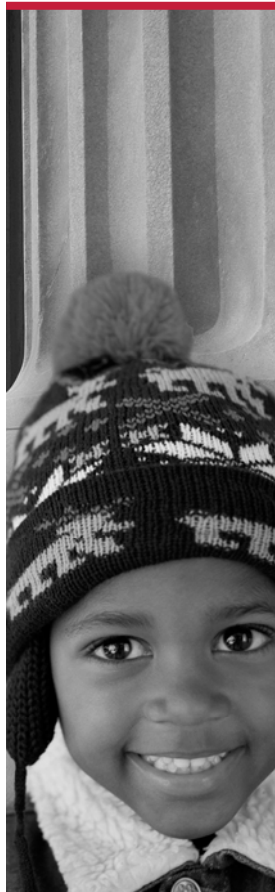


# FIRST FOCUS: THE FEDERAL BUDGET

## A CHILDREN'S BUDGET

First Focus is a bipartisan advocacy organization that is committed to making children and their families a priority in federal policy and budget decisions. Children's health, education, family economics, child welfare, and child safety are the five core issue areas around which First Focus is working to promote bipartisan policy solutions.



### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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### WHAT IS A CHILDREN'S BUDGET?

A children's budget is a full accounting of all the money spent on and for children. Because such spending is spread out over many departments and dozens of bureaus, there currently is no simple way to evaluate the level of federal investment in children. Comparing levels across years is an equally difficult task. **A children's budget would gather together the diverse sources of funding for children's programs in one place to communicate a clear picture of the federal investment in America's young people.**

### WE DON'T HAVE IT BUT WE NEED IT

Are we shortchanging our children? It can be hard to tell sometimes. Some programs that benefit children have enjoyed funding increases in recent years, while others have suffered cuts. What is the overall trend for spending on kids? This a question to which every parent in America should be able to find an answer with ease. Unfortunately, even experienced policy analysts would find it extremely difficult to figure out exactly what the federal government spends for children. **Doing better for our children tomorrow starts with knowing how we're doing today.**

### EASY TO IMPLEMENT, INVALUABLE TO HAVE

There are several state and local governments that currently produce a children's budget annually. These budgets give an advantage to the parents in states like Louisiana and in cities like Philadelphia by making it clear and plain how their governments are responding to the needs of children. **Children's budgets in these states and cities have proven themselves to be an invaluable source of information as well as an inexpensive and efficient way to improve the lives of all children.** At the federal level, unfortunately, no such official source of information currently exists.

### A FEDERAL CHILDREN'S BUDGET

The law (31 USC 1105) that governs the requirements for the President's annual budget request already includes several dozen separate specific instructions. Most recently, the law was changed to mandate that the President include a separate analysis of all spending on homeland security. **A simple and easy addition to this law would instruct the President to submit a Children's Budget as part of the larger request, just as the President submits the separate Homeland Security analysis.** Creating a Children's Budget at the federal level will allow all Americans to judge for themselves the priority that we, as a nation, place on meeting the needs of our children.

### OUR FIRST PRIORITY

**We can all agree that helping our children succeed must be at the top of our national priorities.** Children make up one-quarter of our population, but they are all of our future. Meeting their needs requires commitment and dedication. It also requires that we take stock of our current efforts, but the absence of a clear Children's Budget makes it hard to do so. If we have the opportunity to take simple, inexpensive action to highlight the national commitment to children, shouldn't we do so?



## FIRST FOCUS

MAKING CHILDREN & FAMILIES THE PRIORITY