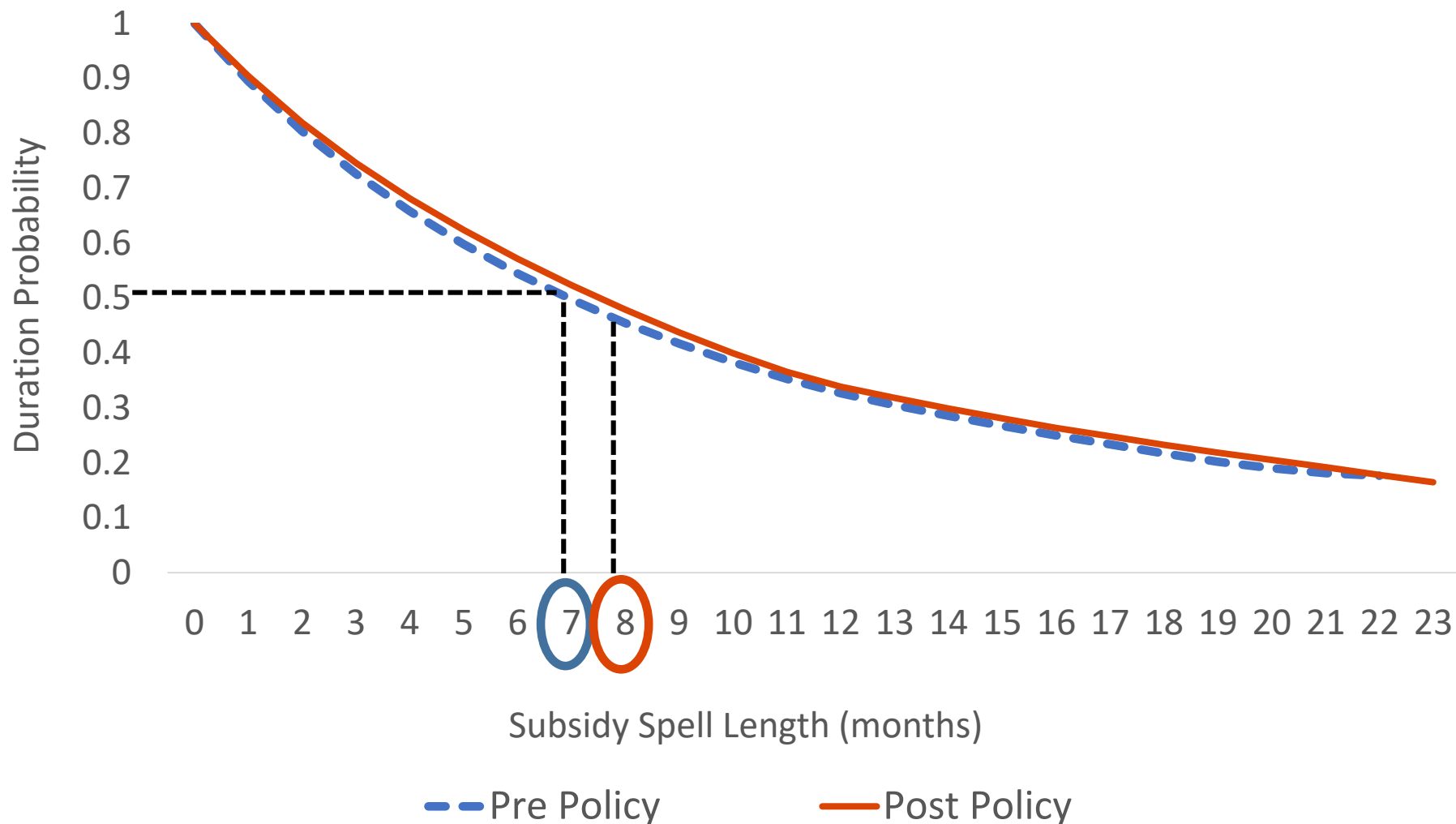


Median spell length was 7 months in pre-policy period and 8 months in post-policy period.





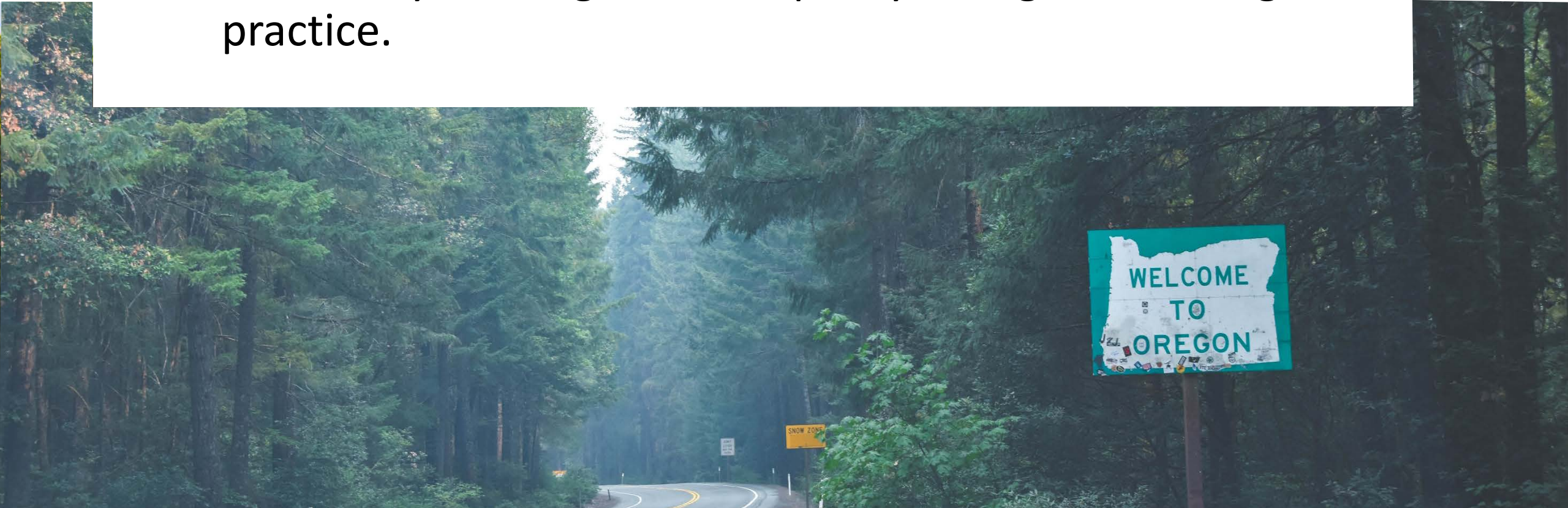
Duration analysis results showed post-policy families stayed on program slightly longer.



