



The Kid Angle

Kid-focused news from First Focus on Children

Biden budget commits to kids. Congress must finish the job.

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In the FY 2024 budget request released today, President Biden commits to completing some of the nation's unfinished business for children. In particular, his proposal would:

- Continue the fight to fully restore the expanded Child Tax Credit, which cut child poverty in half in 2021
- Offer families high-quality affordable child care and universal pre-school
- Provide free school meals to an additional 9 million children
- Increase funding for high-poverty schools
- Significantly boost mental health care for our children and young people
- Provide paid family and medical leave, and urge paid sick leave for all workers
- Invest in reforming the child welfare system to keep more families together

We get that today is just Act I, Scene 1 in the coming budget drama. But the President's document establishes a baseline for what we can — and SHOULD — do for our children.

We've said it before, but it can't be said enough: The pandemic and its economic fallout revealed decades of deferred maintenance on the health and well-being of America's children. [The powerful investments Congress made in response increased the share of federal spending on children to an historic 11.98% of the U.S. budget, producing remarkable declines in child poverty, hunger and the rate of children without health insurance.](#)

Congress must not turn its back on that progress.

In the past, difficult spend-and-cut conversations like the ones ahead have generally targeted children first. [In 2009, the Senate recommended a \\$100 billion reduction in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act](#) (the Great Recession's stimulus package) — nearly half of which came from programs that specifically help children, such as Head Start, school construction, education for disadvantaged children, and prevention programs. [In 2018, the Trump Administration singled out the Children's Health Insurance Program](#) — which serves roughly 7 million children — to achieve nearly half of all the cuts in its proposed rescission or "clawback" package.

We urge Congress to apply the lessons learned during the pandemic and to continue investing in our kids. Our baseline should not be what we have done in the past, but what we have learned is possible.



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