

Parents' Jobs and Children's Health: Differences by Race/Ethnicity and Nativity

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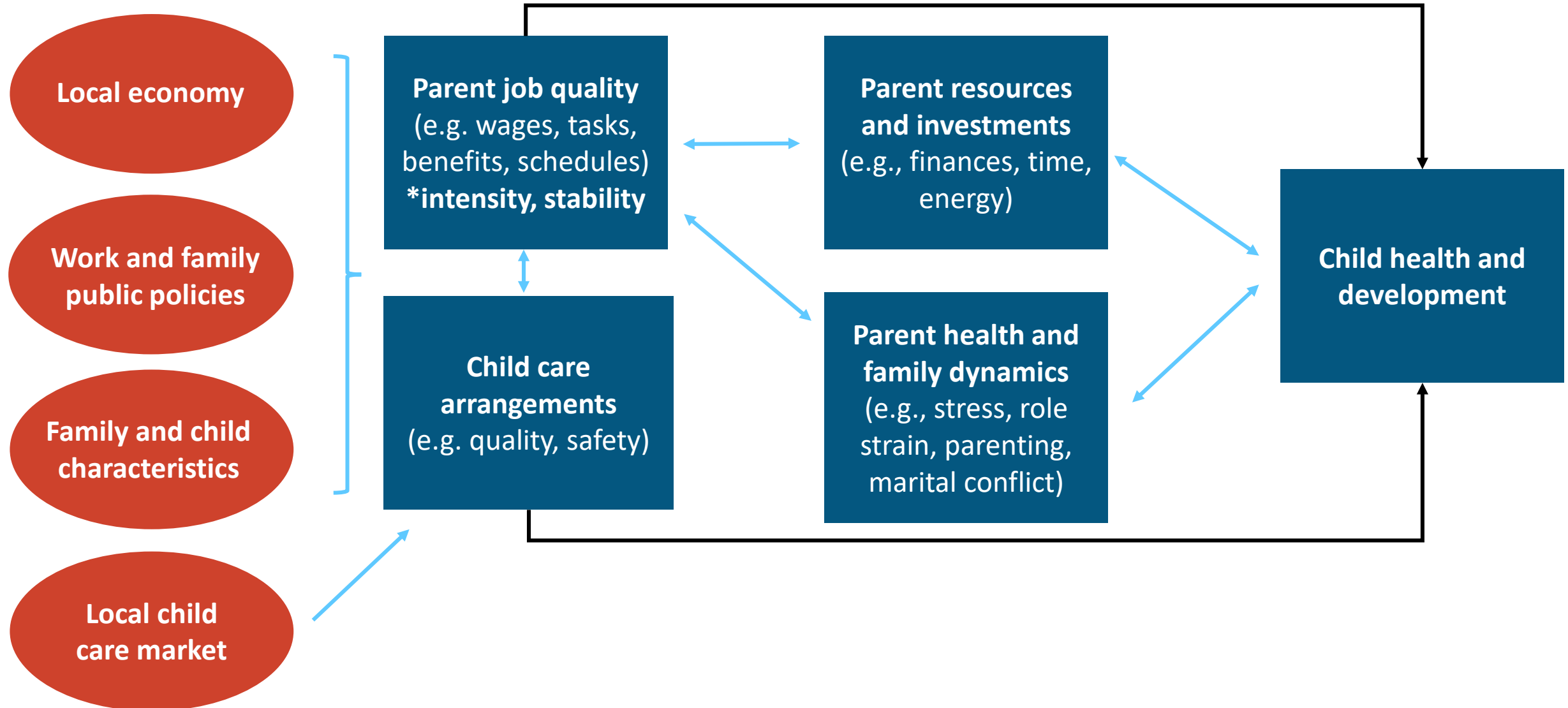
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Outline

- Conceptual framework
- Parental employment trends
- Variation in parents' job quality
- Summary of evidence: parents' job quality and children's health
- Research recommendations

