

Children's Defense Fund

Children's Rights

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

Campaign and Advocacy

To succeed, children need quality and healthy homes, generous income and wealth support, quality health care, ample nutritious food, good schools, safe neighborhoods, and access to resources and opportunities that enable them to reach their full potential. Our children are striving, but too often the decks are stacked against them and the basic building blocks for success are out of reach.

Every child deserves to live in a world where they can learn, thrive, and live up to their fullest potential. The only way to do so is to confront our current systems and institutional racism and advance change for all of our communities, especially our Black, Latinx, and indigenous children and families.

About 1 in 7 children nearly 10.5 million were poor in 2019. Almost half of these children lived in extreme poverty at less than half the poverty level. Children of color who make up a majority of all children and our nation's future are at greatest risk. Seventy-one percent of poor children were children of color. More than 1 in 4 Black and 1 in 5 Hispanic and Indigenous children were poor compared with 1 in 12 white children. Across all racial and ethnic groups, the youngest children were the poorest. Nearly 1 in 6 children under 6 lived in poverty during their years of greatest brain development.

Poverty and income inequality leave children without reliable access to nutritious food, healthy homes, quality health care, and other resources to support their healthy development and later success.

Denying millions of children basic necessities like food, housing and healthcare can have devastating and lasting consequences. Child poverty creates gaps in cognitive skills for young children, jeopardizes children's health and ability to learn, and fuels an intergenerational cycle of poverty. Child poverty is too costly for our children and nation and it is neither necessary nor morally defensible.

We envision an America where we fully invest in our communities, particularly communities of color, so that no child lives in poverty, where racial justice is realized and all children have the opportunities they need to reach their full potential. We believe that we must tear down the systemic and institutional racism and discrimination embedded in our institutions and our policies to fully realize this dream. As a country, we have the resources to end child poverty now and must create the will to do so. We cannot afford to wait. The future of our children and our nation depends on it.

We fight to end child poverty and ensure all families have resources they need to thrive and flourish by expanding, improving, and advancing new federal programs and policies that help our communities. Ending child poverty will take a multi-pronged approach. To end child poverty now, we must:

This week marks the one year anniversary of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act. As co-chair of the Automatic Benefit for Children (ABC) Coalition, the Children's Defense Fund played a vital role in leading advocacy efforts that ultimately resulted in the inclusion of an expanded and fully inclusive Child Tax Credit (CTC) in the ARP.

It's time for the IRS to create a permanent, robust simplified filing process, so all families can easily access crucial programs like the CTC and EITC.

On this day last year, my son and I watched events unfold just two miles from our new home in Washington, D.C. Dallasmy artist, the empathy among my four children who feels deeply all that he sees around him was unnerved in the place where I was moving my family. He watched, with children across the nation, as the hopes for his well-being were attacked at the Capitol.

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