

The Kid Angle

Kid-focused news from First Focus on Children

COVID and the classroom

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Text/Call/Email: [Michele Kayal](#), VP Media and Communications, 703-919-8778

COVID: Unmasking back-to-school concerns

The country's **single largest group of unvaccinated individuals** has begun regularly gathering in small spaces, sometimes prohibited by law from protecting themselves.

Yes, we're talking about children.

[Only 33% of 12-15 year-olds and 43% of 16-17 year-olds are fully vaccinated](#) — and **100% of those under 12 are not even eligible** (about 49 million children across the country). Nevertheless, it is imperative — for their physical, mental, emotional, psychic, social and academic health — that they return to the classroom in person.

Many of our nation's kids go to school in old buildings with **outdated ventilation systems**. Others cram into classrooms that make **social distancing impossible**. Some live in **states that are attempting to prevent them from wearing masks**. Our kids are heading into this environment as pediatric cases — and hospitalizations — skyrocket in parts of the country.

So, how do we keep them safe?

First Focus on Children last week offered the Biden Administration strategies to prepare for when more kids are eligible for vaccines and to reach families who may need more information before vaccinating their child. Among the suggestions:

- Use **all available federal resources** and existing programs for sharing information and reaching families
- Hold **listening sessions for caregivers** to learn about their concerns and effective ways to address them
- Establish an **explicit goal of eliminating racial and other disparities** in children's vaccinations. [Find the specifics here.](#)

Shouldn't the Department of Education do something?

[In a recent memo](#), President Biden directed the Secretary of Education to ensure that local leaders are doing everything in their power to — as First Focus President [Bruce Lesley recently advocated](#) — “implement the array of public health measures to **protect children** from COVID and keep schools from having to resort to lockdowns and quarantines, which everybody should agree is something we should avoid as best as possible.”

The August 18th directive also made clear that **cost is not an issue** in protecting children’s health at school. According to the memo, the **Federal Emergency Management Agency will “reimburse States, including their school districts, at 100 percent Federal cost share** to support the safe reopening and operation of school facilities and to effectively maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and staff.”



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FEDERAL BUDGET: House makes rain for kids

House approval this week of a **\$3.5 trillion budget resolution** opens the door to a historic expansion of the social safety net, including **multiple benefits for children and the people who care for them**. The Senate-passed FY22 budget resolution outlines funding and policy priorities for **child care, refundable tax credits** such as the Child Tax Credit improvements, children’s health and well-being, more **affordable housing** and **early childhood education, paid family leave, a path to citizenship** for immigrant children and families, and other items that prioritize our nation’s 74 million children.



First Focus Campaign for Children

@Campaign4Kids

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👏 This was a once-in-a-generation, critical vote for kids — w/ investments in child care, the [#ChildTaxCredit](#), children’s health, affordable housing & early childhood education, paid family leave, a path to citizenship for immigrant children, & efforts to prioritize our 74M kids



CSPAN @cspan · Aug 24

U.S. House approves \$3.5 trillion budget resolution in procedural vote.

The vote also sets a September 27 deadline to consider the bipartisan infrastructure bill.



4:39 PM · Aug 24, 2021 · Twitter Web App

2020 CENSUS: Children undercounted — again

[A new study](#) examining [recently released 2020 Census data on children](#) suggests that **even more children were omitted** than in the 2010 count, already notable for its failure to account for all kids. The report cites “net undercount” data, which balances people who were not counted with those counted twice, and can be used to predict omission trends. The net undercount of children was **more than 1.5 million in 2020**, according to the analysis, **compared to about 1.3 million in 2010**. The net undercount of Hispanic children increased in 2020 by more than 4%, to more than 830,000. The figures suggest that the number of children that went uncounted by the 2020 Census will increase from 2010, **particularly for Hispanic children**. Information on these "omissions" is expected to be available in coming weeks.

FOOD: More of it for children

ICYMI, the Biden Administration has revised the USDA’s Thrifty Food Plan, a move that will increase benefits for recipients of the **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) by more than 25% above pre-pandemic levels**. The boost also represents the **largest increase in the program’s history** and the first time the purchasing power of the Thrifty Food Plan has changed since it was introduced in 1975. Children make up more than 40% of SNAP recipients, making this an [excellent investment in reducing child hunger](#).



FOOD, Part II: Look Mom, no pesticides!

Also, ICYMI, the [EPA moved to stop the use of the pesticide chlorpyrifos](#) on all food to better protect human health, particularly that of children and farmworkers. Used on a large number of crops, including soybeans, fruit and nut trees, broccoli, cauliflower, and other row crops, chlorpyrifos causes neurotoxicity, and has been **associated with neurological damage in children**. During the previous Administration, the EPA [rejected its own research](#) to declare chlorpyrifos not harmful to children.



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First Focus on Children
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