Why didn't Oregon see more stability for families?



- A single policy does not work on its own.
- There may be a lag between policy change and change in practice.



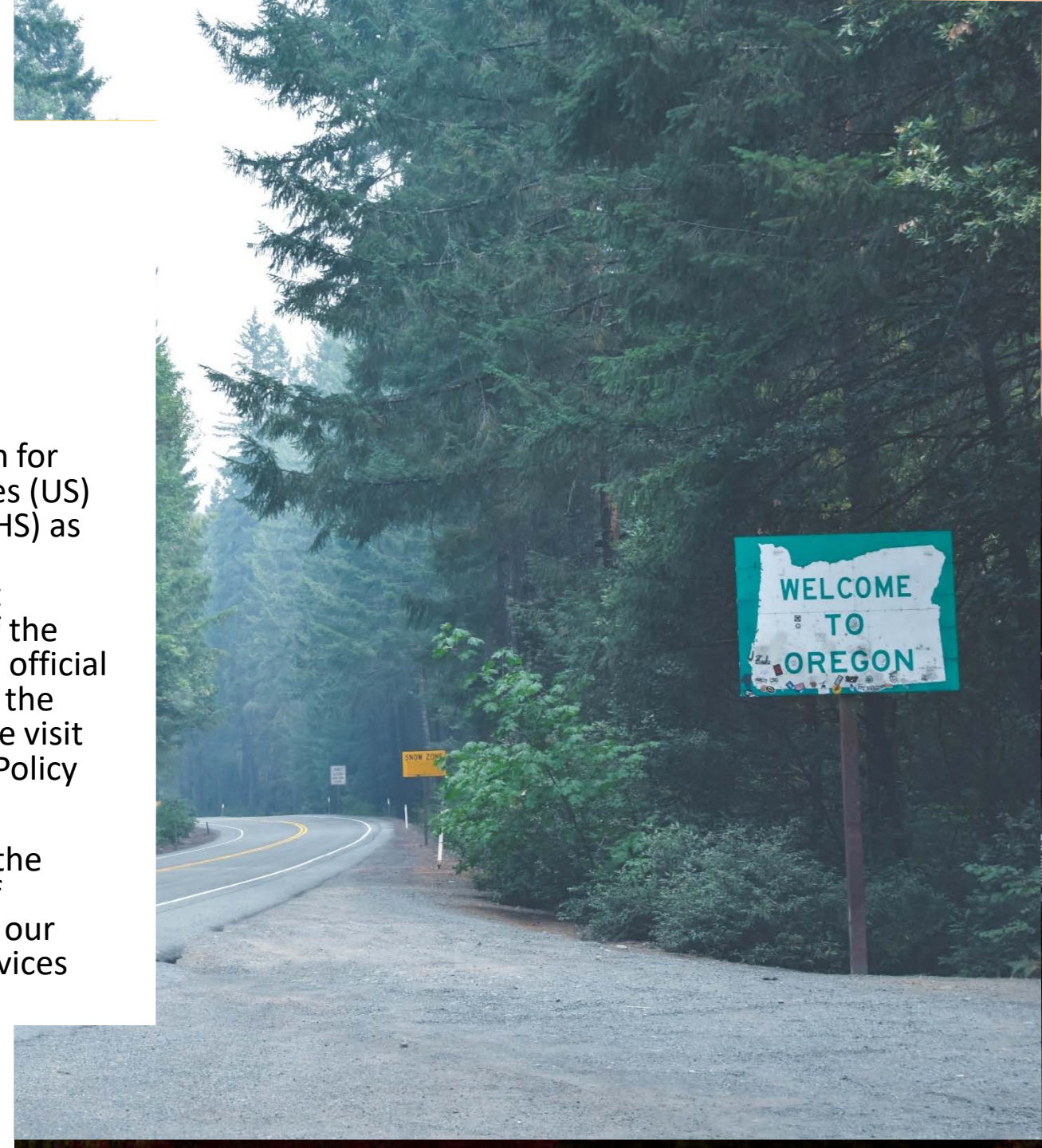


Questions?

Acknowledgement

This project is supported by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) of the United States (US) Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award (Grant #: 90YE0200) totaling \$961,410 with 100 percent funded by ACF/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by ACF/HHS, or the U.S. Government. For more information, please visit the ACF website, Administrative and National Policy Requirements.

This study was completed in partnership with the Early Learning Division, Oregon Department of Education. We would also like to acknowledge our partners at Oregon Department of Human Services for their support and insight into this work.



