

Child Care Choices of Low-Income Working Families: Immigrants in Washington and Rhode Island

Urban Institute

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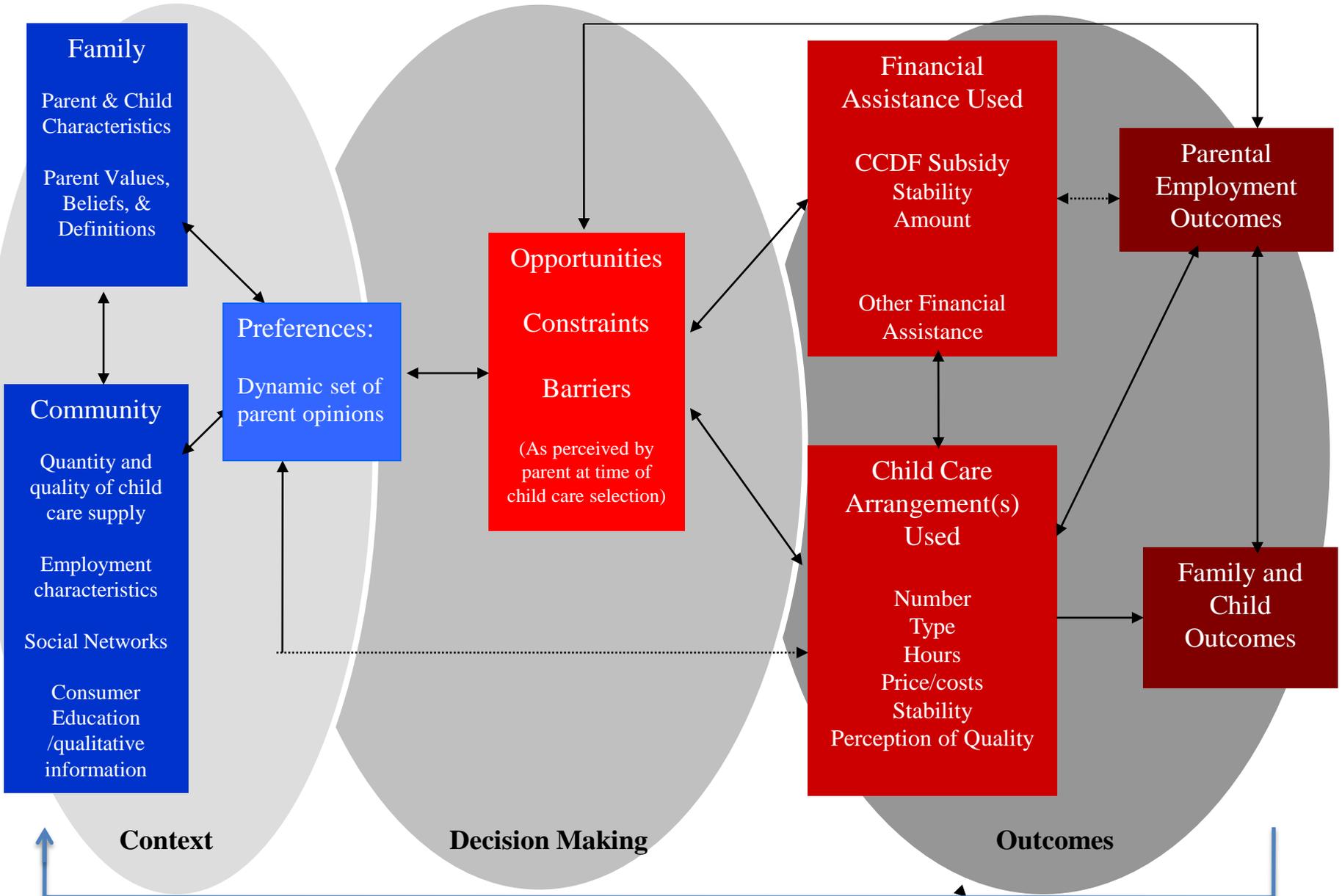


Purpose of Study

To examine the child care decision making process of low-income, working parents within the context of their individual circumstances and community contexts, so that we may consider strategies that better support their efforts and offer choices that can make higher quality child care available and affordable to more families.



Parental Child Care Decision-Making: Graphic Description



Outcomes become part of context for next child care decision

(Weber, 2011)

Research Questions

1. What are parents' preferences for child care and which factors ultimately influence (*facilitate or constrain*) parents' child care choices among low-income working families?
2. How does the process of choosing child care interact with several key contextual factors that can influence parents' child care decisions, including employment contexts and early care and education supply, information, and related program policies in the community?
3. How do some particular family characteristics influence child care decisions, and do the choices of some key sub-groups of low-income families differ in important ways from low-income families overall?
 1. Immigrant families
 2. English language learners
 3. Families whose children have health or other special needs



Research Methods

- Two low-income communities with high immigrant concentrations in Providence, RI and Seattle, WA
- 86 low-income working families (43 in each site)
 - 60% foreign born (Dominican, Mexican, Vietnamese, Somali)
 - 47% English language learners
- Sample eligibility criteria:
 - below 250% poverty
 - parent/primary caregiver works at least 20 hours per week
 - child under age 5 in non-parental care
- Two rounds of in-depth qualitative interviews about 1 year apart
- Each interview averaged 90 minutes in length; conducted in English, Spanish, or English with translator

