Exploring the Intersection Between the Labor Market Realities Facing Low-Income Families and Child Care

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Overview of Labor Market

- Job quality declined and employment instability increased in the U.S. over past four decades

  Low wages, limited wage growth, few benefits
  Between-job instability (unemployment; job changes)
  Within-job instability (underemployment; work schedules with nonstandard timing, variable hours, unpredictable hours, limited schedule control)

- Less-educated, younger workers, and workers of color have been most affected by changing labor market

3 Measures of Employment Instability
(From US Bureau of Labor Statistics)

- Involuntary part-time
- Marginally Attached
- Official Unemployment Rate

2008-2010 Recession
### NLSY – 97 New Work Schedule Items

#### Advance Notice (Predictability)
- How far in advance do you usually know what days and hours you will need to work?
  - One week or less; Between 1 & 2 wks; Between 3 & 4 wks; 4 wks or more)

#### Hour Fluctuations
- In the last month, what is the greatest number of hours you've worked in a week at this job?
- In the last month, what is the fewest number of hours you've worked in a week at this job?
- How many hours do you work for [employer name] in a normal week?

#### Schedule Control
- Which of the following statements best describes how your working hours are decided?
  - Starting and finishing times are decided by my employer and I cannot change them on my own;
  - Starting and finishing times are decided by my employer but with my input;
  - I can decide the time I start and finish work, within certain limits;
  - I am entirely free to decide when I start and finish work;
  - When I start and finish work depends on things outside of my control and outside of my employer's control
# NLSY, Dimensions of Precarious Scheduling: Vulnerable Groups of Hourly Workers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hour fluctuations</th>
<th>Short notice</th>
<th>No schedule input</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Max – Min Hours / Usual</td>
<td>One week or less advance</td>
<td>Employer decides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fathers</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>55%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Latino/a</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>58%</td>
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<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>47%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low-Wage Jobs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>57%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>43%</td>
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NLSY, Dimensions of Precarious Scheduling: Select Occupations, Hourly Workers

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<td></td>
<td>Max – Min Hours / Usual</td>
<td>One week or less advance</td>
<td>Employer decides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janitors and housekeepers</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food service</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>41%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>46%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Home care</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>36%</td>
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</tbody>
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(Lambert, Fugiel, & Henly, 2014)
Why should child care researchers care about labor market conditions?

- Low & variable earnings, frequent job changes, unemployment, and precarious work schedules
  - make it difficult to afford child care
  - complicate access to quality early care & education
  - interfere with child care subsidy use
  - negative implications for parental and child wellbeing
Low-income parents in education and training also constitute a group whose schedules do not fit the child care market

- Half are working and in school (Eyster, Callan, & Adams, 2014)
- Education and training schedules often short-term activities, irregular hours

See: *Bridging the Gap*

http://www.urban.org/research/publication/bridging-gap
The misfit between the cost of child care and earnings from low-wage work (Pam Joshi)

How well do child care center characteristics match the characteristics of parental jobs? (Erica Greenberg)

Implications of job characteristics for subsidy use and parental wellbeing (Heather Sandstrom)

Job schedules, child care, and CCDBG reauthorization (Helen Blank)