Improving Child Care Subsidy Stability through CCDBG Policy Changes for Massachusetts Families Receiving TANF

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Research Partnership Team:

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Wendy Wei (Harvard University)

Jocelyn Bowne (MA Department of Early Education and Care)



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Department of
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BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY

The Heller School FOR SOCIAL POLICY AND MANAGEMENT



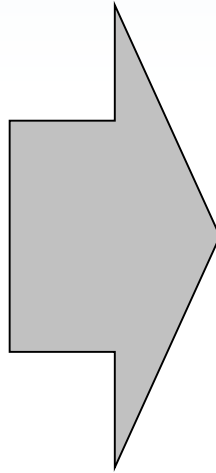
Boston University School of Social Work

CCDBG changes that could affect TANF clients' subsidy stability

CCDBG Policy

Pre-October 2018

- **3–6 month** authorization
- Authorization length **tied to work activity**
- **Frequent** client visits to reauthorize
- **No authorizations** to search for a work activity



CCDBG Policy Changes

Post-October 2018

- **12-month** authorization
- Authorization length **not tied to work activity**
- **Less frequent** client visits to reauthorize
- **12-week authorizations** to search for a work activity

Massachusetts has separate TANF and child care subsidy systems



TANF Office

Issues Child
Care Referral



Make an
Appointment at
CCR&R



CCR&R Agency

Issues Child Care
Voucher

Hypotheses: what we expect

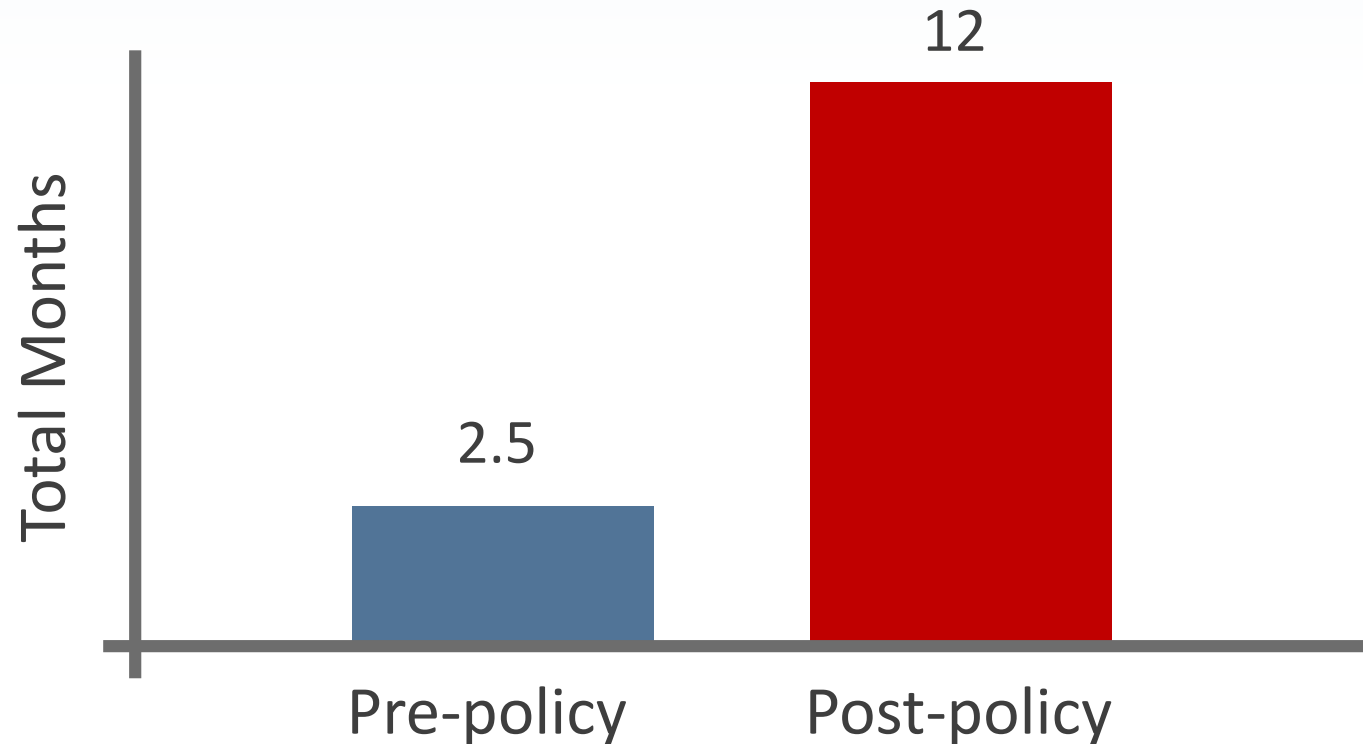
- New CCDBG authorization rules should help increase subsidy stability among families receiving TANF
- Effects of new rules could be offset by:
 - Implementation challenges
 - Existing administrative burden not addressed by the policy changes
 - Additional policies implemented at the same time
- Expect to see differences by region

Policy implementation: TANF offices

- Implementation of new CCDBG rules went relatively smoothly at TANF offices
 - *“**Zealous**” implementation to make sure families understand increased access to care*
- Many TANF staff welcomed changes and saw the benefits for children’s child care stability and parents’ stress levels
 - *“[parents] love the 12 months because now they are **not so panic stricken**...the whole process is a lot calmer for everyone involved, so it doesn’t seem like you’re stabilizing crises all the time”*
- Culture change still needed for some TANF caseworkers
 - *“some have thought that [**the child care referral**] is the one thing we had to hold parents **accountable** for meeting their hours and we could threaten to take the child care away”*

Subsidy authorization periods increased after policy implementation

- Median authorization length was only 2.5 months in pre-policy period and 12 months in post-policy period



Policy implementation: CCR&R offices

- Implementing new rules for low-income working clients was not easy and could lead to longer wait times for appointments

*“While we are seeing **less clients in the office**, we are overwhelmed by the amount of [mid-authorization] documentation coming in...It has **eliminated the number of voucher counselors available to see appointments** due to us having to set aside a day per counselor to keep up with the changes being reported”*

- Staff reported fewer emails/phone calls and in-person visits with TANF clients

Families receiving TANF stay on subsidies longer after the policy change



Regional administrative practices can help explain differences in subsidy stability across regions

Families receiving TANF in Region 2 stayed on subsidies longer after the policy change compared with Region 1

- Issuing 12-Week Authorizations at TANF Offices
 - Region 1 emphasized giving 12-week vouchers if clients needed time to find a work activity
- Transition Between Two Systems
 - Region 2 CCR&R calls TANF client when referral is received
 - Region 2 CCR&R co-locates at TANF Offices

Questions?