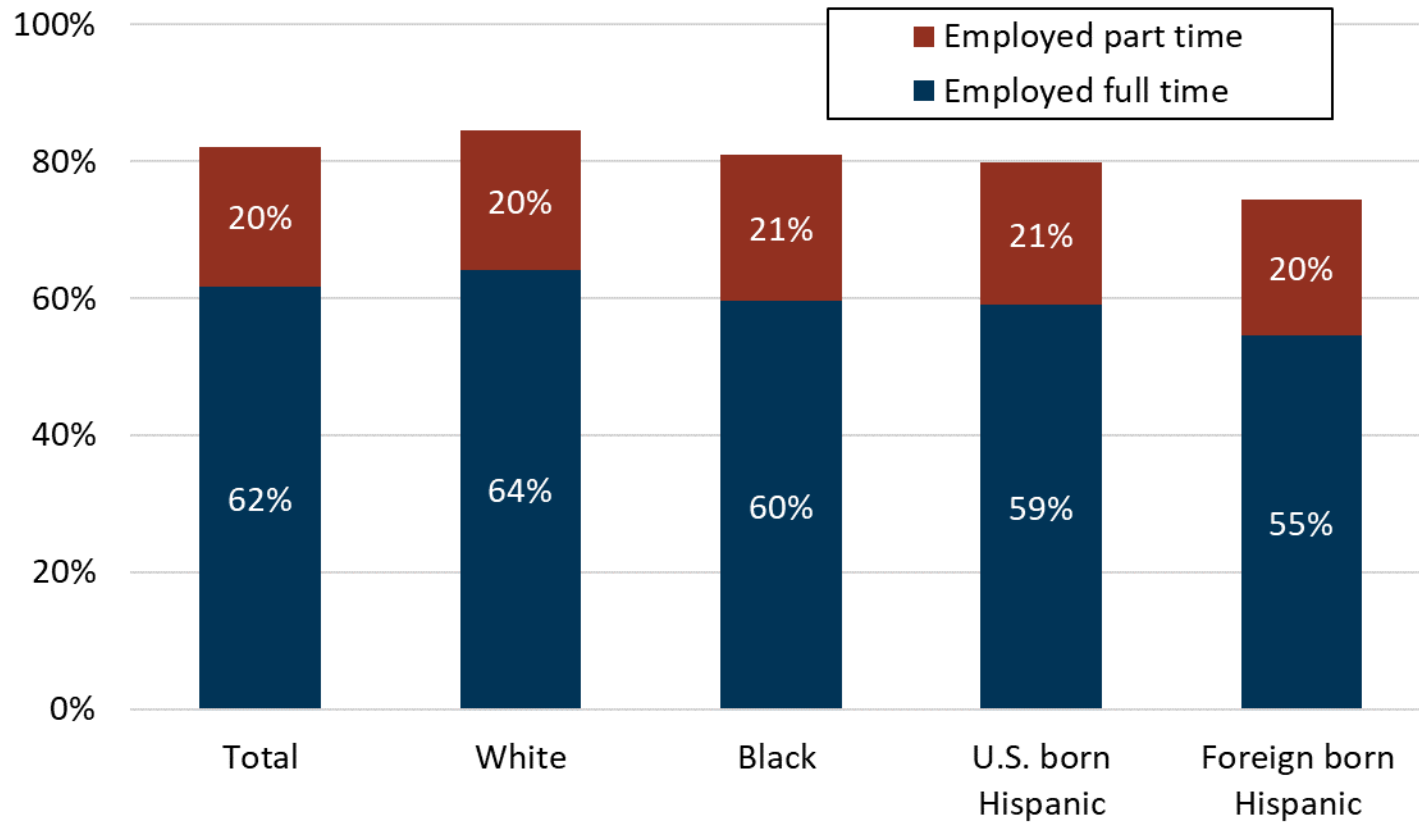
Conceptual framework

Pathways between parents' jobs and children's health



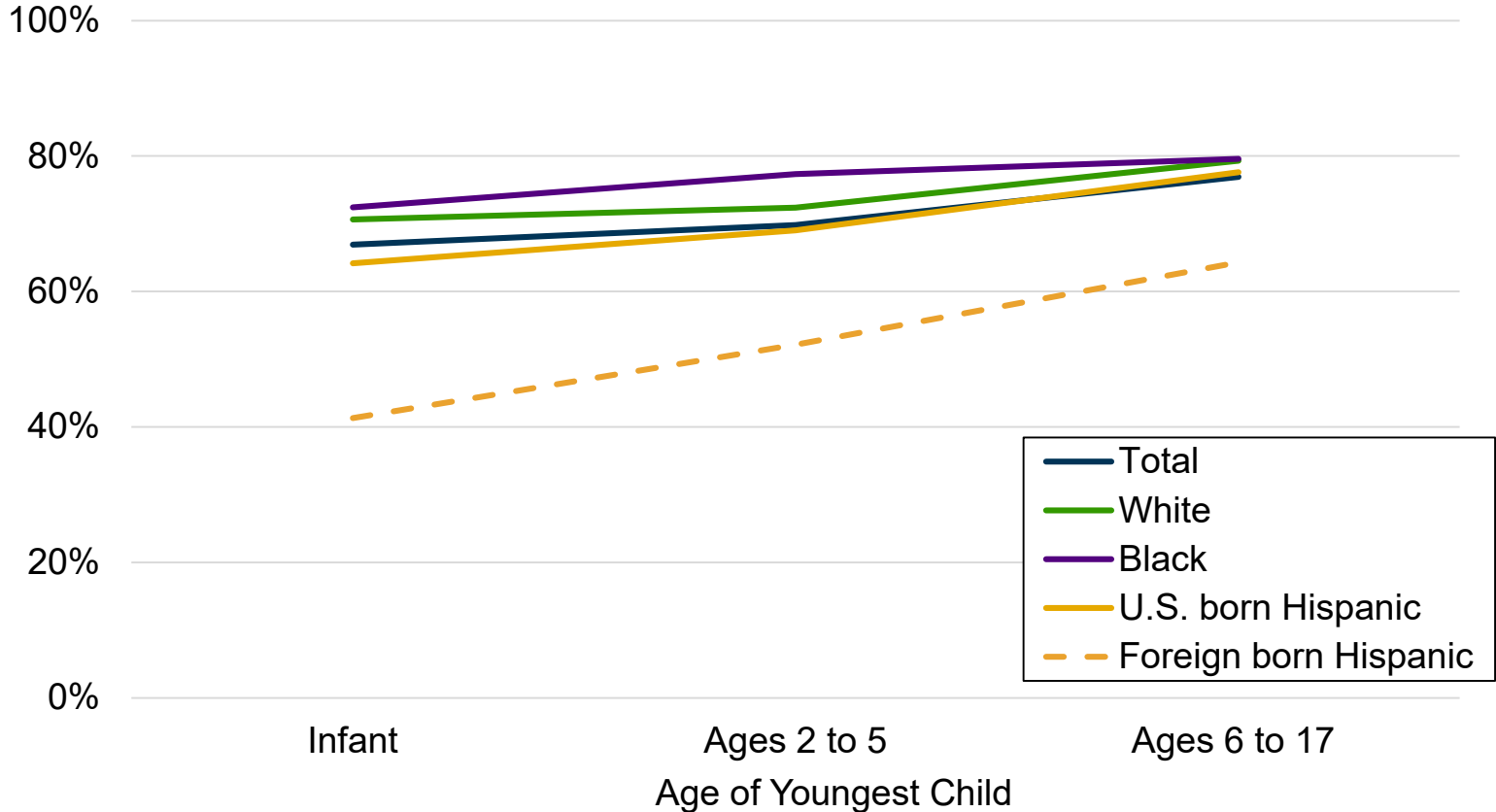
Parental employment: differences by race/ethnicity and nativity

