A landscape painting of a road at sunset. The road, paved with cobblestones, leads from the foreground into the distance, flanked by grassy fields and forested hills. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm, golden glow over the scene. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds. The overall style is that of a classical oil painting.

A Roadmap to Reducing **Child Poverty**

The National Academies of
SCIENCES • ENGINEERING • MEDICINE



Study Sponsors

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- **The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**



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Statement of Task

The U.S. Congress asked the National Academies to provide a non-partisan, evidence-based report that:

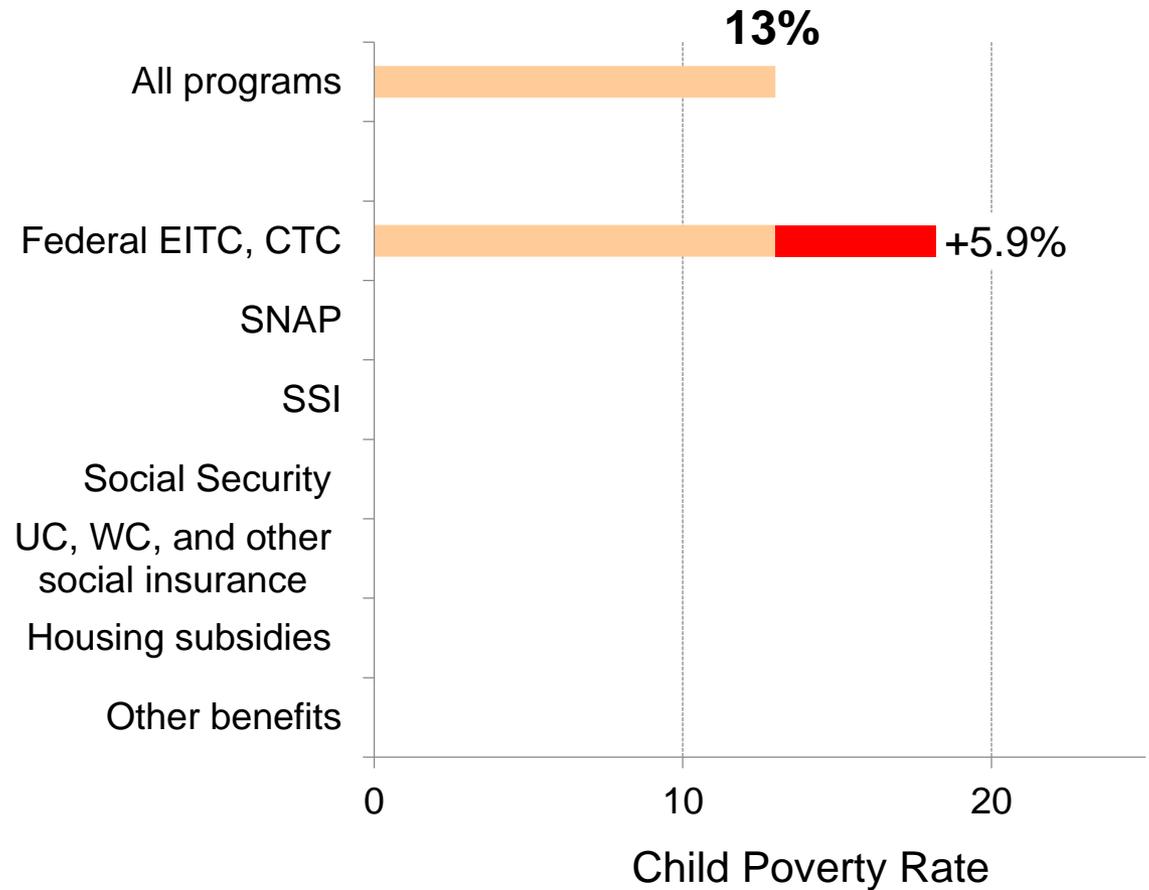
Reviews research on linkages between child poverty and child well-being.

Provides objective analyses of the poverty-reducing effects of major assistance programs directed at children and families.

Provides policy and program recommendations for reducing the number of children living in poverty (and deep poverty) in the U.S. by half within 10 years.

