

Children's Defense Fund

Children's Rights

<https://www.childrensdefense.org/policy/policy-priorities/education/>

Campaign and Advocacy

Children living in poverty and children of color often begin school behind their peers, as they are less likely to have been provided access to high-quality early development and learning opportunities like Head Start programs. Recent data demonstrates the consequences of us failing to invest in and properly support our students, particularly students living in poverty and students of color: in 2019, more than 65 percent of 4th and 8th grade students performed below proficiency in reading and math. Hostile school environments and exclusionary discipline policies also disproportionately target children of color, LGBTQ children, and children with disabilities, often denying them opportunities for success and pushing them into the school-to-prison pipeline. Children and youth experiencing homelessness, those in foster care, and those returning from juvenile detention are also often denied the tools and support they need to succeed and are therefore at greater risk of falling behind and dropping out of school.

We envision a public education system where every child enjoys their education, feels supported and appreciated in school, and has opportunities to gain the social, economic, and cultural and political capital necessary to realize their full potential. All students have a right to the robust enforcement of our nations civil rights and education laws and freedom from discrimination.

Education should be the great equalizer, leveling the playing field for all children. This means a public education system with equitable resources for all, including equitable access to high-quality teachers and programming within school districts and schools. It also means a public education system where children are not trapped in schools isolated by race and poverty and privy to discriminatory discipline policies and practices. There must be special recognition and attention given to the educational needs of children who are living in poverty or in families with low incomes, as well as children who are differently abled; English language learners; and children who are experiencing homelessness, living in foster care, or returning from juvenile detention.

We work to eliminate discriminatory education policies and practices and the inequitable distribution of resources that undermine equal educational opportunities for all students. To ensure all children an equitable education, we must:

We know school policing and harsh, exclusionary school discipline practices harm students, so we joined 90 civil rights and education organizations to call on Congress to advance critical legislation to provide safe, healthy, and inclusive school climates.

The compromise bill includes important generational investments to boost families economic stability and reduce racial inequities in income, housing, education, and health care that disproportionately harm Black, Latino, and Indigenous children. However, it leaves out important investments to ensure children and families have what they need to thrive.

Youth are still growing and learning at such a young age. They should not be subjected to such a harsh punishment because that affects them long-term. Placing them in juvenile detention centers does more damage especially when these centers are not equipped to truly help them on their educational journey.

A gift today helps children get the help they need

The Childrens Defense Fund is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Our Federal Tax ID number is 52-0895622.

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Be a champion for every child. Sign up for updates about our work to fight for children and ways you can help.

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Fight for children, stay informed and know when to act.