

June 28, 2022

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden Jr.  
Office of the President  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Ambassador Susan Rice  
Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden and Ambassador Susan Rice:

The undersigned organizations dedicated to improving the health, development, and well being of children and families are writing to thank you for your leadership in convening a White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health.

We believe it is essential that the conference not only include experts in child health and development, but also anchor its work in how poor nutrition and hunger impact American children throughout their lifetime. Addressing the acute and long-term impact for children facing food and nutrition insecurity is a national priority. Properly nourished children more actively participate in the education experience and can better focus and retain information. Additionally, children who eat poorly can suffer not only from diseases like obesity, type 2 diabetes and tooth decay, but can also face a lifetime of challenges caused by inadequate access to proper nutrition, including behavioral problems, depression, and numerous chronic conditions from cardiovascular disease to cancer and osteoporosis. Moreover, lack of access to appropriate nutrition can exacerbate the multitude of health challenges facing children with serious and chronic medical conditions.

The pandemic has exacerbated preexisting nutritional inequities that disproportionately impact children of color and children from low-income backgrounds. Food and nutrition insecurity among children, particularly children of color and children from low-income backgrounds, remains [stubbornly high](#), and dietary diseases among children are [increasing](#). In addition, college students experience food insecurity and hunger at higher rates than the general population, negatively impacting their physical, mental, and academic wellbeing. Therefore, we urge you to ensure that the conference will prioritize discussions on how to ensure children and youth have access to healthy, nutrient dense food at every stage of development, and the steps we must take to reduce the disparities that prevent equitable access.

We strongly recommend including child health experts, school nutrition representatives, students across the age spectrum with lived experience with hunger and nutrition insecurity, educators (from early learning, K-12 and post-secondary settings), parents and caregivers of children with chronic medical conditions, as well as other children and youth stakeholder groups in the planning and execution of the Conference. In addition, we urge you to add a pillar focused on the importance of ending food insecurity and improving nutrition for children and adult learners in America. We welcome the opportunity to share our suggestions with you as well as any opportunity to collaborate on this effort.

Some possible topics that we hope will be covered at the conference include school nutrition and its impacts on child health and education; improvements to the food and nutrition security provided by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; how to support and strengthen the role that educational institutions, childcare through college, play in solving food insecurity; racial and ethnic disparities in child food and nutrition insecurity; improvements to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the recommendations of reducing sugar, trans fats, and sodium; investing and building upon the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children's (WIC) ability to address the nutritional needs of millions of women and children; ensuring that all children are able to be physically active in safe and accessible environments; and the importance of the gut-brain connection and its impact on behavioral health and academic achievement.

As planning for the conference continues, we urge you to ensure children and youth are at the forefront of your efforts. Please use us as a resource, and do not hesitate to reach out to Olivia Gomez, Director of Health and Nutrition Policy at First Focus on Children ([oliviag@firstfocus.org](mailto:oliviag@firstfocus.org)), and Blair Wriston, Senior Government Affairs Associate at The Education Trust ([Bwriston@edtrust.org](mailto:Bwriston@edtrust.org)), with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

First Focus on Children  
The Education Trust  
AIDS Alliance for Women, Infants, Children, Youth & Families  
Autistic Women & Nonbinary Network  
Autistic People of Color Fund  
Boys & Girls Clubs of America  
Child Welfare League of America  
Communities in Schools  
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation  
EdAllies  
Families USA  
Family Centered Treatment Foundation  
Futures Without Violence  
Horizons National  
MENTOR  
The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
National Diaper Bank Network  
National Network for Youth, Inc.  
National Prevention Science Coalition to Improve Lives  
National Recreation and Park Association  
National Women's Law Center  
Our Children Oregon  
Partnership for America's Children

Prevent Blindness  
Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK)  
RESULTS  
SchoolHouse Connection  
Youth Villages  
ZERO TO THREE