

# FIRST FOCUS: OUR AGENDA

## ABOUT FIRST FOCUS

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.



### HEALTH

We all win when kids get the care they need. When an asthmatic child can get regular treatment, she is less likely to need emergency room care for an attack. That helps to keep her in school and her parents at work, and it helps taxpayers avoid the high cost of emergency care. First Focus is committed to making health care more accessible and reliable for America's children and believes that reauthorizing the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), strengthening Healthy Start, and combating childhood obesity are critical steps to improving children's health.

### EDUCATION

Upward mobility and opportunity have long been the hallmarks of American society, as generation after generation surpassed their parents' achievements. But declining high school graduation rates threaten this progress, especially for young Americans of color. First Focus believes America can improve graduation rates and restore access to the American dream by strengthening policies and programs to meet the needs of students in and outside the classroom.

### FAMILY ECONOMICS

Last year, 28 million American children lived in low-income families. Unfortunately, children lacking economic security at home face many disadvantages ranging from poorer health to lower achievement in school. For this reason, First Focus believes that federal investments in children, particularly investments that help lift them out of poverty, are essential to improving their health and ensuring their success in the future. First Focus strives to make children and families a priority in the budget not only in health care and education, but also through initiatives like tax credits, nutrition supports, and child support enforcement.

### CHILD WELFARE

First Focus is committed to the long-term goal of substantially reducing the number of children entering foster care, and working to ensure that our existing system of care protects children and adequately meets the needs of families in the child welfare system. First Focus is working to ensure that promising prevention efforts, including nurse-family visitation programs, are adequately funded and broadly replicated. In addition, First Focus is engaging in efforts to improve access to substance use and mental health treatment for parents and children, expand kinship care and subsidized guardianship, improve services and continuity in care for teens aging-out of the child welfare system, and promote comprehensive reforms to the existing federal child welfare financing structure.

### CHILD SAFETY

Ensuring that our children grow up in a setting that is safe from physical and environmental hazards can have far reaching effects on a child's well-being. First Focus is working to protect children from hazardous consumer products and other substandard physical, chemical, and environmental living conditions. In addition, First Focus is working to increase investments in criminal prevention and intervention efforts for at-risk youth, such as those in the juvenile justice system, to improve safety for our children and their communities.



# FIRST FOCUS

MAKING CHILDREN & FAMILIES THE PRIORITY