High levels of parental employment: by race/ethnicity and nativity



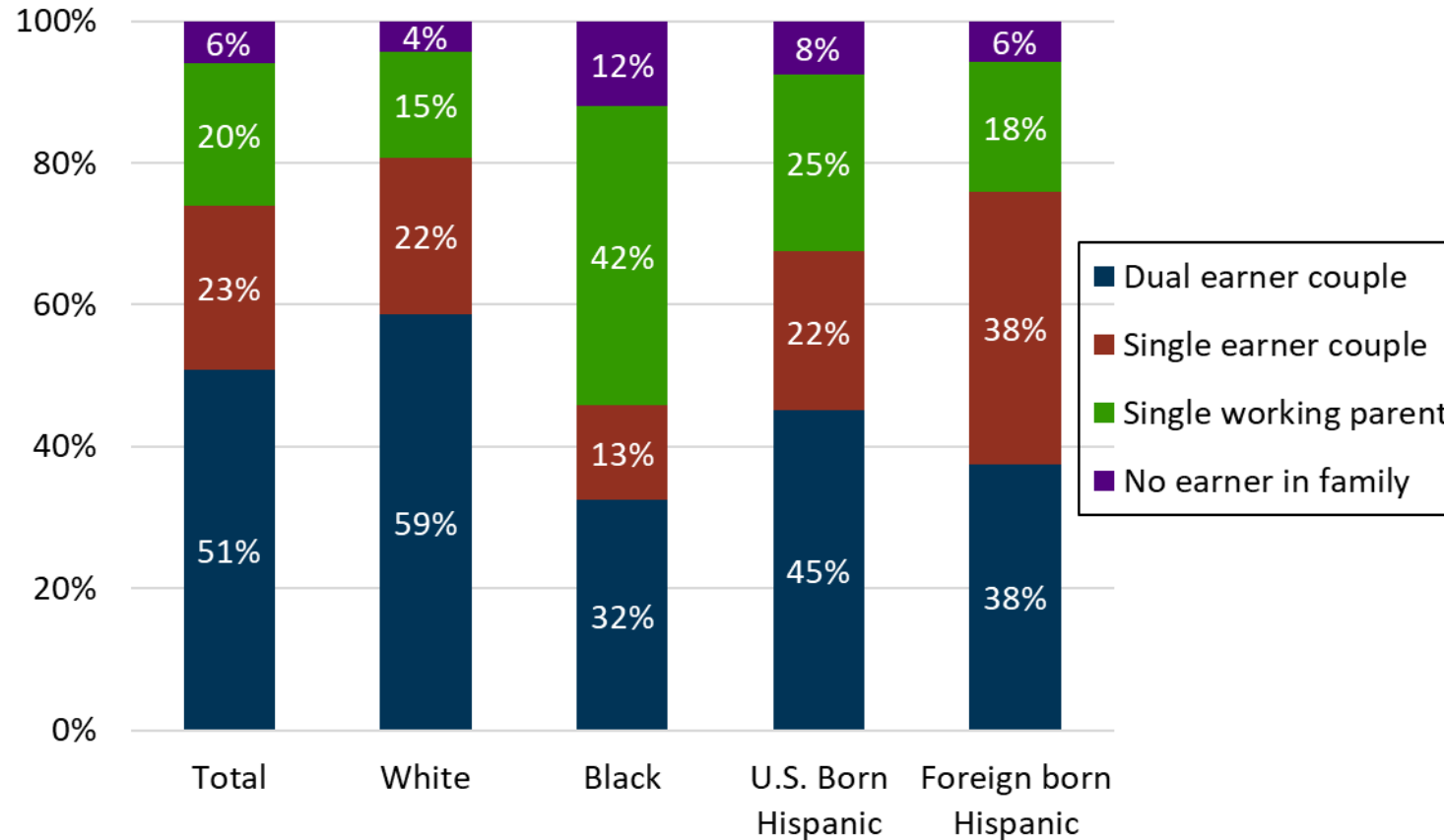
Source: Authors' calculations of the Current Population Survey, 2016-2019.

More mothers work when their children are older: by age of youngest child, race/ethnicity and nativity



Source: Authors' calculations of the Current Population Survey, 2016-2019.

Employment characteristics of families with children vary: by family composition, race/ethnicity and nativity



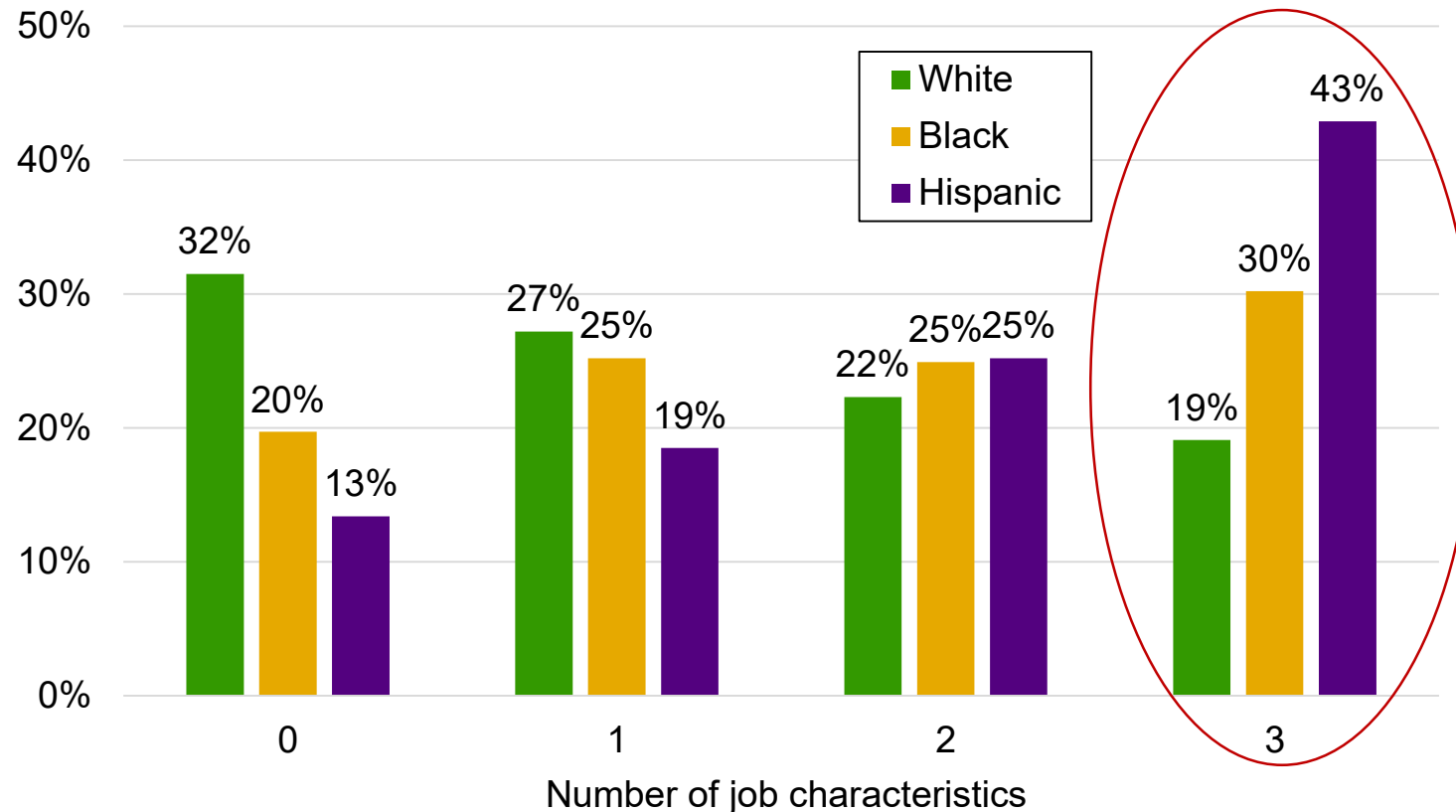
Source: Authors' calculations of the Current Population Survey, 2016-2019.

