

# The Kid Angle

*Kid-focused news from First Focus on Children*

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## A week of firsts for children

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Contact: Michele Kayal, VP Media and Communications,  
[MicheleK@FirstFocus.org](mailto:MicheleK@FirstFocus.org)

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So....much.....news. And, strangely, all of it good. Here's The Kid Angle on all of it:

### **What's New: Oregon pledges health coverage to kids through age 6**

This. Is. HUGE. The Biden Administration signed off yesterday on Oregon's request to keep children continuously enrolled in Medicaid until their 6th birthday. [First Focus on Children has been fighting for more than a decade to achieve "continuous coverage," a mechanism that keeps states from kicking children off Medicaid when a family's financial or other circumstances change.](#) Without continuous coverage, children move in and out of coverage (called "churn"), endangering their health at the most important stage of development.

Oregon becomes the first state to guarantee that children will remain on Medicaid until at least age 6, and other states are continuous-coverage-curious: Washington, New Mexico and California are all exploring the concept. [First Focus on Children President Bruce Lesley told the Washington Post](#): "We have near universal health insurance coverage for senior citizens in this country. Where we really would like to get with kids is that the public programs should basically assume coverage unless someone says, 'No, I have private coverage.'"

- **What's Next:** Congress must pass a minimum of 12-months continuous eligibility for all children in the country. [First Focus Campaign for Children recently joined other advocates](#) urging the Senate to pass legislation that would allow children to keep their Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) coverage for a year, regardless of temporary changes in family circumstances; require a year of postpartum coverage for people on Medicaid and CHIP who give birth; make CHIP funding permanent; minimize gaps in coverage and behavioral and physical care for people leaving jails and prisons; and increase vaccination access for adults on Medicaid.

### **What's New: Biden Administration pledges to end hunger by the end of the decade**

President Biden used colorful language yesterday to drive home the importance of tackling childhood hunger: "If you look at your child and you can't feed your child, what the hell else matters?" he asked. In the country's first nutrition conference in a half-century, the Administration outlined plans to end hunger by 2030. Among the most important of those: Working to achieve [free school meals for all children](#) and restoring the improved Child Tax Credit passed during the pandemic, which cut child poverty nearly in half and significantly reduced food insecurity among children.

- **What's next:** Congress, specifically the Senate, must prioritize finishing Child Nutrition Reauthorization before the end of the session. The legislation marks **marks the first opportunity in 12 years** for Congress to update and modernize federal child

nutrition programs such as school meals programs and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

### **What's New: Life-saving program for new families and babies gets support**

The Jackie Walorski Maternal & Child Home Visiting Reauthorization Act made it out of [committee](#) with (almost unheard of) unanimous, bipartisan support. The bill would reauthorize the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program. [First Focus on Children has been particularly encouraged by some of the bill's critical measures](#), including a full five-year authorization, increased funding, doubling of the tribal set-aside, the continuation of virtual home visits, and new data collection disaggregated by race and ethnicity, all of which can be used to improve equity within MIECHV. It also creates a new set-aside to support and retain the home visiting workforce. Created by the Affordable Care Act, MIECHV provides home visits by professionals including nurses, social workers, early childhood educators, and specially trained parents to young families that want coaching on topics including nutrition, safety, positive parenting techniques, and others to help them raise healthy children. MIECHV has effectively improved the health, economic stability, and overall well-being of the children and families it serves for more than a decade. This piece [from the Today Show](#) shows how MIECHV saves lives among new babies and families.

- **What's Next:** MIECHV has lost purchasing power over its existence, and currently serves less than 5% of eligible families. [Congress must now reauthorize this vital program for children and their families](#). MIECHV is likely to be included in the continuing resolution Congress must pass **by tomorrow** to keep the government funded until December 16, which will stop the program from expiring in the short-term. We urge Congress to reauthorize MIECHV by the end of this year by including it in a year-end legislative package to continue the valuable services and outcomes it provides.



First Focus on Children  
1400 I Street NW  
Suite 50  
Washington, DC 20005  
United States

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