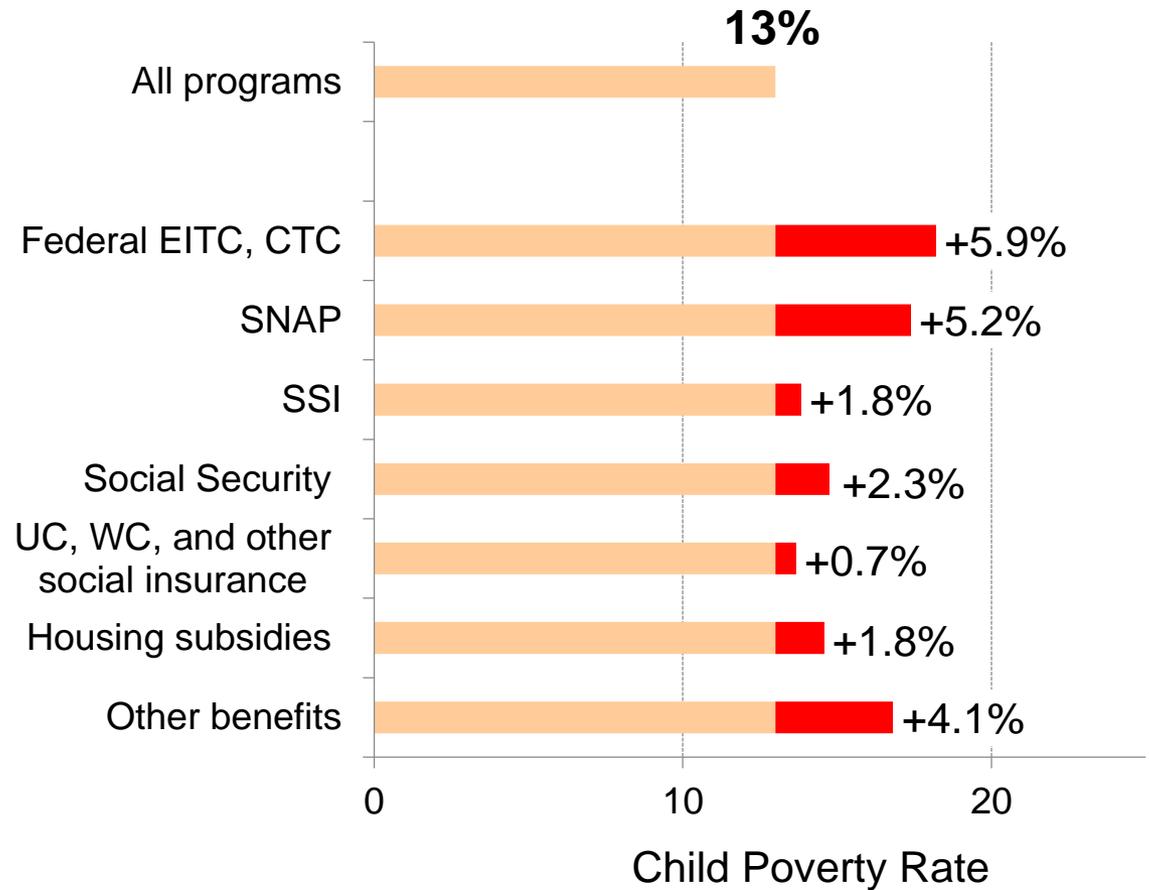
Child Poverty Rates Would Be Higher Without Existing Programs

In the absence of current programs that provide income, food, housing, and medical care, child poverty rates would be much higher



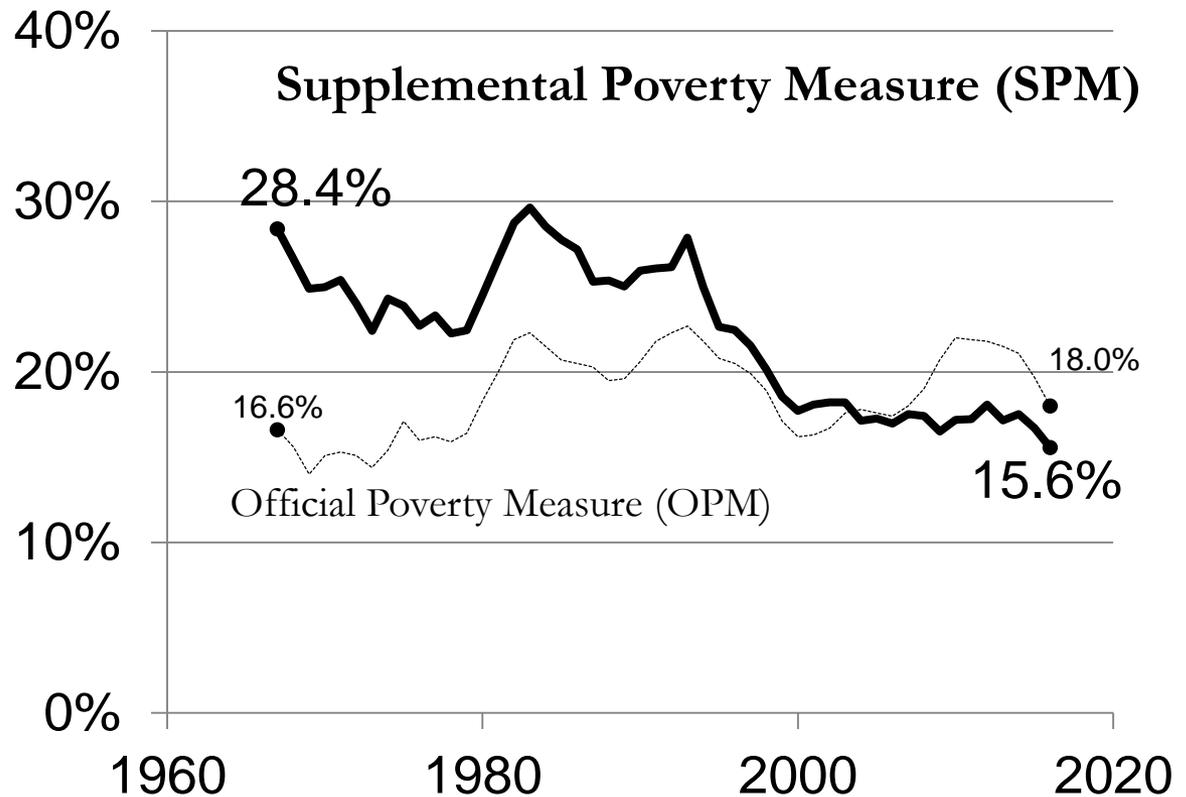
Child Poverty Rates Would Be Higher Without Existing Programs