Please type into the chat box any questions you have.

Acknowledgement

This study was supported by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) of the United States (US) Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award (Grant #: 90YE0203) totaling \$999,997 with 100 percent funded by ACF/HHS. The contents are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by ACF/HHS, or the US Government. For more information, please visit the ACF website, [Administrative and National Policy Requirements](#).

Using a Natural Experiment to Preview Subsidized Child Care Reforms' Impact on Subsidy Stability and Continuity of Care in Illinois

Robert Goerge, Leah Gjertson, and Michele Carter

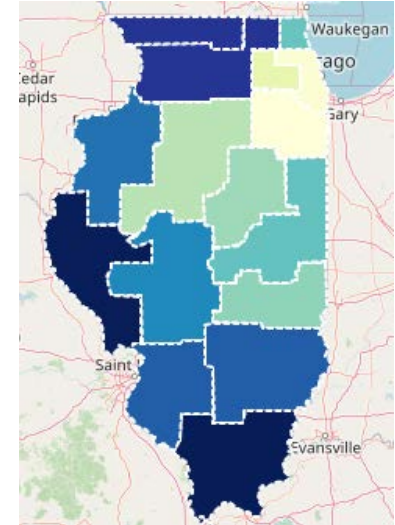
Taking advantage of extended eligibility to preview policy change in the Illinois Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)



Before October 2018, families receiving CCAP must re-apply every **6 months** to maintain eligibility



2014 data system change led to some families getting an **additional 6 months of eligibility** "automatically" without submitting new paperwork



The families granted the automatic eligibility extensions varied by region and the month they came due for reapplication



Data

- Statewide Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) administrative data from Illinois, 2011–2020
- American Community Survey (ACS) data



2014 Study Sample

Extended Eligibility Families

- 42,800 households
- 69,000 children

Standard Eligibility Families

- 15,700 households
- 26,000 children

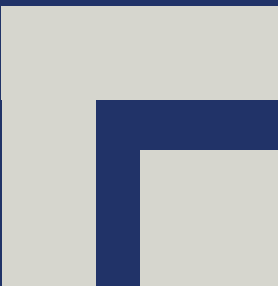


Method

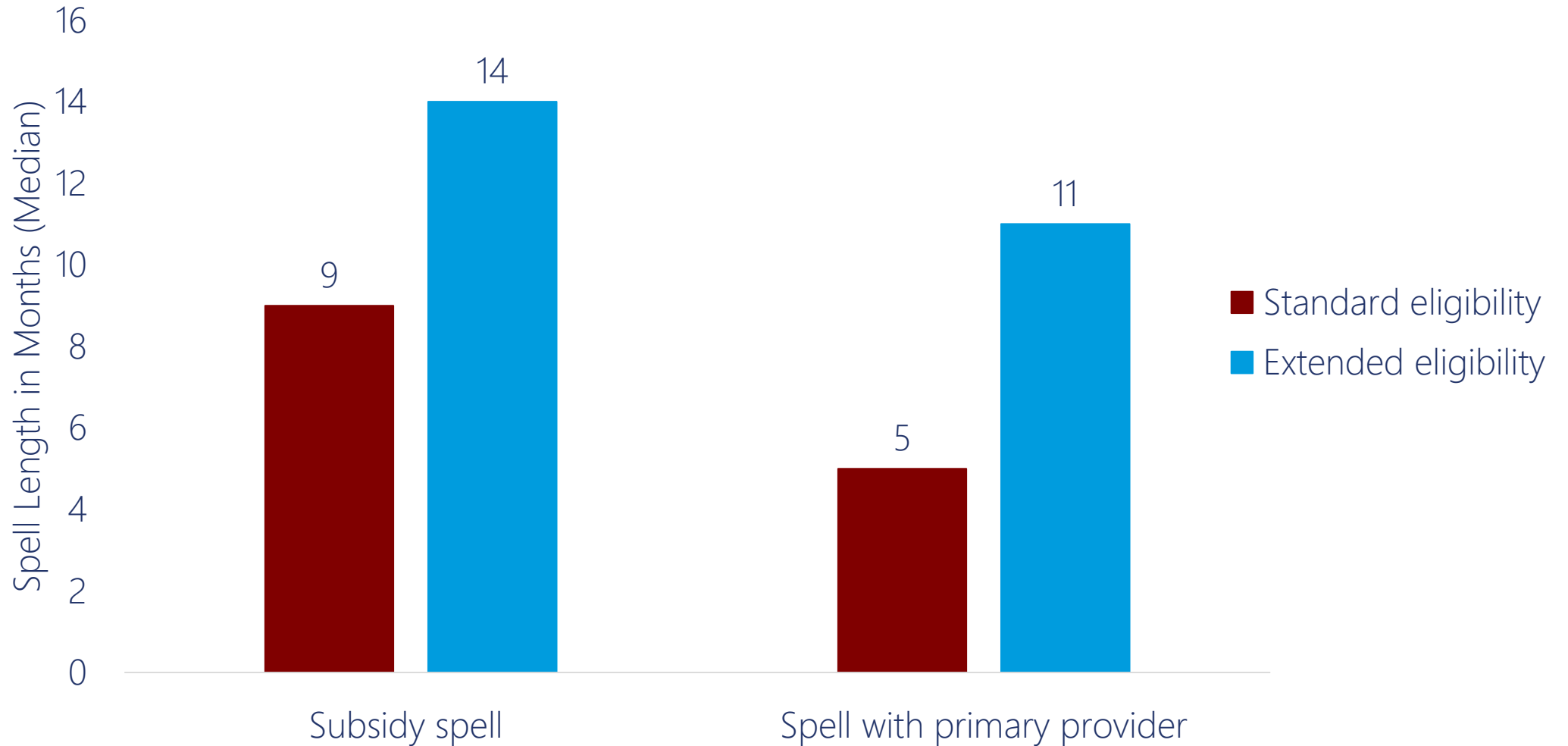
- Compare length of time using child care subsidy (spell length) between extended eligibility families and standard eligibility families
- Duration analysis