Parental job quality components: differences by race, ethnicity and nativity

Components of parental job quality

- Family supporting wages
- Employer provided benefits
- Standard weekday schedules
- Predictable schedules
- High flexibility, autonomy, complexity
- **Intensity**: work hours (overtime, full time, part time)
- **Stability**: duration/transitions

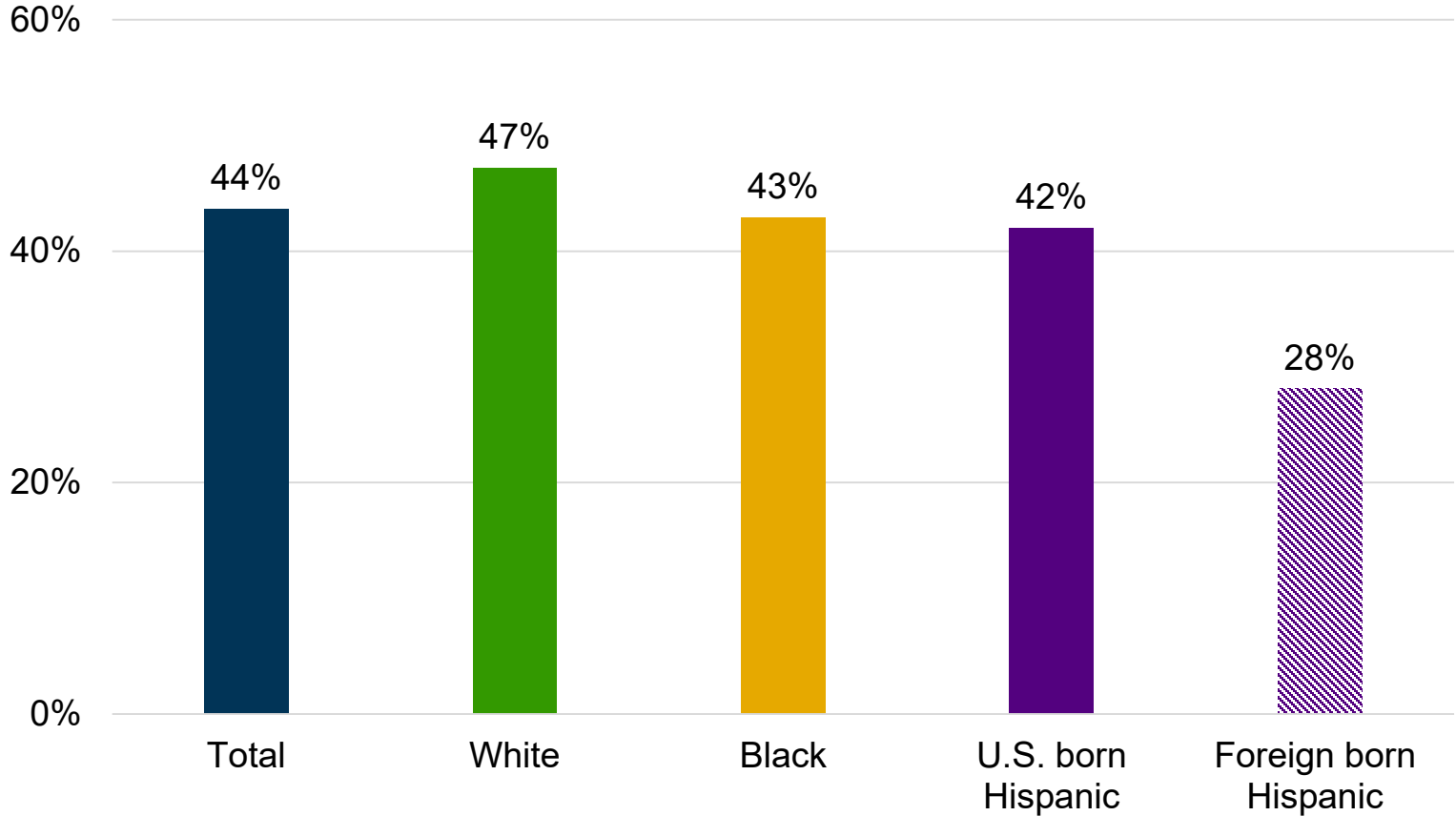
Black and Hispanic working parents are exposed to a higher number of bad job characteristics