In the absence of current programs that provide income, food, housing, and medical care, child poverty rates would be much higher



A 50% Reduction in Child Poverty is Achievable

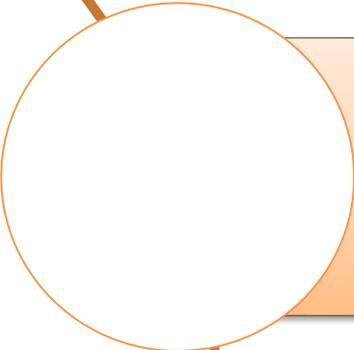
- The U.K. cut its child poverty rate in half from 2001-2008
- Canada's Child Benefit program is on course to cut child poverty in half
- The US nearly cut its child poverty rate in half between 1967 and 2016



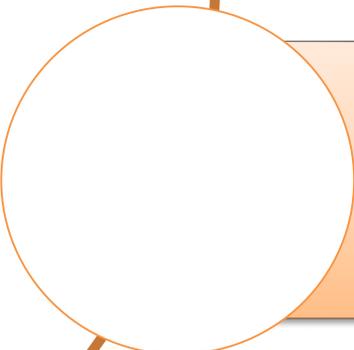
Anchored U.S. SPM child poverty rate. SOURCE: Original analyses commissioned by the committee from Christopher Wimer (2017, October).



The Committee developed:



20 individual policy and program options



4 policy and program packages

Summary of Simulated Programs and Policies

Program and policy options tied to work:

- Expand EITC
- Expand child care subsidies
- Raise the federal minimum wage
- Implement a promising training and employment program called WorkAdvance

Modifications to existing provisions relating to immigrants:

