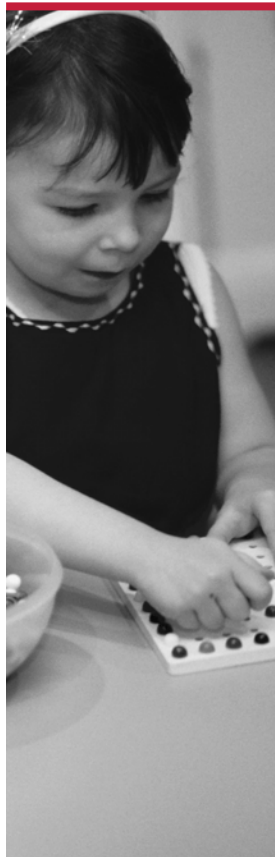


FIRST FOCUS: THE FEDERAL BUDGET

THE PRESIDENT'S FISCAL YEAR 2009 BUDGET REQUEST

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.



Children make up one quarter of our population, but they are all of our future. Investing in their health and well-being now will pay huge dividends down the road. Unfortunately, for too long, children have been more of an afterthought in the federal budget than a focus. As a result, children are the beneficiaries of an ever-narrowing slice of federal spending. Reversing this trend and directing a fair share of federal resources to our children should be the top priority of national leaders everywhere.

KIDS GET A SHRINKING SHARE OF FEDERAL SPENDING

First Focus recently commissioned a report by the Urban Institute to detail how federal spending on children has changed over the past 45 years. The results were startling.

In 1960, the children's share of federal domestic spending was 20.1%. In 2006, that share had declined to 15.4%, a 23.3% overall decline.

Indeed, the Urban Institute report concluded that if present trends continue, the children's share of the federal budget will decline further, to only 13.1% of overall domestic spending.

KIDS HAVE NOT FAIRED WELL THESE PAST FIVE YEARS

From 2004 to 2008 federal spending on children rose by only 1.4%, in real terms. At the same time spending on children was growing by a meager 1%, total federal spending was increasing at about ten times that rate, pushing children back even further. The picture for just discretionary spending has been even bleaker. From 2004 to 2008, the real value of federal discretionary spending on children has actually declined 6.7%

CHILDREN IN PRESIDENT BUSH'S FISCAL YEAR 2009 BUDGET

Unfortunately, the President's last budget request continues past trends, with investments in children making up an increasingly small part of the federal portfolio. In 2008, the federal government will spend

about \$91 billion on discretionary programs that target children. The President's proposal slashes the federal investment in children by almost \$2.8 billion. If enacted, children's programs would suffer cuts in almost every area.

- ◆ **Health:** Under President Bush's budget, discretionary spending on children's health programs would decline 8.4%. The President would fully eliminate Universal Newborn Hearing Screening and Emergency Medical Services for Children as well as end the Carol M. White Physical Education Program. In addition to these cuts, the President propose holding flat the funding for the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant, amounting to a 4% real cut in the value of MCH spending.
- ◆ **Education:** If Congress enacts the budget request, investments in education programs that benefit children would drop by \$1.5 billion. The \$280 million cut to 21st Century Community Learning Centers and the flat funding of the Child Care and Development Block Grant would mean 400,000 fewer children in after-school programs next year.
- ◆ **Child Safety:** President Bush's budget drastically reduces federal investment in our children's safety. In fact, he proposes slicing that investment in half. Poison Control Centers, for example, would suffer a massive 62% reduction.
- ◆ **Child Welfare:** As with other program areas, discretionary spending on child welfare would drop substantially. With big proposed reductions in the Community Services Block Grant and a plan to reduce foster care aid to states, funding for programs that aim to improve child welfare would be reduced more than a third.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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MAKING CHILDREN & FAMILIES THE PRIORITY