

# Children's Defense Fund

## Children's Rights

<https://www.childrensdefense.org/blog/universal-meals-are-essential-for-advancing-racial-equity/>

## Public Facing Advocacy Writing

This week, the House approved a \$3.5 trillion budget resolution to make critical, once-in-a-generation investments in our children and future. As Congress prepares to assemble and pass a final package, universal school meals must be a top priority.

As CDFs [new infographic](#) shows, universal school meals are essential for advancing racial equity and food justice. Institutional racism disproportionately denies children of color access to healthy food at home and in their communities, with Black and Latinx children going hungry at two times the rate of white children. Eliminating barriers to healthy school meals will help level the playing field and reduce longstanding racial disparities in nutrition, health, and education. Research confirms access to universal school meals boosts attendance, improves academic and health outcomes, and reduces behavior-related suspensions that feed into the Cradle to Prison Pipeline.

Congress and the Department of Agriculture temporarily authorized schools to serve free meals to all children in response to the pandemic, but these flexibilities are set to expire at the end of the 2021-2022 school year. If Congress does not act now to make universal school meals permanent, millions of children will soon be left behind and children of color will be hit hardest. Nearly 60 percent of children just above the cutoff for free meals are children of color, and reverting back to strict eligibility standards will disproportionately deny them the healthy food they need to succeed inside and outside of the classroom.

We cannot allow Congress to take meals away from our children. Download our [infographic](#) to learn more about the ways universal meals will advance racial equity and join us in [telling Congress to make them permanent!](#)

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.