- Increasing immigrants' access to safety net programs

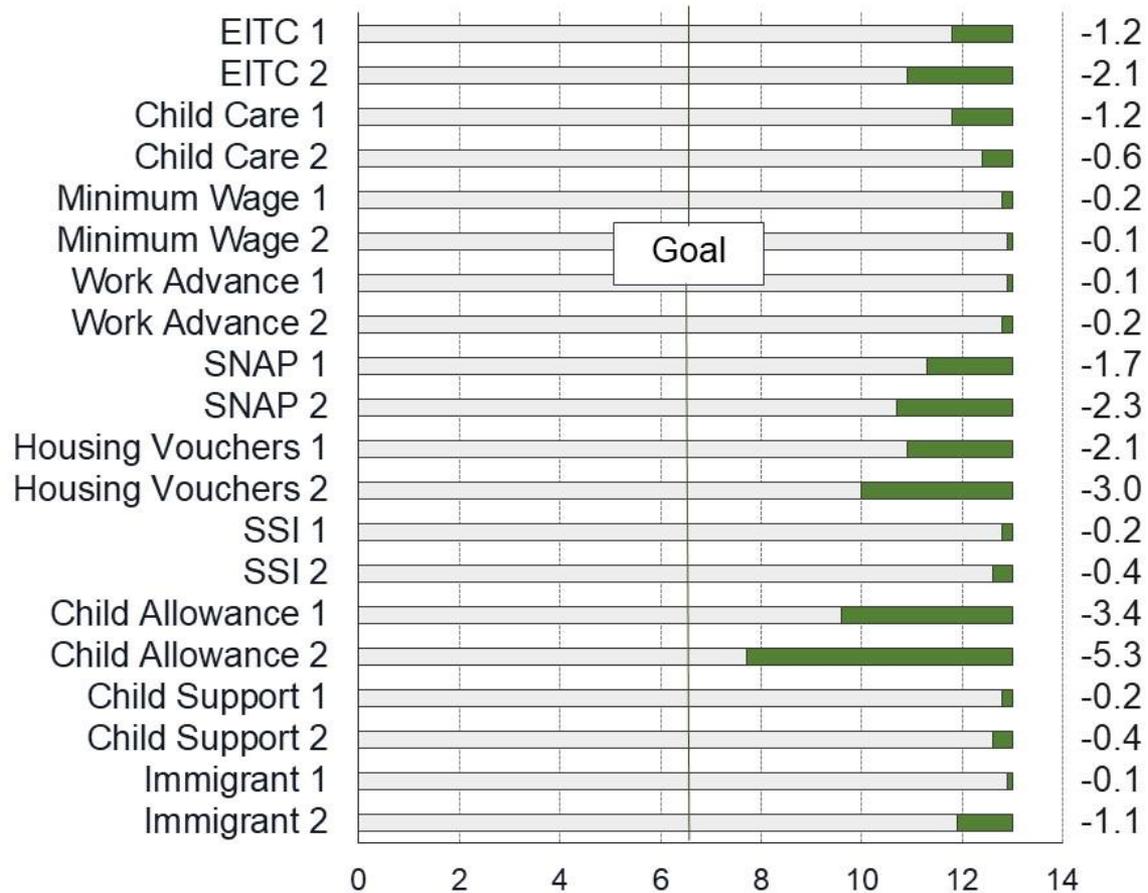
Modifications to existing safety net programs:

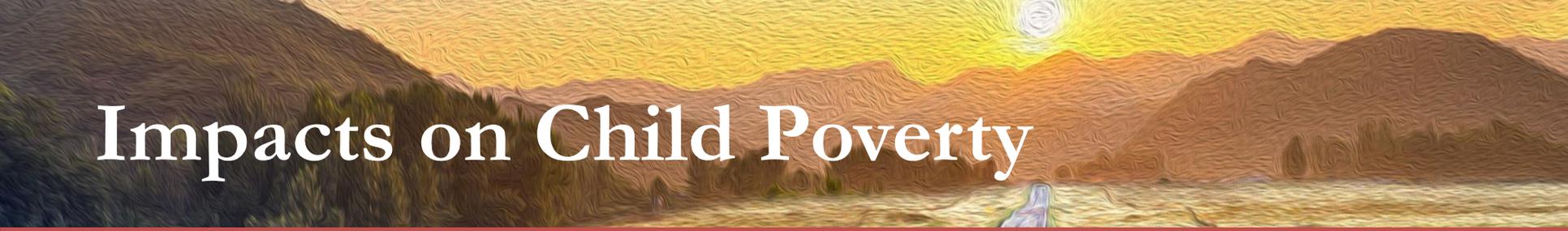
- Expand SNAP
- Expand the Housing Choice Voucher Program
- Expand SSI

Policies used in other countries:

- Replace Child Tax Credit with a universal child allowance
- Introduce a child support assurance program