Note: Bad job characteristics include: low wages, lack employer-provided health insurance and pension

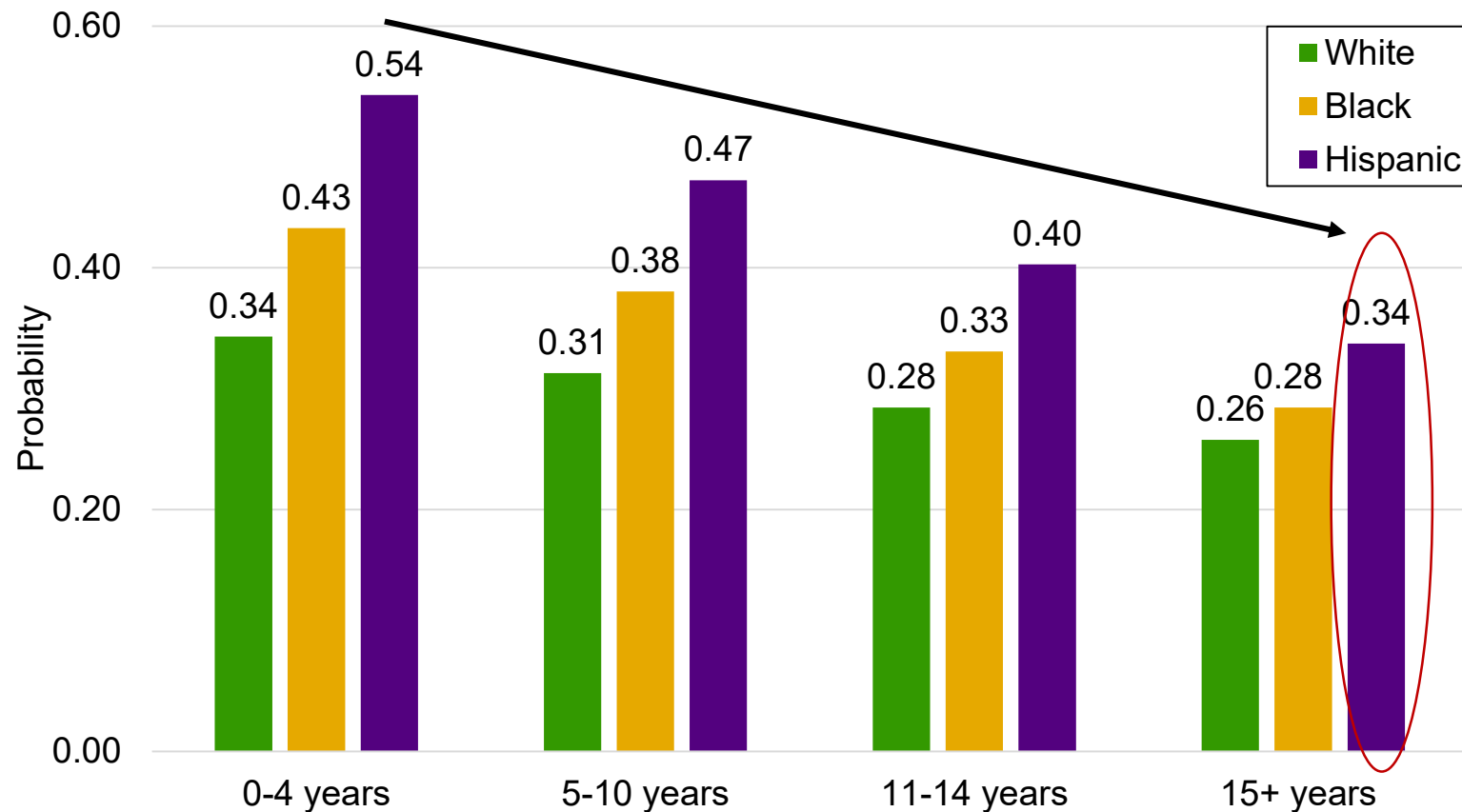
Source: Earle, Joshi, Geronimo, & Acevedo-Garcia, 2014

Foreign born Hispanic working parents have lower access to employer- or union- provided health insurance



