



# *The Kid Angle*

*Kid-focused news from First Focus on Children*

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## **PEPFAR kids lose in Congressional chaos October 5, 2023**

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While Congress plays musical chairs, real things are happening to real children. Allow us to highlight the **fate of children currently receiving food, medical attention, education, support services and other care under the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, aka: PEPFAR.**

“Wait,” you say, “PEPFAR? Didn’t I hear something about PEPFAR?”

Yes. **[You heard that the requirement to spend 10% of all PEPFAR funding on orphans and children in need has expired.](#)**

**You heard — from some members of Congress — that it doesn’t matter.** Because who would hurt kids? The money is still there, they say. It’s just in one big pot. And we’ll *definitely* spend it on children. Don’t you worry.

**Here’s why we’re worried:**

- Congress has a pretty poor track record of spending on kids when they don’t have to. Example: **[Children represent a quarter of the U.S. population, yet Congress spent less than 10% of the FY 2023 budget on them.](#)**
- Congress has an even *worse* record when it comes to spending on children internationally. Just 1.4% of all federal spending goes to international priorities. And just 9 cents of each dollar spent internationally goes to aid children in need. **[In FY 2023, the share of spending on children abroad was just 0.1% of the entire federal budget.](#)**
- More than **[7.2 million children and their caregivers](#)** currently rely on services provided through the PEPFAR set aside. They may not survive — let alone thrive — without them.
- Every day, **[more than 700 children become infected with HIV. Nearly 300 die](#)** from HIV- related causes.

It’s easy to think HIV is no longer a threat to children. But that’s precisely *because* PEPFAR has been so successful. **[PEPFAR has saved the lives of more than 25 million men,](#)**

[women and children](#) since its inception 20 years ago. In addition to its groundbreaking “whole child” approach, which offers orphans and vulnerable children comprehensive health, education and social services, PEPFAR has ensured that [5.5 million babies were born HIV-free](#). Since 2010, PEPFAR-supported efforts have also [cut in half the number of new HIV infections in children](#).

HIV was the original pandemic. [PEPFAR funding helped create the infrastructure that allowed countries around the world to battle COVID](#) and to care for the [10.5 million orphans and other vulnerable children left in its wake](#). Without continued funding, that infrastructure may crumble, as will the world’s ability to care for children during the next pandemic.

In its 20-year existence, PEPFAR has been reauthorized three times, each time with broad bipartisan support. Right now, however, even the party in power can’t agree among themselves on what to do. Ideas are floating around The Hill about how — or whether — to restore PEPFAR’s 10% set aside for these orphans and vulnerable children. **The minimal acceptable solution is a clean, five-year reauthorization, which would ensure continued support for these children at the current levels.**

Of course, an even better solution would be to give kids their fair share. [Kids make up 30% of the global population and up to 50% of the population in some countries in sub-Saharan Africa](#). So what’s their fair share?

You do the math.



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