
In this brief, the authors provided an overview of child-only TANF cases; noting that, in 2009, they made up almost half of the national TANF caseload. There are two main types of child-only TANF cases: (a) non-parental, where the child lives with neither parent and (b) parental, where parents live in the child’s household but are ineligible to receive TANF. The authors found that non-parental cases made up 41% of child-only cases. These cases were found to arise when parents were deemed unfit, often because of serious problems including substance abuse, mental health issues, and incarceration. The authors also noted that children living with grandparents made up two-thirds of non-parental cases. Overall, parental child-only cases made up 59% of the child-only caseload and could be broken down into subcategories such as parents receiving supplemental security income benefits, who are generally ineligible to receive TANF, and immigrant parents, who in some states are also not eligible for TANF. The authors noted that child-only cases are diverse in nature and numbers, their characteristics vary greatly from state to state, and that there are generally no work requirements or time limits on them. Finally, they touched briefly on the interaction of child-only TANF cases with the child welfare system, implications for state and federal policy, and remaining research questions.

Mauldon, J., Speiglman, R., Sogar, C., & Stagner, M. (2012). *TANF Child-Only cases: Who are they? What policies affect them? What is being done?* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago, Chapin Hall. [https://www.opressrc.org/content/tanf-child-only-cases-who-are-they-what-policies-affect-them-what-being-done](https://www.opressrc.org/content/tanf-child-only-cases-who-are-they-what-policies-affect-them-what-being-done)

In this report, the authors argued that the dominant approach of organizing TANF into adult and child-only cases was simplistic and proposed that the caseload should be divided into four categories: adult-aided, non-parental caregiver, supplemental security income, and ineligible immigrant parents. In addition to using administrative records, the authors used a mixed-methods approach that included surveys and interviews to answer four research questions relating to the number and nature of various TANF cases; federal requirements and state variations; the stability of child-only cases over time; and how state policy variations, demographics, and other factors shaped states’ TANF caseload compositions. By exploring these questions,
the authors developed a complete picture of the complexity and diversity of child-only TANF. They provided tables and figures on 35 states’ caseloads and examined four states’ (California, Florida, Illinois, and New York) caseloads in more detail. Looking at TANF uptake and family composition by each type of child-only TANF case nationwide, they found that, in 2011, child-only TANF cases made up two in every five cases, about 40%. They also noted that at a state-level, the child-only caseload had become increasingly diverse. For example, in 30 states, child-only cases made up 30–49% of TANF cases; but in five states, it was at least 70%. Within child-only cases, the largest category was non-parental caregivers, but the share ranged from 5–89% across states. The authors ended by advocating that policymakers must acknowledge the diversity of child-only TANF and providing recommendations on how best to improve access to benefits and outcomes for participants.


[https://www.opressrc.org/content/children-without-parents-tanf-caseload-thinking-beyond-child-only-label](https://www.opressrc.org/content/children-without-parents-tanf-caseload-thinking-beyond-child-only-label)

In this journal article, the authors examined the differences in service needs and outcomes between non-parental caregiver child-only TANF cases and broader child-only TANF cases. Framing their study, the authors provided a brief literature review of previous research on non-parental households, specifically grandparent households. Such research found that single grandparent households were worse off economically than households that included grandparents, parents, and children; but these households were better off than those with children in nonrelative agreements or foster care. The authors used administrative data from Maryland to examine the difference in child characteristics between parental TANF caregiver and nonrelative TANF caregiver cases. They also examined differences between cases that received child-only benefits and cases in which the caregivers also received benefits. The authors illustrated that, for many children across the sample, this was not the first time their household was receiving TANF. They also found that children in relative care were less likely to have established paternity for determining child support, were more likely to be victims of child maltreatment, and tended to have longer welfare histories, compared with children in parental care. Regarding the caregivers in TANF cases, both child-only relative caregivers and relative caregivers receiving benefits had lower child support distribution rates and higher participation rates in social services than parental caregivers.


[https://www.opressrc.org/content/children-and-caregivers-tanf-child-only-cases-identifying-unique-characteristics](https://www.opressrc.org/content/children-and-caregivers-tanf-child-only-cases-identifying-unique-characteristics)

In this research review, the authors highlighted the diversity and variation in the characteristics of children and caregivers who received child-only TANF benefits. For immigrant and refugee families, the authors highlighted that they experienced higher rates of poverty and lower likelihoods of receiving public benefits.
and health insurance coverage compared to native families. Regarding supplemental security income (SSI), prior research indicated that parental SSI child-only cases had much longer TANF histories (41.5 months), less work history, slightly higher incomes, but higher rates of food insecurity. With regard to non-parental caregivers (NPC), the authors found that they tended to be older and were more likely to be married than parental caregivers. Many suffered from poor physical health and experienced financial hardships. Families and children who were eligible for child-only TANF were often found to not take up benefits. Compared to caregivers in foster care, relative caregivers received less money and fewer services, but had more stable situations for children. Finally, the authors examined specific states’ and counties’ strategies and programs designed to assist caregivers in the widespread, but diverse, child-only caseload. They concluded that, despite innovations, many child-only caregivers lack the support services need to raise the children in their care.


[https://www.opressrc.org/content/between-two-systems-children-tanf-child-only-cases-relative-caregivers](https://www.opressrc.org/content/between-two-systems-children-tanf-child-only-cases-relative-caregivers)

In this journal article, the authors compared child outcomes between children in child-only TANF cases with those in kinship and foster care arrangements. The authors used data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation and the National Survey of Child Adolescent Well-Being as well as case studies. Prior research indicated that children living with relatives in non-parental child-only TANF situations were often exposed to traumatic experiences before changing caregivers; thus, they had an increased risk for medical, behavioral, and educational problems. Yet, the authors’ analyses indicated that they performed better on several well-being indicators, such as pre-school social skills and language, than children in foster or kin care. However, there were no group differences regarding behavioral or mental health measures. Assessing information across five state case studies, the authors found that children with relative caregivers had extensive service needs that went beyond the basic financial assistance capabilities of TANF. Particularly, they found that TANF was ill-equipped for case management of relative caregivers in child-only TANF cases, and there was little collaboration between TANF and other child welfare systems. The authors concluded by encouraging researchers to explore child-only TANF in more detail and encouraging policymakers to find better ways for collaboration between systems.