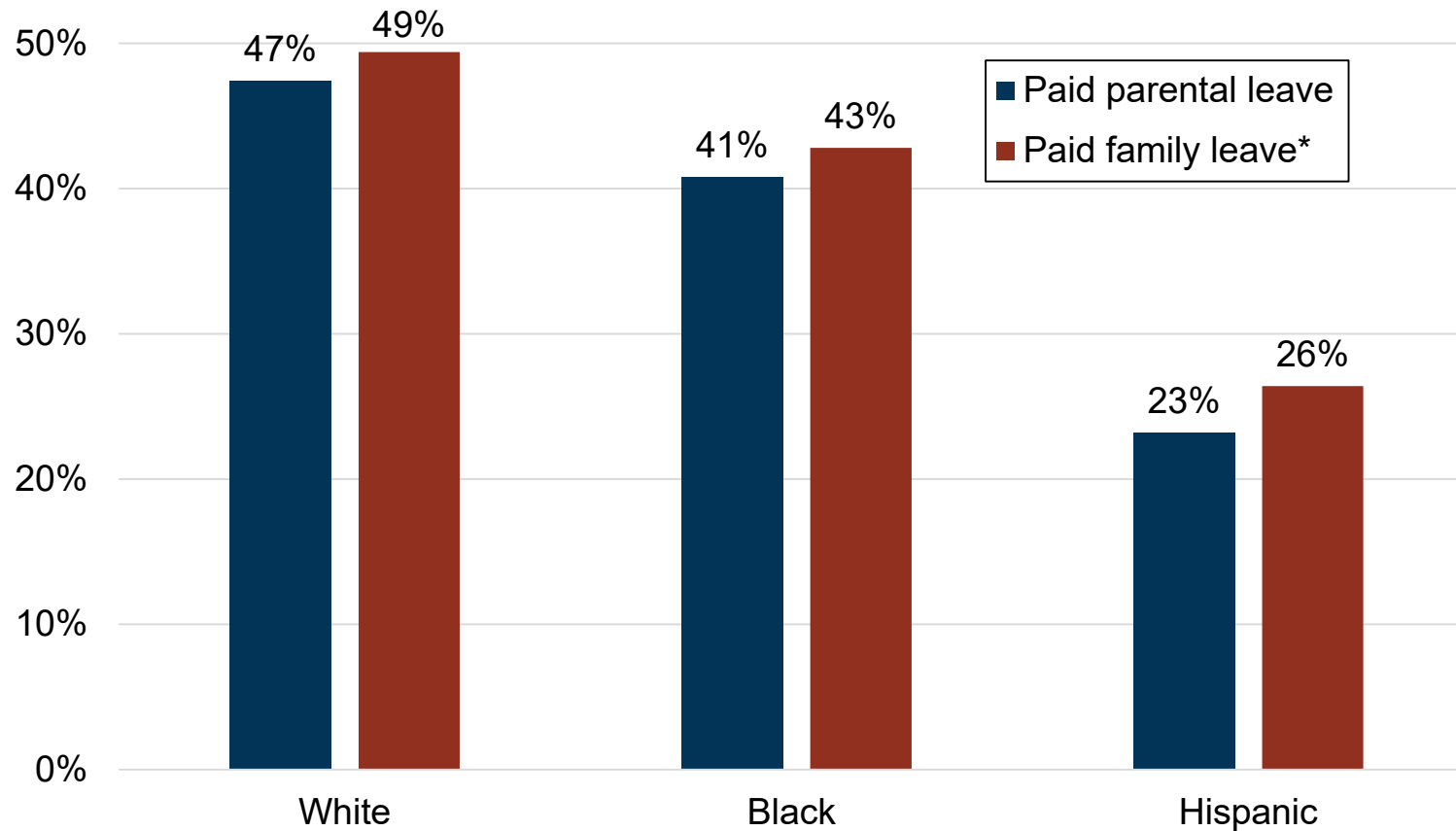
Source: Authors' calculations of the Current Population Survey, 2016-2019.

Foreign born working parents predicted to have less exposure to bad job quality the longer they live in the U.S.



Source: Earle, Joshi, Geronimo, & Acevedo-Garcia, 2014

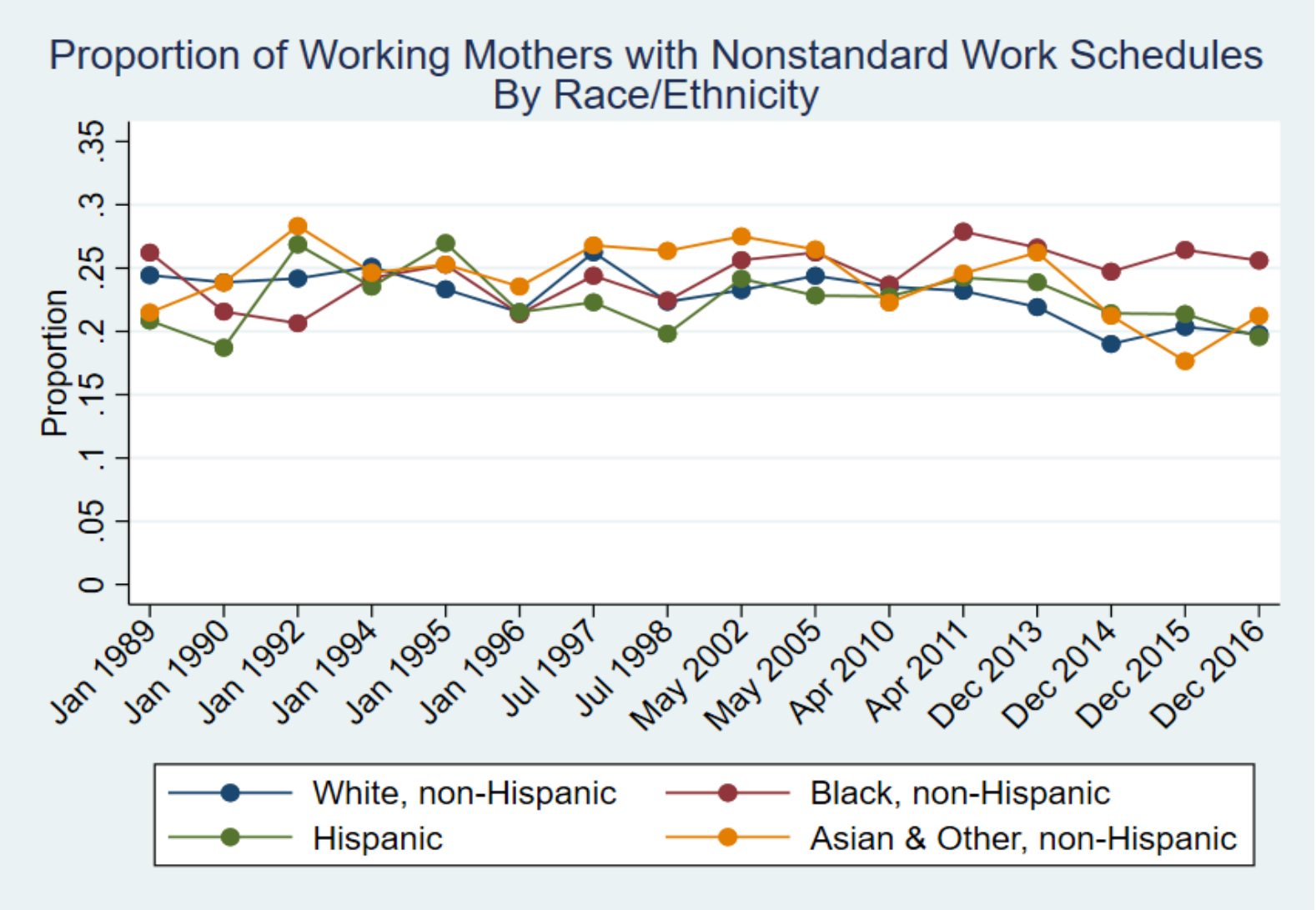
Hispanic workers have less access to employer-provided paid parental and family leave



