

ChapinHall at the University of Chicago

Policy research that benefits children, families, and their communities

Who we are

Established in 1985, Chapin Hall Center for Children is an independent policy research center at the University of Chicago that creates and builds knowledge to design solutions for some of the most challenging problems confronting vulnerable children, families and their communities.

Chapin Hall is renowned for its work with big data at city, state and federal levels, and is extending its work beyond research and data findings into implementation science and interdisciplinary translation of findings to reduce the time between new learning in science/academia and the use of that information in the field for practical program and policy recommendations. A cornerstone of this work is the Foster Care Data Archive (FCDA)—a longitudinal data warehouse that contains decades of data from over twenty-four states on approximately 3 million children who have spent time in foster care.

More than 70 research and policy staff work at Chapin Hall, coming from a variety of academic and professional disciplines including child welfare, early childhood, economics, education, law, public policy, and sociology. Many have applied and operational experience in policy and clinical contexts, in addition to academic training. All have intentionally chosen to pursue careers in applied research.

What we do

Chapin Hall combines a full range of statistical and research methods with clinical and practice expertise, use of evidence, data analysis, policy expertise, and ready access to academic literature in connecting partners with innovations so that policymakers, government officials, service providers, community groups, and funders are better positioned to improve the well-being of society's most vulnerable young people and their families.

Direct, purposeful collaboration with public and private partners ensures that the work evolves from close interaction with organizations that have direct responsibility for the well-being of children. Areas of research include child and adolescent development, child maltreatment prevention, child welfare systems, community change, economic supports for families, home visiting, runaway and homeless youth, schools and school systems, out-of-school time, youth crime, and justice.

Our Impact

The impact of Chapin Hall's work can be seen in child-serving systems at all levels of practice in development and implementation of effective public policies and programs which make careful use of the human, financial, technical, and programmatic resources needed to support children, youth and their families. Chapin Hall's work also guides foundations and communities in creating responsive, coordinated programming that helps children and adolescents thrive physically, socially and academically.

Chapin Hall's diverse portfolio of work is sponsored by non-profit entities, private foundations and all levels of government with more than 100 active research projects at any given time. Approximately 25% of our work is focused locally in Chicago and the state of Illinois; 75% is focused on multi-state, national and international initiatives.