 **CASE**
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Neighborhood Influences on Child Indicators

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Outline

- ✓ **Relevance of neighborhood for child indicators**
- ✓ **Two challenges:**
 - ✓ **Definition of neighborhood**
 - ✓ **Interpreting neighborhood influence**
- ✓ **Two examples:**
 - ✓ **Resident maps**
 - ✓ **Review of neighborhood influence on child maltreatment indicators**

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Why neighborhood indicators for children?

- ✓ **Place is implicated in the reproduction of social disadvantage (social exclusion)**
- ✓ **Neighborhood as target and context for prevention**
- ✓ **Place as context for child development and community practice**
- ✓ **Location for organizing and mobilization**

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Theory of place in social research

- ✓ **Neighborhoods or small areas as important places and of research interest**
 - Origins in sociology, notably Chicago School
 - Environmental and community psychology (e.g. behavior settings, place identity, etc.)
 - Developmental psychology and social work (ecological models)

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Theory of place (continued)

- ✓ **Concentration of poverty (social exclusion) and other social ills brought renewed interest**
 - Concentration effects Socialization, contagion)
 - Social disorganization, community capacity, collective efficacy
 - Stress-Coping paradigms (health/ mental health)
 - Segregation, selective mobility

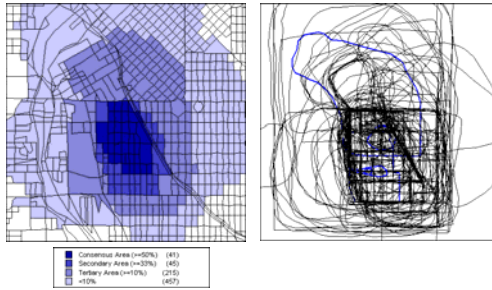
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Neighborhood definition problematic for child indicators

- ✓ **Many definitions**
 - ✓ **E.g. Geographical, historical, social interaction, place identity**
- ✓ **Neighborhood indicators**
 - ✓ **typically use postal codes, census tracts, administrative boundaries, etc.**
- ✓ **Importance of resident perceptions and exposure**

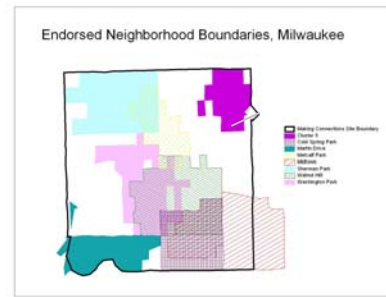
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Example: Variation in resident perceptions



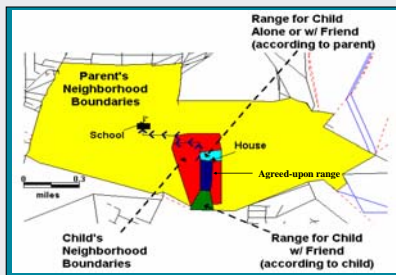
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Example: AECF's Making Connections



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Example: Parents differ from children

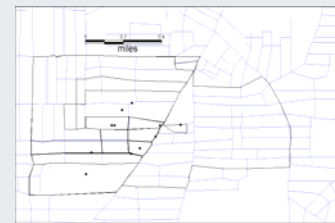


(Spilsbury, et al., 2007)

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Example: Cleveland neighborhood children's maps

Children vary in how they perceive neighborhood boundaries



(Spilsbury, et al., 2007)

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Neighborhood definitions suggestions

- How do residents view their neighborhoods spatially and symbolically?
 - Differences across cities and demographic groups
- How do residents' views compare with pre-defined boundaries?
 - Boundaries differ, but average size like block groups
- Can information about resident perceived neighborhoods prove useful in neighborhood indicators?
 - Yes, to guide formulation of neighborhood units; but difficult across time
- Can individual's (unique) neighborhoods be useful?
 - Yes, to examine influence of "perceived" neighborhood on child indicators

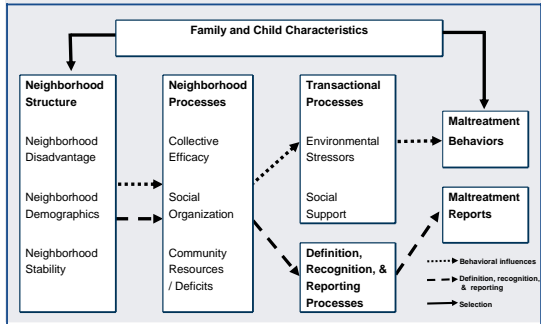
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Example: Neighborhood and child maltreatment indicators

- Lit. review
 - 25 studies (in English, 1975-2002)
 - Neighborhood—Sub-city area
- Maltreatment Indicators
 - Most "official" reports or investigations
 - A few "self-reported" behaviors
- Findings
 - "Ecological" correlations moderate
 - Individual neighborhood effects weaker
- Mechanisms of influence need to be sorted out

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Alternative Pathways: Neighborhood influence on child maltreatment indicators



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Research agenda: Neighborhood and child indicators

- ✓ **Control for neighborhood mobility and selection**
- ✓ **Uncover unintended consequences of formal social control or reporting bias**
- ✓ **Incorporate neighborhood perceptions**
- ✓ **Study effectiveness of community change strategies on indicators**

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