No Single Program or Policy Option Met the 50% Reduction Goal

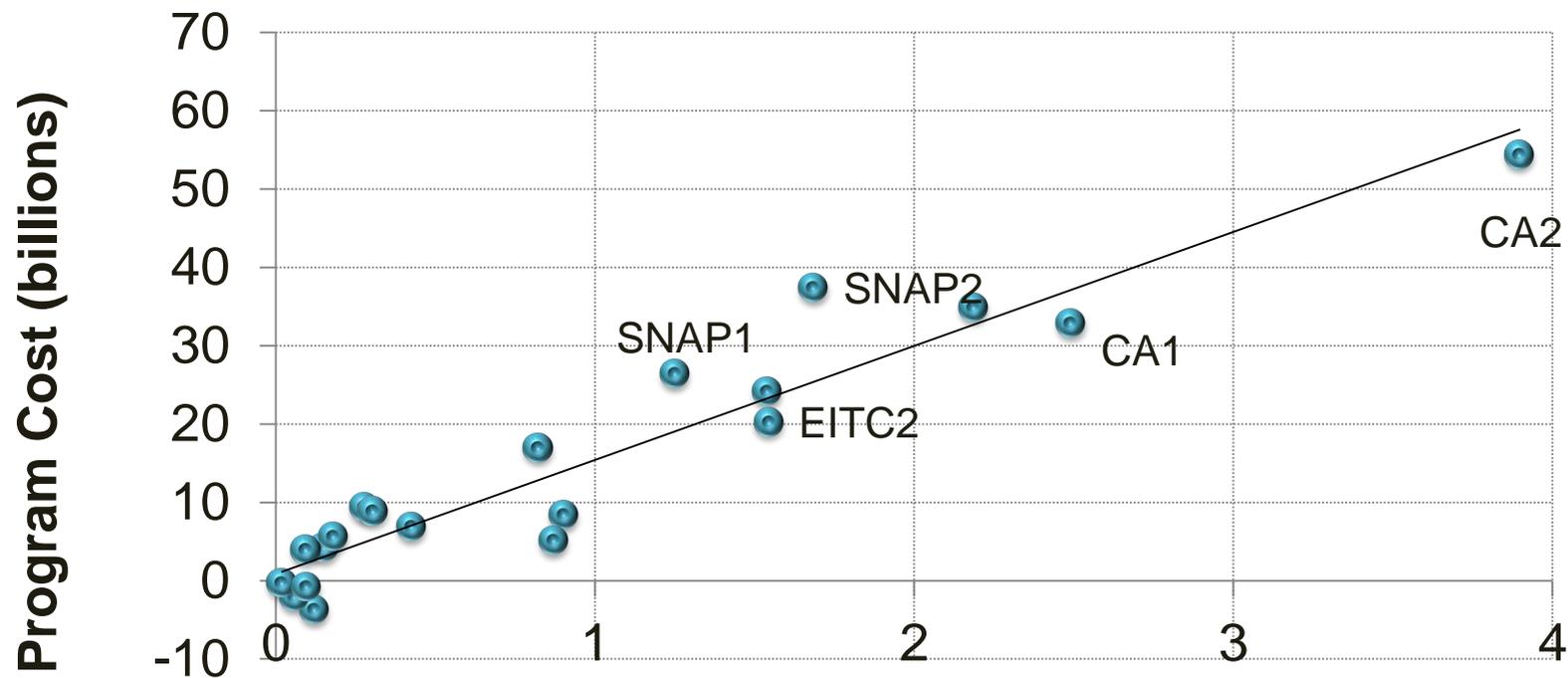




Impacts on Child Poverty

- No single programs reduced poverty by 50%
- Enhancements to SNAP and housing vouchers, and a child allowance, came closest
- Enhancements to the EITC and CDCTC also reduce poverty significantly

More Effective Policies Generally Cost More



Children Lifted Above 100% TRIM3 SPM (millions)

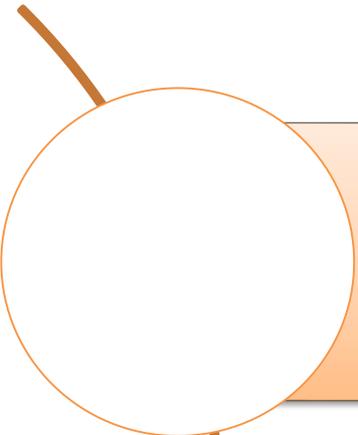


Impacts on Employment

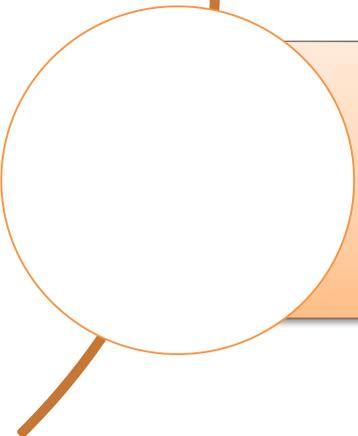
- Income support enhancements decreased employment by up to 160,000.
- Work-based enhancements (e.g., to EITC, CDCTC) increased employment by up to 550,000.



The Committee developed:



20 individual policy and program options



4 policy and program packages

Composition and Impacts of Program and Policy Packages

	Work-oriented package			
Expand EITC	X			
Expand Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit	X			
Increase the minimum wage	X			
Roll out WorkAdvance	X			
Expand housing voucher program				
Expand SNAP benefits				
Begin a child allowance				
Begin child support assurance				
Eliminate 1996 immigration eligibility restrictions				
Percent Reduction in the number of poor children	-18.8%			
Percent Reduction in the number of children in deep poverty	-19.3%			
Change in number of low-income workers	+1,003,000			
Annual cost, in billions	\$8.7			

