

## The Kid Angle

**Kid-focused news from First Focus on Children**

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**The keys are in their hands**

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The post-Labor Day scramble has arrived. Here's a quick-and-dirty look at what's coming for kids over the next couple weeks:

### **The key to healthy children**

The number of [\*\*kids without health insurance rose for the fourth year in a row\*\*](#) in 2020, according to figures [released this week by the U.S. Census Bureau](#). The numbers show that nearly 4.3 million children — **or 5.6% of all U.S. children** — did not have health insurance in 2020, a 7% rise over 2019. Children of color were hit hardest, the data suggests, with **9.5% of Hispanic children** lacking health insurance, the highest of any ethnic group.

**But wait! There's hope!** The Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and Medicaid — which together insure roughly 40 million children — scored a victory in budget negotiations last week that offers Congress a rare opportunity to reverse this trend. The Democrats in the House Energy and Commerce Committee announced that **making CHIP permanent and offering children 12-month continuous enrollment in Medicaid are priorities** of their budget legislation.

[\*\*More than 500 local and national organizations\*\*](#) representing all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico recently joined First Focus Campaign for Children in **urging Congress to make CHIP permanent**.

First Focus Campaign for Children also joined [\*\*more than 200 national, state and local organizations\*\*](#) who urged House and Senate leaders this week to include language in the reconciliation package that **requires states to offer 12-month continuous eligibility for children on Medicaid and CHIP**. Continuous eligibility would be a game-changer in states like [\*\*Texas, where churning off coverage has contributed to nearly 13% of children\*\*](#) — a high number of them Hispanic — going without health care coverage.

### **The key to ending child poverty**

This week also confirmed the outsized impact of economic assistance on child poverty — and, more important, **the absolute necessity of harnessing that progress**.

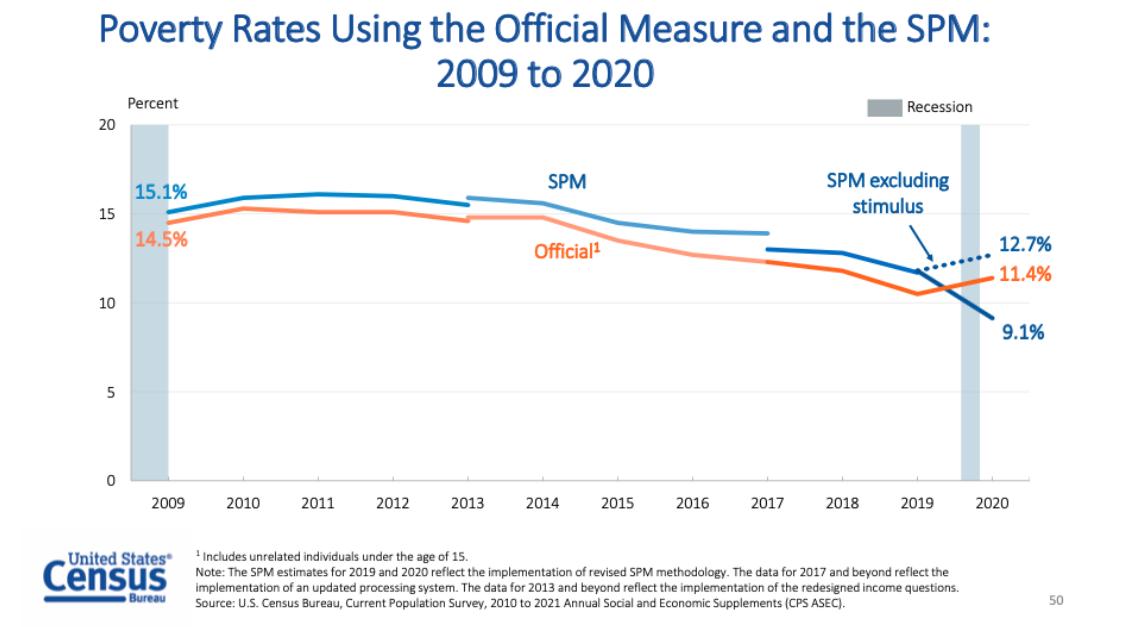
The number of children living in poverty, also according to [\*\*census figures released Tuesday, actually went down in 2020\*\*](#) — which, you may recall, saw a global pandemic and economic crisis.

When accounting for government assistance — which included two rounds of stimulus payments, and an increase to emergency unemployment benefits and food assistance — the census found that the rate of [child poverty was 9.7% — nearly 3 percentage points lower](#) than the same figure in 2019. **The stimulus payments alone ensured that nearly 3.3 million fewer children lived below the poverty line, according to the data.**

These figures do not even reflect improvements to child-related tax credits [expected to cut child poverty in half in 2021](#).

**The moral of the story:** We know what works. The proof is right there, in the numbers. Congress has the keys. Will they have the gumption to walk through the door?

Stay tuned.



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First Focus on Children

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