



The Kid Angle

Kid-focused news from First Focus on Children

Aid to children ends as COVID cases soar

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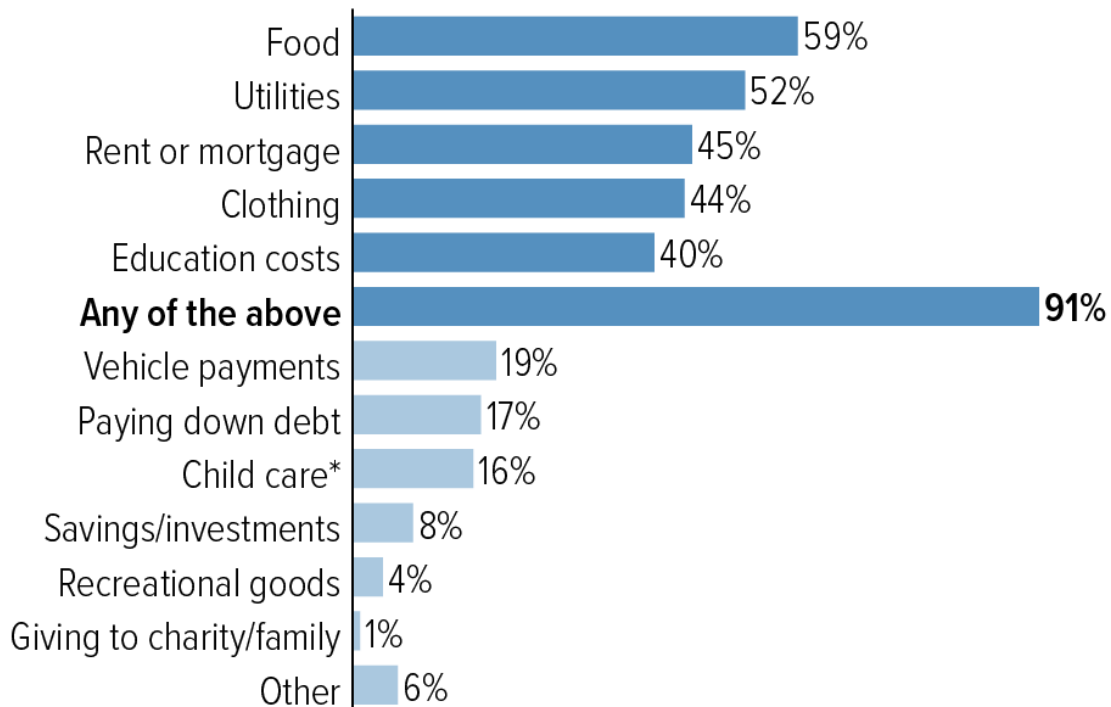
Poverty-slashing aid to children ends...

Tomorrow will mark the first time since summer that families go without their monthly tax rebate of up to \$300 per child. Congress — which **increased and restructured** the annual lump sum Child Tax Credit **as a monthly advance** to help families meet recurring financial obligations — simply let the improvements expire. West Virginia Sen. Joe Manchin, a Democrat who blocked continuation of the improved credit, worried that [low-income families would spend the money on drugs](#).

Fun fact: Parents of most of the [61 million children](#) receiving the payment actually spent it on [food, rent, utilities, education and other necessities](#). **See below.**

Families With Low Incomes Spend Expanded Child Tax Credit on Most Basic Needs, Education

Percent of households with incomes below \$35,000 who spent their credit payments on:



*Percent of households with child(ren) under age 5.

Note: Education costs include school books and supplies, school tuition, tutoring services, after-school programs, and transportation for school. Household income is in 2020. Figures are for households who reported receiving a Child Tax Credit payment in the last 30 days in data collected July 21–September 27, 2021.

Source: CBPP analysis of U.S. Census Bureau Household Pulse Survey public use files for survey weeks 34-38.

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We'd like to take this opportunity to remind everyone that the [Child Tax Credit was conceived in 1991 by a bipartisan commission, enacted in 1997 by President Bill Clinton and a Republican-led Congress, and has been regularly improved by Republican and Democratic presidents since then, including Donald Trump.](#) With whom [nearly every Republican sided.](#)

So what's different now? Why all the disagreement? Maybe it's the fact that the latest improvements to the CTC:

- Kept nearly [4 million children out of poverty](#)
- Included [26 million low-income children](#) who previously went without the credit because their families *made too little money*
- [Fed hungry children](#)

- Increased [equity for Black and Hispanic children](#) and other children of color

Tax breaks and increased fairness apparently are very important to some members of Congress — as long as the recipients aren't children, and especially, aren't poor children.

...As pediatric COVID infections soar

Pediatric COVID infections continue to rise exponentially, according to doctors, hospitals and government trackers, **breaking records for cases and hospitalizations.**

More than 580,000 pediatric COVID cases were reported for the week ending Jan. 6, according [to the American Academy of Pediatrics \(AAP\)](#), a **78% increase over the previous week** — and triple the number of reported cases two weeks earlier. Nearly 8.5 million children have tested positive for COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic, AAP reports, **with nearly 11% of these cases added in the past two weeks.**

Cases among children ages 4 and younger — who are not eligible for the vaccine — reached a seven-day average of more than 4 in 100,000, according to the [Centers for Disease Control](#), **roughly double the rate of the previous month.**

The Biden Administration has taken some positive steps to get eligible children vaccinated, which is recommended by the AAP. But clearly, the country needs a **comprehensive, child-focused plan to address the specific needs and challenges of reaching this group.** A plan like the one **First Focus on Children** has repeatedly called for, [most recently in August.](#)

Vaccine uptake among eligible children (ages 5 to 17) has been disappointingly low. As of Jan. 5, just [25% of children 5-11](#) had received at least one dose of the vaccine, and just over [half of children 12-17 \(53%\) were fully vaccinated.](#)

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