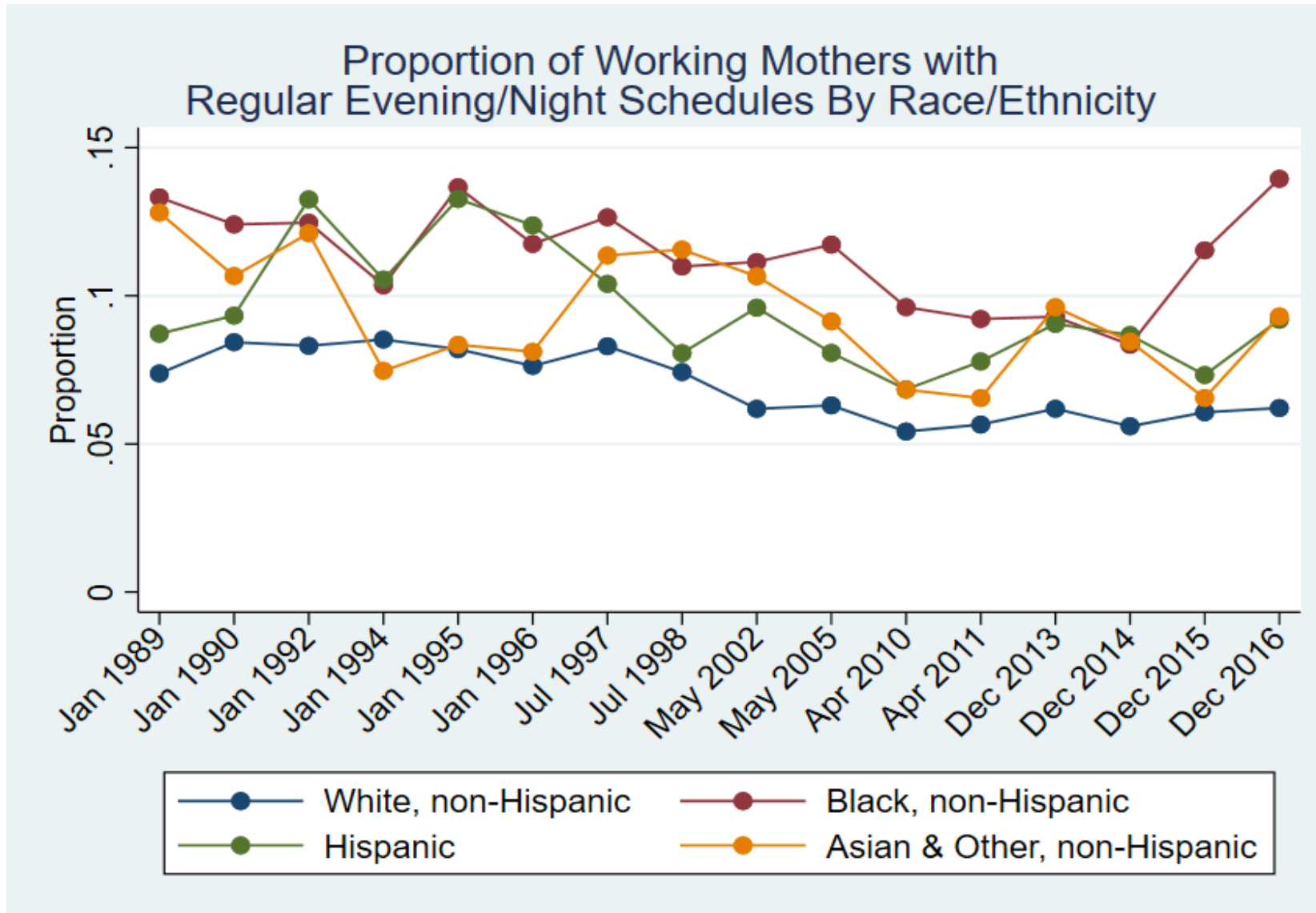
*Note: Paid family leave is paid leave to care for a sick family member

