

# Children's Defense Fund

## Children's Rights

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

## Campaign and Advocacy

The earliest years of a child's life are the time of greatest brain development and opportunity. Children's early experiences and environments build the foundation for future health, education and life outcomes. Unfortunately, the odds are stacked against the more than 3.6 million children under 6 living in poverty who too often face unsafe and stressful environments that can damage or delay their development. While high-quality early childhood programs can play an important role in buffering the negative impacts of early childhood poverty, too few poor children have access to affordable, high-quality opportunities.

We envision an America where every child regardless of race, gender or family income has access to a continuum of high-quality, comprehensive early childhood opportunities that meet their needs and the needs of their families. Providing every child this *Head Start* with the help of caring families and communities is necessary to guarantee a successful passage to adulthood.

We work with policymakers and community leaders to ensure every child a high-quality, early childhood education that builds a strong developmental foundation for the rest of their lives. To ensure all children a head start, we must build a high-quality continuum of early childhood opportunities for every child, including:

Being there isn't negotiable. National paid family and medical leave is one building block in a stack of policies, including the Child Tax Credit and high-quality, affordable child care, that create a solid foundation for children to grow and thrive. Congress must raise the pillars of stronger, better, and more inclusive national paid family and medical leave in Build Back Better and beyond.

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.

President Biden recently released his Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Budget request to Congress to strengthen the economy, address longstanding racial disparities, and ensure a more equitable future for our children. After a year marked by such dramatic change and drastic negative impact on children's lives, we need meaningful investments in supports for children and families. President Biden's FY22 budget request starts to do just that.

A gift today helps children get the help they need.

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

Let us know how you're using this resource



**Count me in!**

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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