

By Devin Simpson

A new study that links state-level Earned Income Tax Credits (EITCs) to a reduction in cases of child maltreatment adds to mounting evidence of the EITC's importance for improving health outcomes for children in low-income households.

Research conducted by the [Center for Disease Control \(CDC\)'s National Center for Injury Prevention and Control](#) examined hospital admissions for pediatric abusive head trauma across 18 years, comparing states with an EITC to those without a state-level credit. The findings show that states with a refundable EITC had 13 percent fewer hospital admissions, but states with nonrefundable EITCs showed little to no improvement over states with no EITC at all.

The CDC researchers hypothesize that the EITC helps reduce child maltreatment by decreasing stress and mental health problems associated with financial instability, improving child care arrangements and reducing the “cognitive load” –the mental resources required to accomplish such tasks as paying for groceries on a tight budget – carried by many low-income families. The study attributes the discrepancy between outcomes in states with refundable EITCs versus states with nonrefundable EITCs to the fact that nonrefundable credits often exclude the most vulnerable population: parents with the lowest incomes.

The findings are the latest in a [growing body of research](#) that links the EITC to improved health outcomes for low-income workers and their children. Join us over the next week as we discuss more of these findings on Twitter using #EITC4Equity.