Source: Bartel, Kim, Nam, Rossin-Slater, Ruhm & Waldfogel, 2019

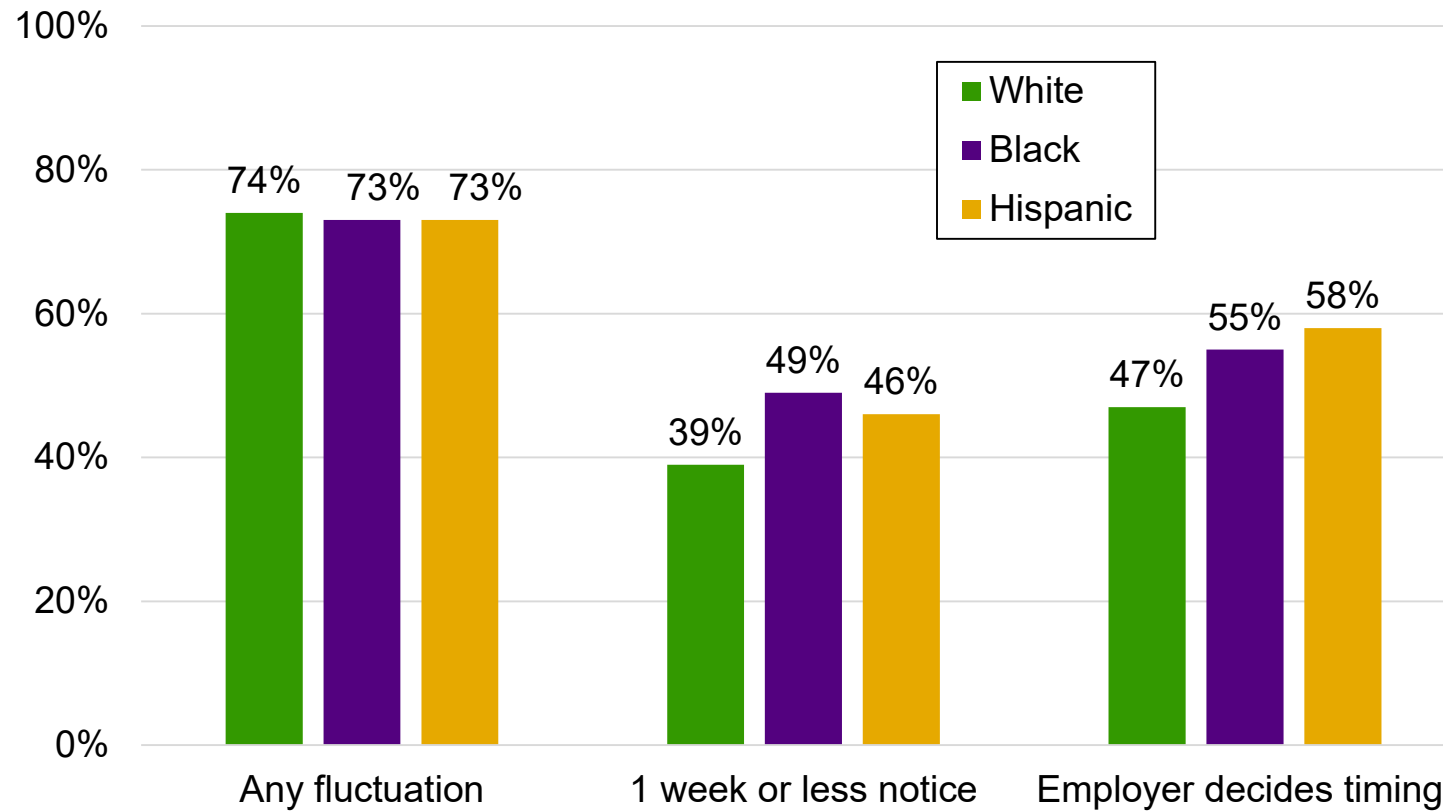
Mothers' nonstandard schedules: by race/ethnicity



Mothers' evening/night work schedules: by race/ethnicity



Unpredictable schedules for hourly workers: by race/ethnicity



Source: Lambert, Fugiel, & Henly, 2014.

Summary of evidence: parental job quality and children's healthy development

Positive effects of parents' 'good' job quality

- **Job quality (latent class, index, multiple variables):** wages, hours, tenure, stability, employer-provided benefits, control, flexibility, security
- **Young children:** reduced children's emotional and behavioral difficulties
- **School-age children:** improved cognitive and socio-emotional outcomes
- **Adolescents:** less grade repetition & school dropout; higher mastery & self-esteem
- **Mediators:** mothers and fathers' psychological distress
- **Moderators:** low income, family composition
- **Mothers:** positive general health and financial stability, less family routines
- **Cross-over effects:** new mothers' leave policy reduced fathers' anxiety

Sources: Review by Heinrich 2014; Coley & Lombardi 2014; Kalil & Ziol-Guest 2005; Lombardi & Coley 2013; Perry-Jenkins et al. 2017; Pilkauskas, Brooks-Gunn & Waldfogel 2018; Strazdins et al. 2010; There are new studies underway by Pilkauskas and Pilarz & Lin.

Adverse effects of parents' nonstandard schedules

- **Parents:** sleep, marital conflict, social support, family formation, father involvement
- **Young children:** emotional/behavior problems and cognitive outcomes for preschoolers, income-based gaps in child care participation for infants and toddlers
- **School age/adolescents:** depression, behavior problems, adolescent smoking, drinking, drug use, delinquency, sexual activity, math/verbal scores, BMI, sleep
- **Mediators:** child care, parenting stress, parental time, depression, home environment
- **Moderators:** family and work schedule composition, income, child gender, child age, schedule timing and duration, cashier or service occupations
- **Night shifts** have the largest negative effects particularly when kids are young

Sources: Review of child outcomes: Li et al 2014 and Bolino, Kelemen & Matthews 2020; Parent outcomes: Joshi, Quane & Cherlin 2009; Kalil, Dunifon, Crosby & Su 2014; Kalil, Ziol-Guest & Levin Epstein 2010; Pilarz, Cuesta & Drazen 2020; Pilarz, Li & Magnuson 2020; Su & Dunifon 2017

Adverse effects of parents' unpredictable schedules

- **Parents:** worse parenting stress, parent-child interactions, parental mood, sleep quality
- **Child care:** more numerous care arrangements, informal care, sibling care, home alone without adult supervision
- **Children:** behavior problems
- **Mediators:** economic insecurity, work-life conflict, time, parental well being

Sources: Ananat & Gassman-Pines 2020; Harknett, Schneider & Luhr 2019; Henly & Lambert 2014; Johnson, Kalil & Dunifon 2012; Schneider & Harknett 2016; Schneider & Harknett 2019

Key take aways:

- Children have high exposure to parental employment (with some variation across childhood and for foreign born Hispanic families).
- Job quality is worse for Black and Hispanic parents and foreign born Hispanic parents who have lived in the US for a shorter duration.
- There are studies that find poor job quality negatively affects kids, often indirectly through parents health, stress and child care.
- Good job quality and predictable standard schedules potentially have larger effects for lower income families and single working mothers.
- This suggests that differential exposure to poor parental job quality can help to explain some of the racial/ethnic disparities in child health.

Research recommendations

Evaluate policies proposed to improve job quality



- Fair scheduling and minimum wage laws
- Child care schedules to match changing work schedules
- Sectoral strategies and benefit pools
- Social insurance with progressive wage replacement
- Inclusive programs for immigrant working families (EITC changes)

Research recommendations



- Analyze existing data sets to estimate pathways of effects by race/ethnicity and nativity
- Take a family level approach
- (Re)evaluate public and private policy solutions designed to increase job quality and estimate the impact on families by subgroups
- Use innovative data collection to reach workers in multiple sectors and geographies