

CHILDREN'S BUDGET 2020

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FIRST FOCUS
ON CHILDREN

First Focus on Children is proud to introduce the 14th annual release of its signature Children's Budget publication. While the COVID-19 health and economic crises have highlighted how important it is to put children and families at the forefront of budget decisions, far too often lawmakers fail to prioritize children when allocating federal resources. This year's report details the persistence of an alarming trend: children continue to receive a smaller and smaller share of federal spending. Policymakers must take action to change course and correct this inequity.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM CHILDREN'S BUDGET 2020

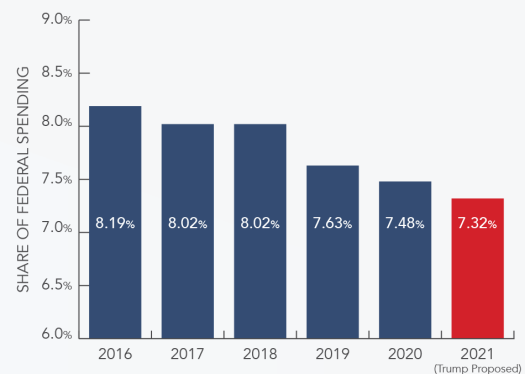
Investing More Government Resources in Kids Would Make a Significant Difference:

The child poverty rate remains 54 percent higher than that for adults – and the poverty rate is even lower for the elderly, who benefit from Social Security and Medicare (the two largest government programs). These results show that significant government investment could reduce hardship for children as it has for the elderly.

Our Share of Spending on Children Continues to Decline Despite Higher Discretionary Caps:

Lawmakers raised statutory caps on discretionary spending in the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2020. Yet children didn't receive their fair share of those increases – resulting in the share of federal spending on children dropping once again in 2020, to 7.48 percent. If the president's budget were enacted for 2021, the kids' share of spending would be even worse – dropping to 7.32 percent of total federal spending.

Children's Share of Total Federal Spending Declined between FY 2016 and FY 2020



Spending on Children Internationally is Very Low: For the first time, this year's Children's Budget presents our analysis of federal spending on children internationally via the international affairs budget. We found that our investment in kids abroad has flatlined at 0.11 percent of federal spending. As a share of our international affairs budget, kids abroad receive about \$9.54 of every \$100 spent on foreign aid.

Lawmakers Should Reverse This Trend and Fund Children's Priorities: At a time when children face severe uncertainty about their ability to safely receive an education, have stable housing, and get proper nourishment, Congress must fund adequate investments in children's futures. Even before COVID-19, children faced the following obstacles:

- » 1 in 5 children in foster care will become instantly homeless upon aging out of the system.
- » 89% of children eligible for Early Head Start do not have access to it.
- » 15% of U.S. households with school-age children do not have access to high-speed internet at home.
- » 2.2 million children were affected by parental opioid use or their own use in 2017.
- » 75% of families eligible for rental assistance in the U.S. do not receive it.
- » 1 in 7 children lived in a household that struggled to put food on the table in 2018.
- » There were 25 school shootings in 2019.
- » The youth unemployment rate was 30% in May 2020.

Congress and the president must take concrete steps towards curing these inequities, meeting the growing needs of our nation's children today and into the future. We call on this country's leaders to prioritize the unique needs of our children so they all can thrive.