Research Question:

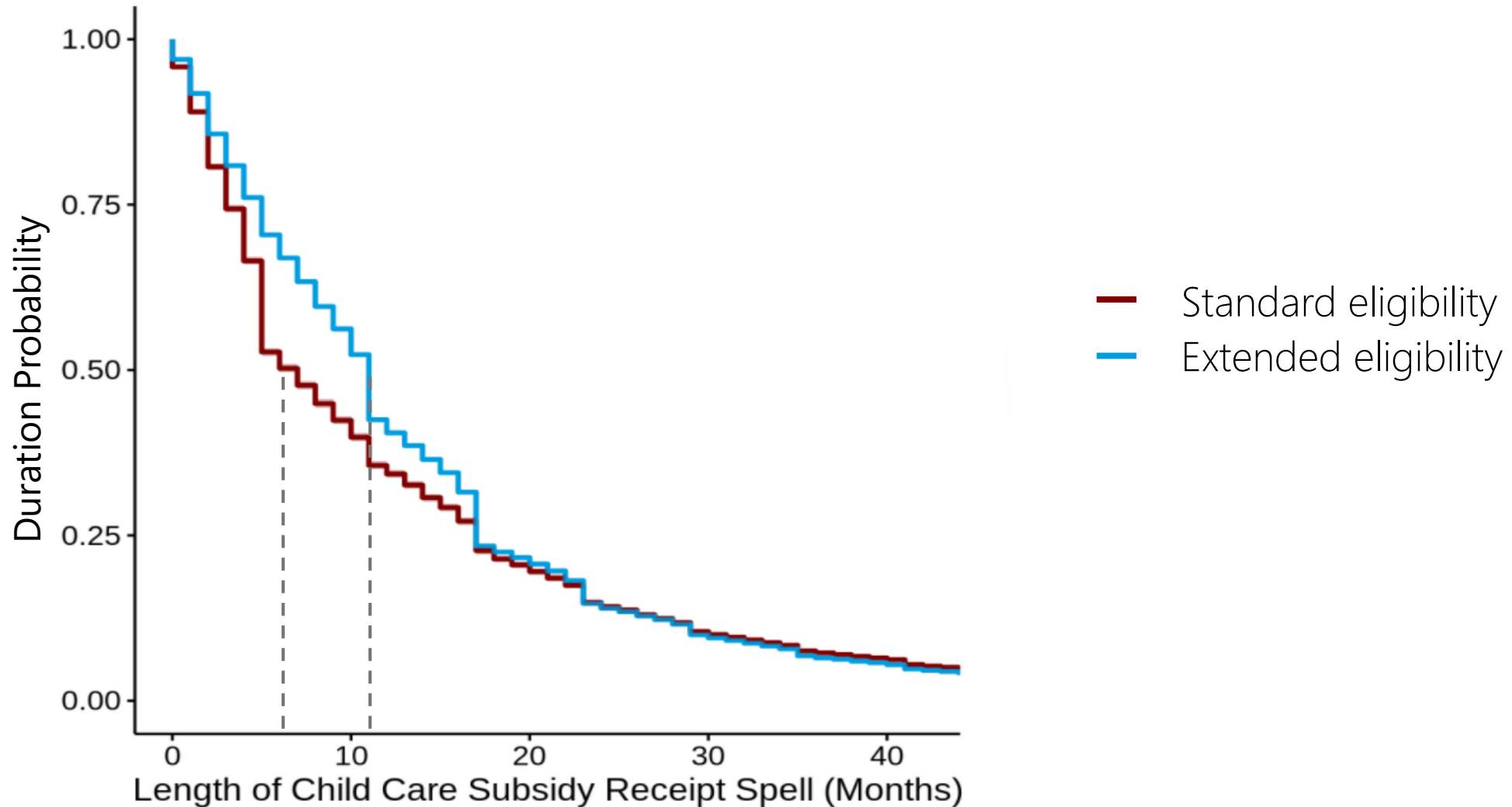
Does extending the child care subsidy eligibility period in Illinois from 6 months to 12 months increase stability of subsidy receipt and continuity of care for children?



