

The Kid Angle

Kid-focused news from First Focus on Children

The REAL name — and purpose — of Build Back Better
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10 things the president can do *right now* for children

The [reports of Build Back Better's](#) death have been greatly exaggerated. In fact, First Focus Campaign for Children continues to believe so strongly in the bill that today we sent [a letter urging President Biden not only to keep working toward a comprehensive, intact bill, but to better reflect its true purpose with a new name: The "American Families Plan"](#).

That said, children can't wait for the supposed "adults" to work through all their bickering. The President has accomplished a great deal without Congress: He re-entered the Paris climate accord. Strengthened the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Got rid of the Trump-era "public charge" rule that kept families from receiving health care and other assistance. While the White House continues to push its historic agenda, our letter also calls on the President to take [10 executive actions](#) that can benefit children right now. **They include:**

- 1. Create a Children's Cabinet and White House Office of Children:** Hundreds of different programs, departments and agencies play a role in the health and well-being of children. [More than 350 groups](#) support the creation of these mechanisms to better prioritize and coordinate the best of interests of children across these silos.
- 2. Set a National Child Poverty Reduction Target:** This is, quite frankly, a no-brainer. The President has the authority to establish a national target to cut child poverty in half within a decade. This strategy worked in the United Kingdom, where it halved child poverty by 2008. It worked in Canada. It works so well that [New York, Puerto Rico](#) and [other venues](#) have deployed it in just the last few months. And it has the support of [70% of American voters, regardless of party](#). Now — as the expiration of the improved Child Tax Credit threatens to plunge [nearly 4 million children](#) back into poverty — could not be a better time.
- 3. Adopt a "Best Interest of the Child" standard:** The Biden Administration should commit to and apply a "best interest of the child" standard across all executive branch policy. This initiative, which would prioritize the protection and safety of children in federal policy, boasts an additional advantage: Support from [more than 80% of all voters — yes, regardless of party](#).
- 4. Require Child Impact Statements: [Child Impact Statements](#),** already used by countries such as Canada, the United Kingdom, New Zealand

and Sweden, and in certain U.S. cities and counties, evaluate proposed laws, regulations, policies, and programs to determine the potential positive and negative impacts on children. They can be implemented by executive order.

5. **Take Better Care of Homeless Children:** The definition of “homelessness” remains among the biggest barriers to addressing child and youth homelessness. The Department of Housing and Urban Development defines homelessness so narrowly that [millions of homeless children remain in hotels, doubled up with friends or relatives or in other dangerous living situations](#) because they don’t qualify for assistance. These same children are often identified as homeless by the Department of Education and other agencies. The president should align the dictionaries used by his agencies to protect and aid these children.
6. **Create a Healthier Environment for Children:** President Biden’s sweeping plan for climate action will continue moving through Congress. In the meantime, his Environmental Protection Agency has the immediate authority to improve regulations on various pollutants and toxins — like asbestos and items with scary names like “perchlorate” — proven to inhibit brain development, aggravate and induce asthma, and cause cancer among children.

Find [all 10 of our recommendations in our letter to the Administration.](#)

For a list of all recommended priorities for the Biden-Harris Administration, consult our report: [The Promises We Must Make to Our Children: Recommendations to the Biden-Harris Transition Team](#)

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