Composition and Impacts of Program and Policy Packages

	Work-oriented package	Work-Based and Universal Support Package		
Expand EITC	X	X		
Expand Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit	X	X		
Increase the minimum wage	X			
Roll out WorkAdvance	X			
Expand housing voucher program				
Expand SNAP benefits				
Begin a child allowance		X		
Begin child support assurance				
Eliminate 1996 immigration eligibility restrictions				
Percent Reduction in the number of poor children	-18.8%	-35.6%		
Percent Reduction in the number of children in deep poverty	-19.3%	-41.3%		
Change in number of low-income workers	+1,003,000	+568,000		
Annual cost, in billions	\$8.7	\$44.5		

Some Program and Policy Packages DID Meet the Goal

	Work-oriented package	Work-Based and Universal Support Package	Means-tested supports and work package	Universal supports and work package
Expand EITC	X	X	X	X
Expand Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit	X	X	X	X
Increase the minimum wage	X			X
Roll out WorkAdvance	X			
Expand housing voucher program			X	
Expand SNAP benefits			X	
Begin a child allowance		X		X
Begin child support assurance				X
Eliminate 1996 immigration eligibility restrictions				X
Percent Reduction in the number of poor children	-18.8%	-35.6%	-50.7%	-52.3%
Percent Reduction in the number of children in deep poverty	-19.3%	-41.3%	-51.7%	-55.1%
Change in number of low-income workers	+1,003,000	+568,000	+404,000	+611,000
Annual cost, in billions	\$8.7	\$44.5	\$90.7	\$108.8

Costs of the Packages:

Package costs range from \$8.7 billion to \$108.8 billion per year

Studies have estimated the annual costs of child poverty to range from \$800 billion to \$1.1 trillion

Lessons From the Packages:

Individual policy and program changes are insufficient

Bundling work-oriented and income-support programs can reduce poverty AND increase employment



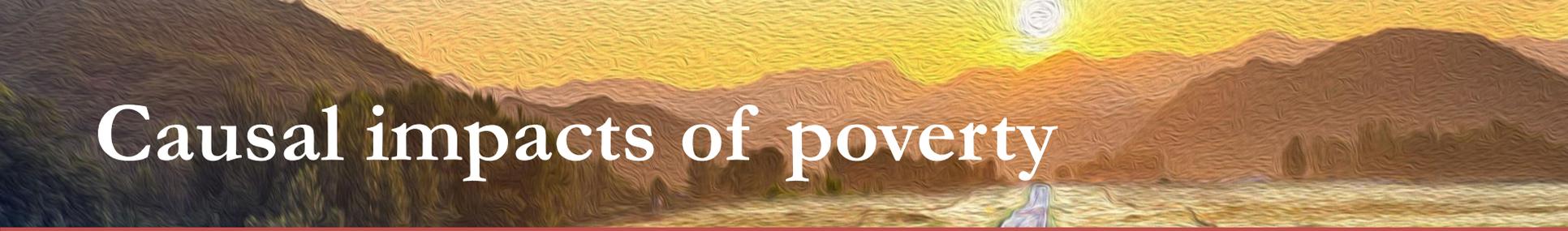
Impacts of Poverty on Child Well-being



Correlation and Causation:

Consistent correlations between poverty and a host of adverse childhood experiences and outcomes