Extended eligibility resulted in more months using child care subsidy and more months with the child's primary provider

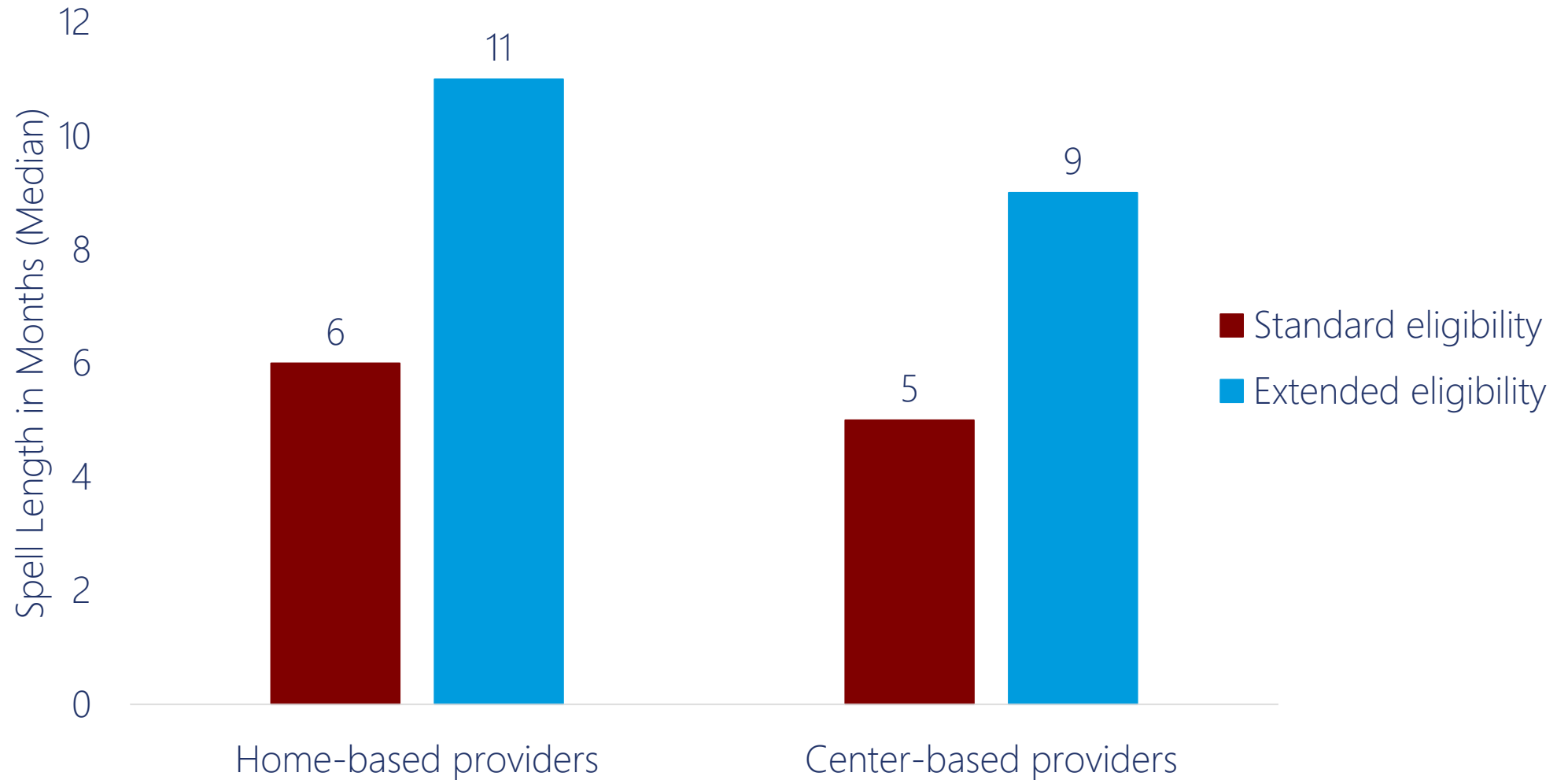


Extended-eligibility families spend more time with the child's primary provider, according to duration analysis

