



The Kid Angle

Kid-focused news from First Focus on Children

In their own words: Youth leaders on children's mental health

July 20, 2023

Contact: Michele Kayal, VP Media and Communications,
MicheleK@FirstFocus.org

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed our children's mental health crisis and — to their credit —lawmakers, news outlets, doctors, educators and other concerned parties have responded.

Congress has expanded federal funding for schools and programs to address workforce shortages and lawmakers have begun investigating the [insurance industry's failure to comply with parity laws](#). The White House raised the profile of children's mental health by issuing an [advisory outlining the scope of the crisis](#).

But we must hear more from the children who have actually lived these issues.

[First Focus on Children hosts four youth leaders](#) in school mental health, foster care, peer-to-peer support, and racial equity next week to discuss policy solutions based on their lived experience and their work helping fellow young adults.

Moderator Maddie Stults, a board member of the National Alliance on Mental Illness and a senior at Florida State University, opens the conversation on Tuesday, July 25 at 1pm, engaging these peer supporters on policy solutions for supporting student mental health, tailoring the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline to adolescents, addressing the over-prescription of psychotropic drugs to children in foster care, and embedding cultural competency in mental health.

Panelists for this virtual roundtable include:

- **Martha Sanchez**, Director of Health Policy and Advocacy for Young Invincibles
- **Ameris Carter**, student organizer and former lead youth organizer in Pittsburgh, PA.
- **Trace Terrell**, mental health activist and intern at First Focus on Children
- **Natalie Clark**, the state of Utah's first Lived Experience Transition to Adult Living Assistant Coordinator

[*To attend the roundtable, sign up here.*](#)

A few facts about children and mental health:

- The federal government spends \$15 billion annually to develop the health care workforce. Just 1% of that goes toward mental health, and [of that 1%, just a fraction goes to pediatric mental health](#)

- Almost [60% of youth with major depression](#) do not receive any mental health treatment
- Typically, 11 years pass between the onset of mental health symptoms in a child and [when they first receive treatment](#)
- Approximately [360,000 teens](#) call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline each year
- Half of all mental health issues emerge [before a person turns 14](#). Nearly 80% of all mental health disorders begin before age 24

For more on these issues, please [visit us online](#).



Photo by cottonbro studio from [Pexels](#)



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

If you believe you received this message in error or wish to no longer receive email from us, please (Unsubscribing is not supported in previews).