The committee's report focused on causal studies



Causal impacts of poverty

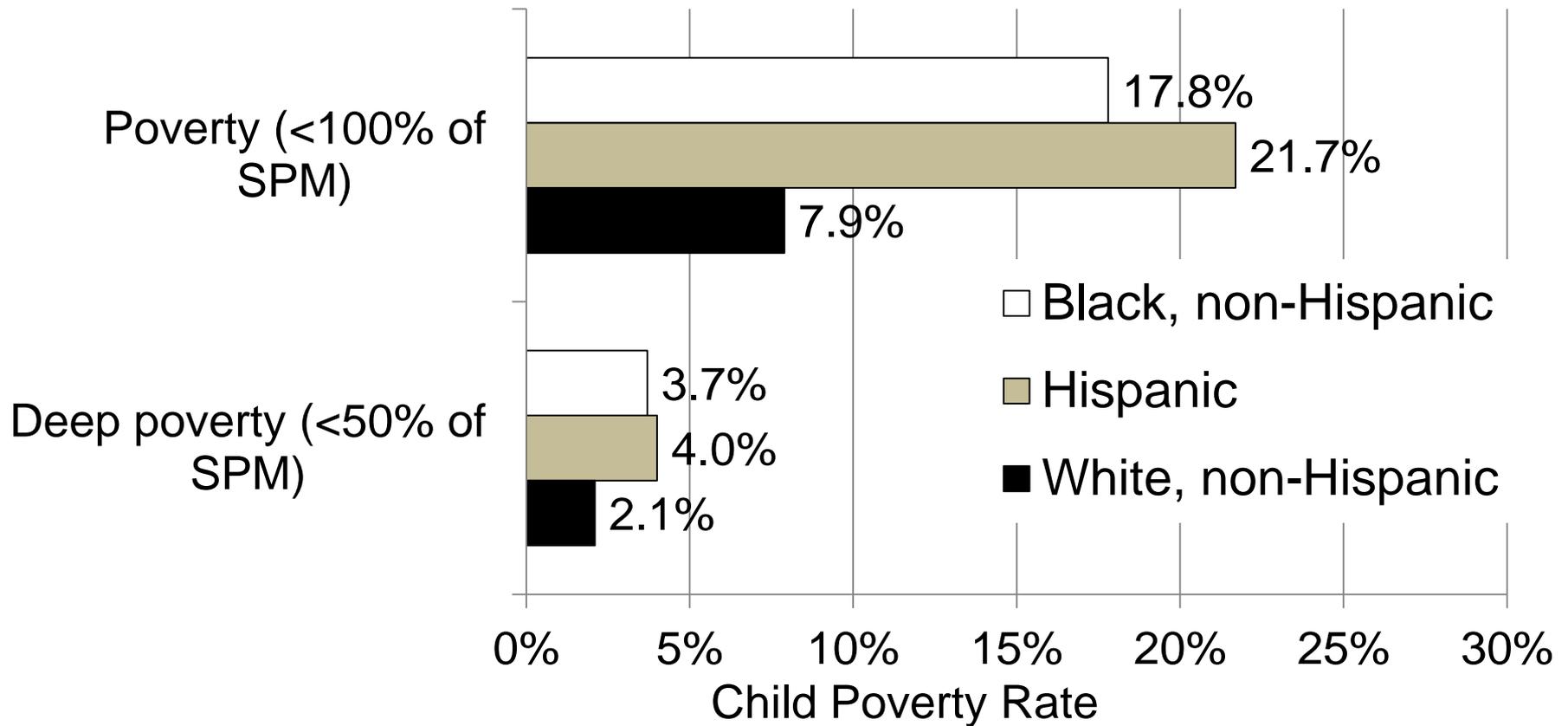
- The weight of the causal evidence indicates that poverty itself causes negative child outcomes, especially when poverty occurs in early childhood or persists throughout a large portion of childhood.
- Some programs that alleviate poverty—e.g., SNAP, EITC, medical insurance—have been shown to improve child health and educational outcomes.