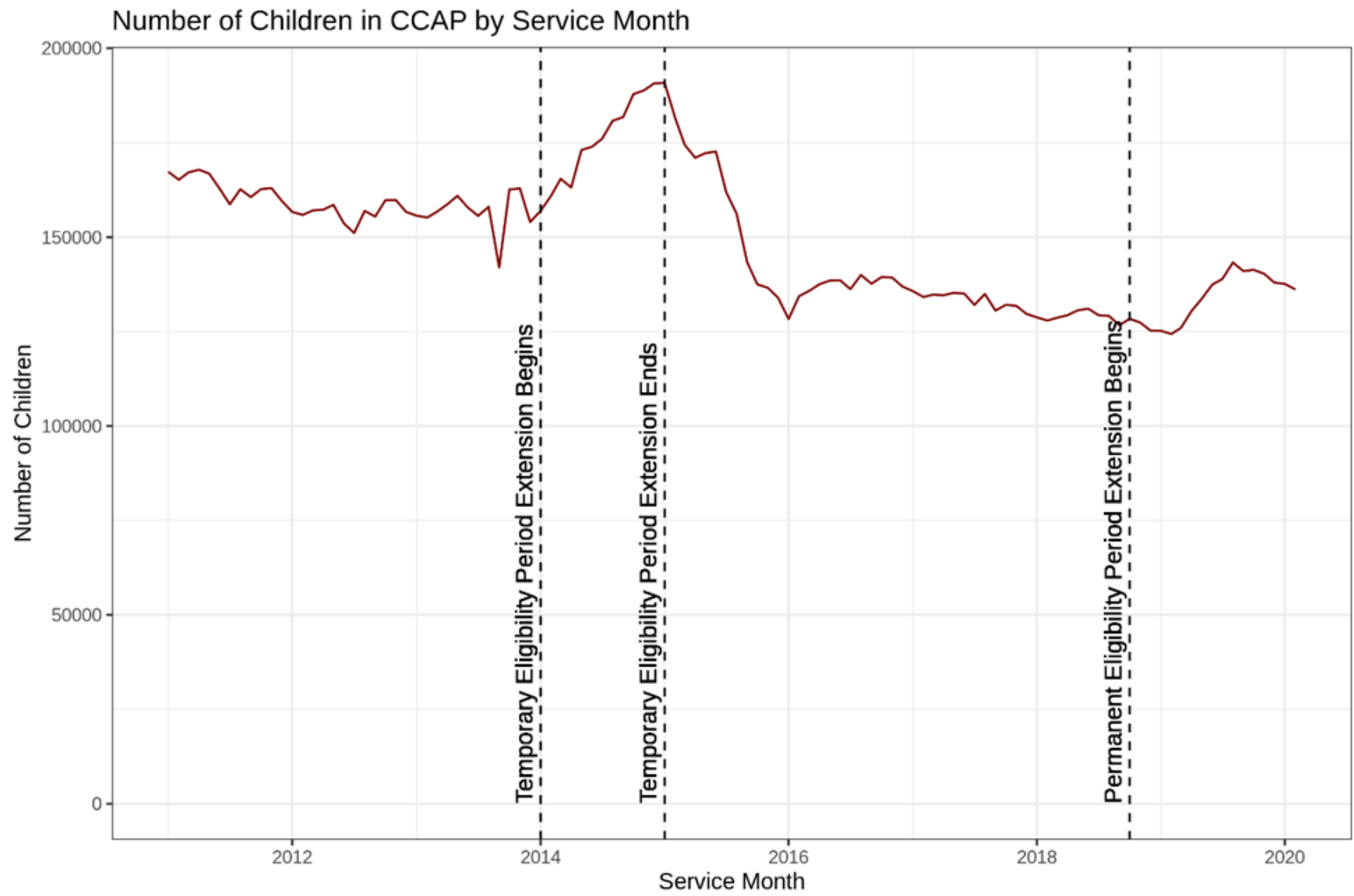


Notes: Cox regression. Model includes controls for child age and Census tract characteristics race/ethnicity, employment, education, transportation, and income-to-poverty ratio.

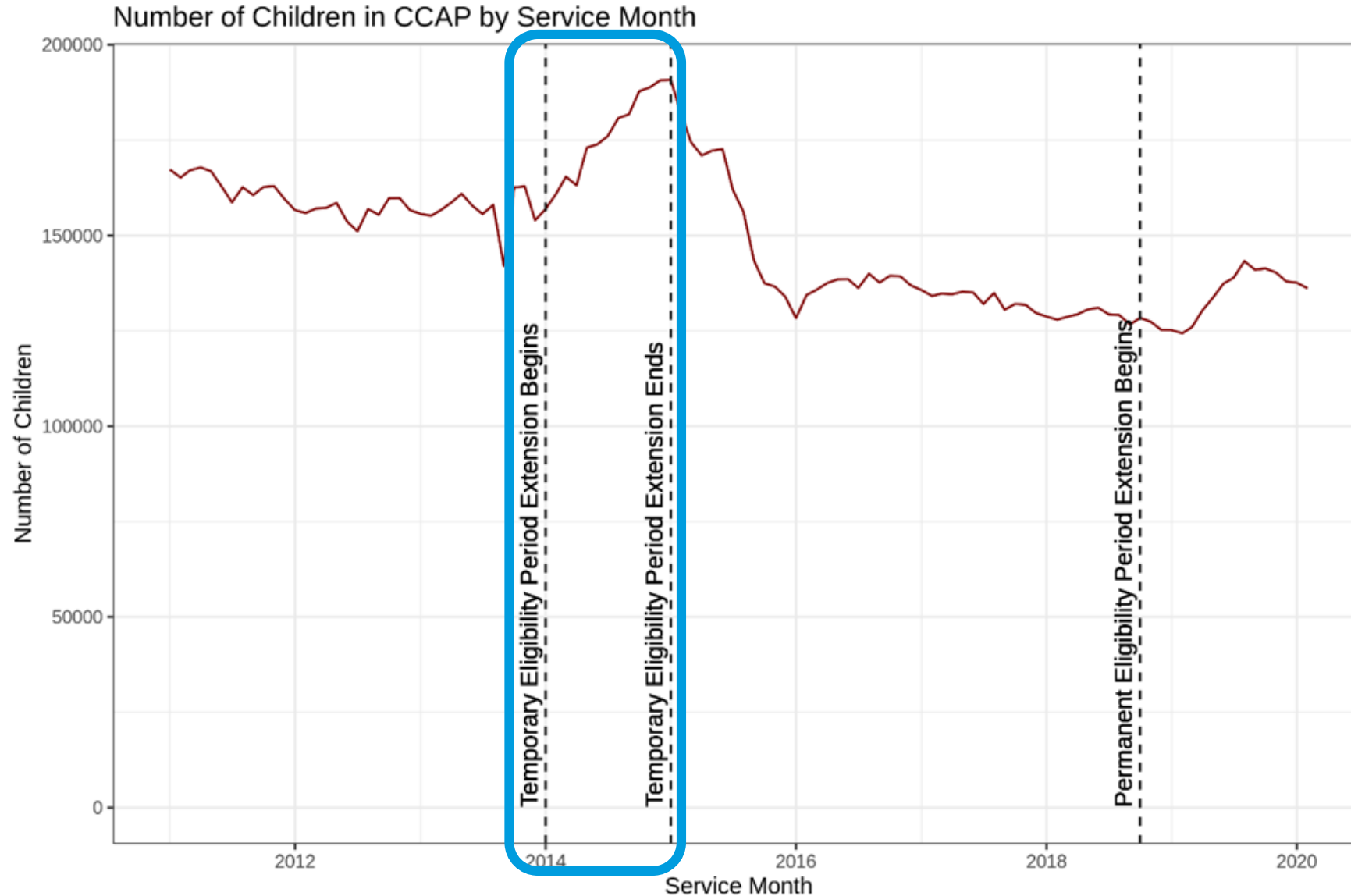
Extended-eligibility families spend more time with the child's primary provider, for home-based and center-based providers



