

Unconditional Cash Transfers for Families of Preterm Infants: Evidence from a Pilot Trial and Qualitative Study

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Preterm birth places entire families under an immense amount of financial and psychological stress and can have a real impact on both child and caregiver health. Unconditional cash transfer (UCT) programs are one promising way health systems can intervene.

In this Research at a Glance report, PolicyLab researchers summarize findings from a pilot randomized controlled trial evaluating whether UCTs are feasible, acceptable, or effective in addressing the unique financial and psychosocial challenges associated with NICU hospitalization.

The study found that UCTs during NICU hospitalization were associated with lower parental stress, indicating that direct financial support may help stabilize families during a critical period. Furthermore, for families who have experienced marginalization or harm within health care systems, unconditional support can signal trust, autonomy and respect for parents' expertise about what their families need.

Authors: [Tim Nelin](#), [Betsy Salazar](#)

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