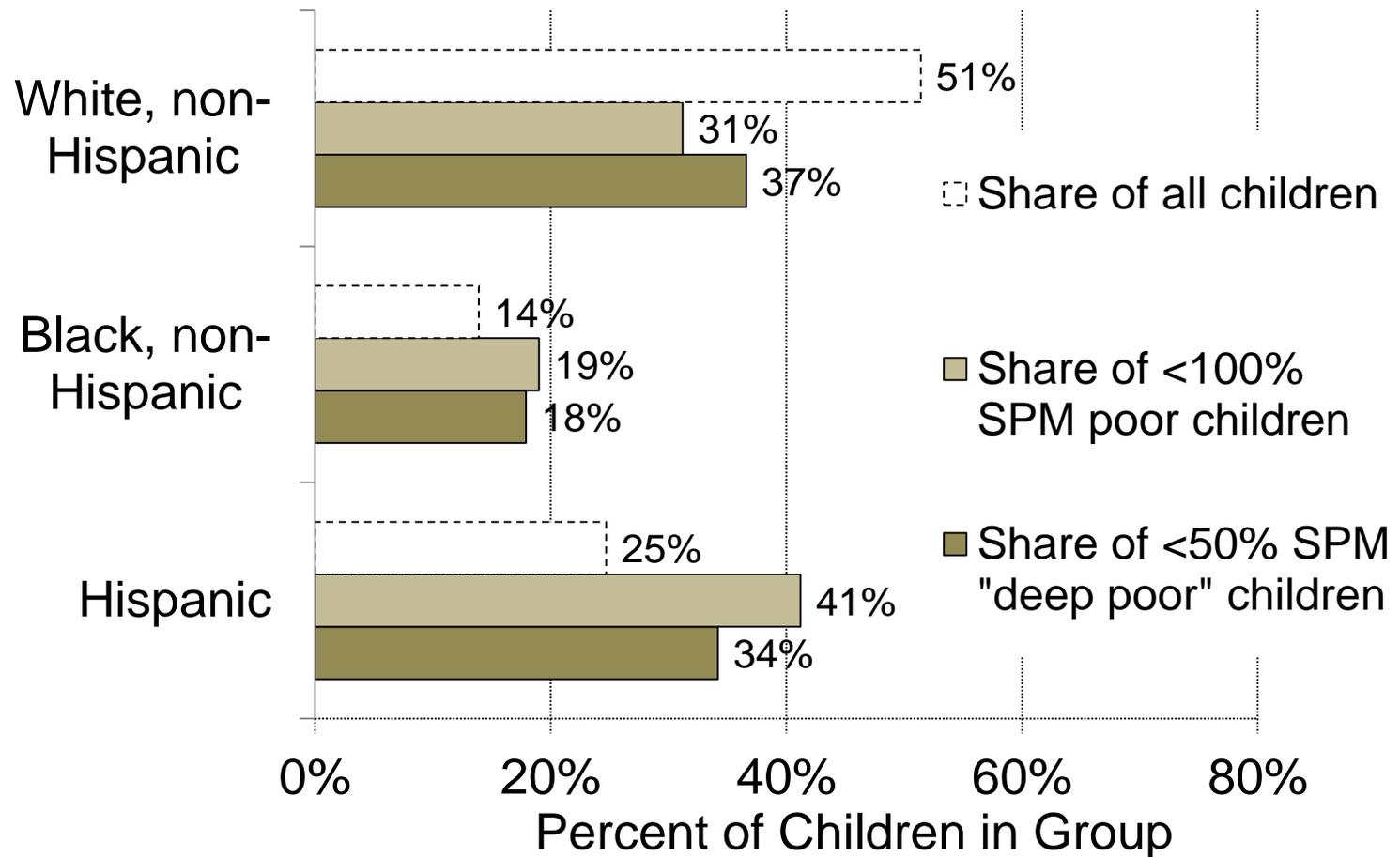
Subgroups and Context



Poverty Rates by Race/Ethnicity



Poverty Shares by Race/Ethnicity



Contextual Factors

Context can greatly influence the impact and success of anti-poverty programs and policies.

Stability & predictability of income

Equitable & ready access to programs

Equitable treatment across racial & ethnic groups

Equitable treatment by the criminal justice system

Positive neighborhood conditions

Health & well-being



Other program ideas



Other Programs Considered

Long-acting Reversible Contraception (LARC)

LARC devices reduce the incidence of unplanned births, which could in turn reduce child poverty.

Mandatory Work Policies

Evidence is insufficient to identify policies that would reliably reduce child poverty.

Marriage Promotion

Likely to reduce child poverty, but no successful models of marriage promotion

Other Programs Considered

Public Health Insurance

Current poverty measures (SPM) do not incorporate health spending.

Policies for Native Americans

Small sample sizes in population surveys make it difficult to simulate effects for this group.

TANF

TANF had mixed effects on child poverty in the short run, and little effect on the long run.



Research Priorities and Next Steps



Research Priorities

State and local waivers to test new work-related programs, supported by federal funding

More research on contextual impediments

Improve federal data on and measurement of poverty

Next Steps

Establish a coordinating mechanism to ensure that the report is followed up and that well-considered decisions are made on priorities for new and improved anti-poverty programs and policies

This mechanism should also ensure that the associated research and data needed for monitoring, evaluating, and further improvement are supported as well.

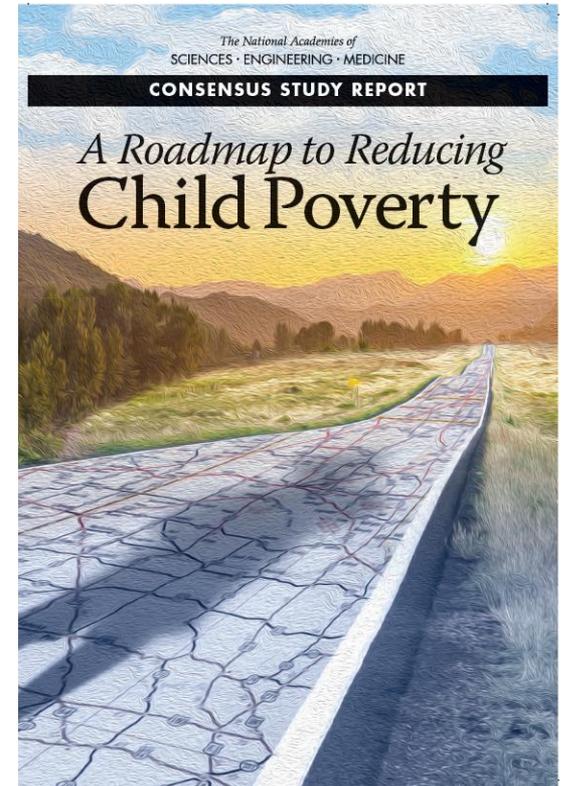


Learn More:

www.nap.edu/reducingchildpoverty

- Appendices
- Data Explorer Tool
- Report Highlights

#ChildPovertyInHalf





Thank you!

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