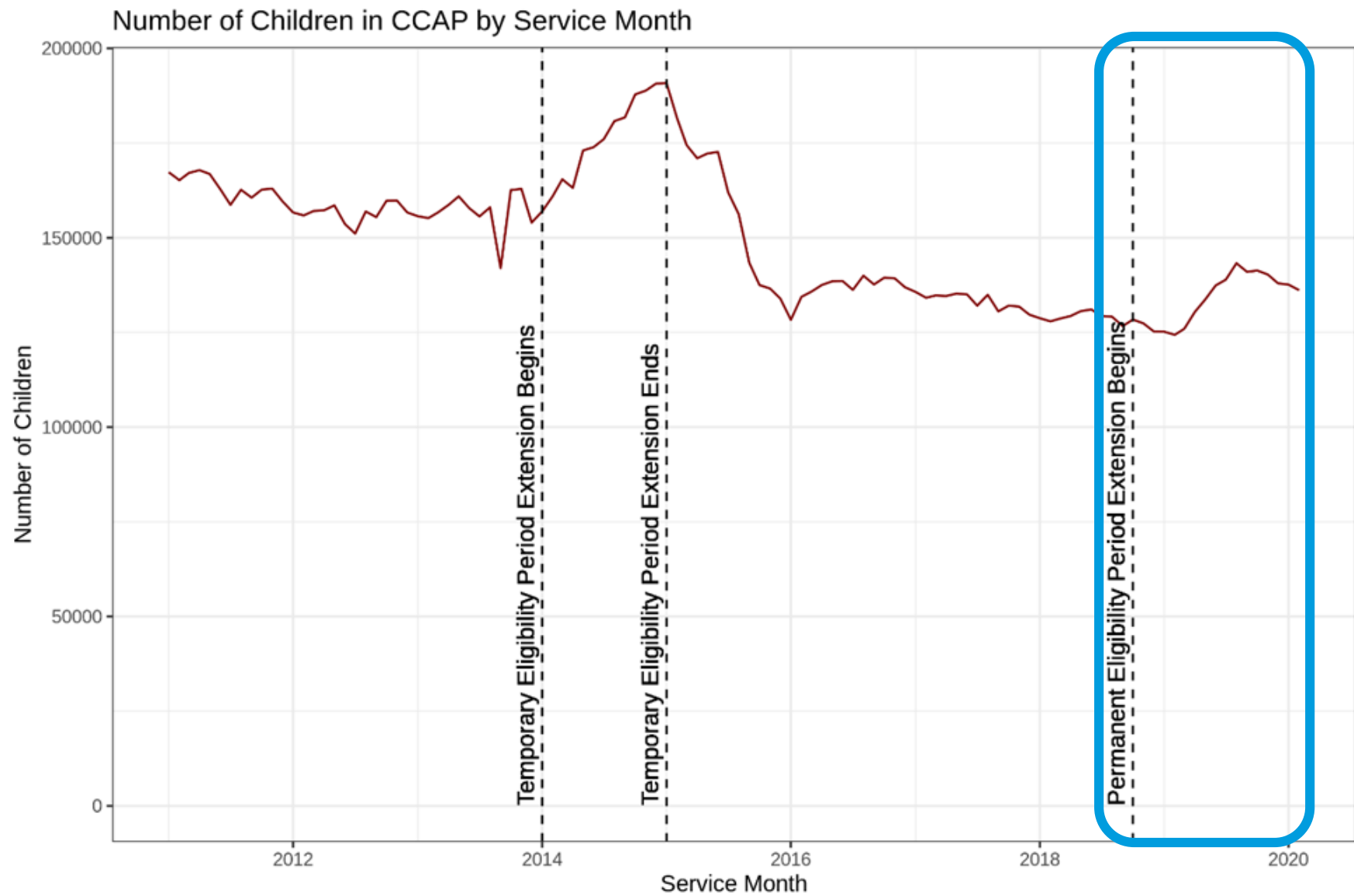
Number of children served by the child care subsidy program increases during periods with extended eligibility



Number of children served by the child care subsidy program increases during periods with extended eligibility



Number of children served by the child care subsidy program increases during periods with extended eligibility



Summary of Findings

- Extending the child care subsidy eligibility period led to:
 - **5-month increase** in the median amount of time in the child care subsidy program
 - **6-month increase** in the median amount of time with the child's primary provider
 - **Stated in days, 52 day increase** in number of full-time days with the primary provider; **7-day increase** in part-time days with the primary provider
 - **Number of children served by the Illinois child care subsidy program increases** during periods with extended eligibility

Implications

- 12-month eligibility periods, implemented in Illinois and other states in recent years, could result in longer child care subsidy spells for families and children spending more time with a primary provider
- With families staying in the program longer, there may not be enough supply of subsidized child care to meet demand
- There are unanswered questions around the impacts of extended eligibility in the current subsidized child care landscape still in recovery from the impacts of COVID-19

Questions?

Please type into the chat box any questions you have.

Acknowledgments

This study utilizes data from the Division of Early Childhood, Illinois Department of Human Services. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Illinois Department of Human Services.

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Questions and Reflections

We welcome your **questions, reflections, or comments**

- Drop them in the chat or use the Reactions button to raise hand to be unmuted.
- We would love to hear from all, especially CCDF Lead Agency staff!

Resources

Check out the [OPRE website](#) for slides, audio recordings, and transcripts of webinars (posted a few months after each webinar).

Check out the [Building Child Care Research Capacity](#) web page for slides from past webinars and other resources.

Join us for a second webinar, “Measuring and Supporting Child-Teacher Interactions: A State and Tribal Story,” on Wednesday, April 20, at this same time (1:00–2:15 p.m. Eastern Time).

If you have questions, feel free to email me (Julia Isaacs) at Jisaacs@urban.org.