

November 18, 2020

Dear President-elect Biden and Vice President-elect Harris:

Children are and will always be the future of our nation. However, children, youth and families are in a time of crisis across the nation as the health, economic and social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic take root. This crisis arises on top of the glaring disparities that have existed in many communities for centuries. We are at a unique crossroads, presented with an opportunity to rebuild better systems and create more prosperous futures for ALL of our nation's children with an eye toward promoting long-term racial, ethnic and socioeconomic equity.

To realize this opportunity and reimagine our systems for optimal health, well-being and development, we, the undersigned, respectfully request the establishment of a White House Office on Children and Youth and a White House Conference on Children and Youth to elevate the needs of children, youth and their families in your Administration.

Out of this crisis must come leadership to secure a prosperous future for the next generation. Establishing a White House Office on Children and Youth would bring sustained attention to research and policy recommendations, enhance alignment and coordination of federal programs and investments, and ultimately set our country on a trajectory of wellbeing, prosperity and thriving for the future. The Office would liaise with the President, Vice President, Cabinet Secretaries and Congress to ensure that addressing the unique needs of children is a regular consideration in policy decisions. It would also develop and advance a National Children's Strategy and all-of-government Children's Budget that would set forth an aspirational yet achievable vision, including the related outcomes goals and metrics, to make measurable progress toward rebuilding systems for children.

Furthermore, since 1909, White House Conferences on Children have led to action within and beyond the government sector, including the growth of adoption agencies, Administrative action to strengthen the Amber Alert system and greater awareness of research on early brain development that informed subsequent policy and resource allocations. Given the enormous stressors on children and families compounded by the pandemic, there is a powerful opportunity for another Conference to spur collective action across the public, nonprofit and private sectors.

Due to the pandemic and economic recession, children and youth across the country have experienced rising rates of poverty, hunger and homelessness. Due to school closures, children are experiencing significant learning loss and mental health challenges. Rates for vaccinations,

primary and preventive services among children in Medicaid and CHIP have steeply declined. Child care capacity in the United States could be cut in half, which is expected to exacerbate existing disparities in child care availability across racial and socioeconomic communities. In the wake of these major challenges, the Office and Conference should focus on how to reduce child poverty, reduce health and educational disparities, and achieve equitable outcomes for children and youth to ensure they can enter child care, early education and school healthy and ready to learn.

A coordinated entity to address children's needs, along with a high-level leader charged with advancing an agenda for children is not a novel concept. Across the country, Republican and Democratic governors have created impactful state-level entities to cut across silos and prioritize the needs of children. Internationally, many of our peer countries have implemented leadership positions, ranging from children's commissioners to ombudsman and Children's Ministers tasked with improving child health and wellbeing. However, no similar entity exists in the federal bureaucracy for children in the United States. As a result, children, who lack formal structures to advocate for themselves, frequently become an afterthought during major policy debates. Now is the time to prioritize children, youth and families through a White House Office on Children and Youth and a White House Conference on Children and Youth.

We look forward to engaging with you on this critical and timely proposal. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

(Organizations and Individuals listed in alphabetical order)

Lead Organizers

Education Redesign Lab, Harvard Graduate School of Education

First Focus on Children

Forum for Youth Investment

Mental Health America

Nemours Children's Health System

National Organizations

The 100th Meridian

ADHD Symptoms Clinic

Adolescents and Children Together for Health (ACT for Health)

Afterschool Alliance

Agenda for Children

AIDS Alliance for Women, Infants, Children, Youth & Families

Alchemist Foundation

Alliance for a Healthier Generation

Alliance for Strong Families and Communities

The Amend Group for Psychological, Educational, and Gifted Services

American Art Therapy Association

American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work

American Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

American Association of Suicidology

American Camp Association

American Diversity Group

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

American Psychological Association

America's Promise Alliance

Anxiety and Depression Association of America

Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs

Association of State Public Health Nutritionists

Boys & Girls Clubs of America

Boys Town

Camp Fire National

The Care Institute

Center for Community Resilience

Center for Community Schools

Center for Health Care Strategies

Center for the Study of Social Policy

Child Care Aware® of America

Child Welfare League of America (CWLA)

Children's Advocacy Alliance

Children's Advocacy Institute

Children's Defense Fund

Children's Funding Project

Children's Health Council

Children's HealthWatch

Children's Healthy Weight Research Group

Children's Home Society of America (CHSA)

Children's Institute

Children Now

The Children's Partnership

Clinical Psychology Associates

Clinical Social Work Association

Coalition for Community Schools

Coalition for the Promotion of Behavioral Health

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)

Committee for Children

Community Catalyst

Communities In Schools National Office

Community Health Centers, Inc.
Council for Professional Recognition
Devereux Advanced Behavioral Health
Early Ages Healthy Stages
Early Care and Learning Partnership
Early Opportunities LLC
EDGE Consulting Partners
Every Child Succeeds
Families USA
Family Centered Treatment Foundation
Family Connects International
Family Voices
First Five Years Fund
Foster America
Foster Care to Success
Friends of the Children
Funding the Next Generation
Futures Without Violence
Genesis Health Consulting
Girls Inc.
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice
Green & Healthy Homes Initiative
Guiding Bright
Healthy Families America
Healthy Schools Campaign

Help Me Grow National Center, Connecticut Children's Medical Center

Hogg Foundation for Mental Health

Holt International

Ignite Afterschool

InnerCity Struggle

Inseparable

Integrated Care for Kids-InCK Marks Initiative

International Social Service - USA

Johnson Group Consulting, Inc.

Jump IN for Healthy Kids

Juvenile Law Center

The Kennedy Forum

Kennedy Krieger Institute

Kids Impact Initiative

Leading for Kids

Lisa Stone Pritzker Family Foundation

McNary Group

MENTOR

National Afterschool Association

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

National Association for Children's Behavioral Health

National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners

National Association of School Psychologists

National Association of Secondary School Principals

National Association of Social Workers

National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors

National Association for the Education of Young Children

National CACFP Sponsors Association

National Center for Families Learning

National Center for Learning Disabilities

National Committee for Quality Assurance

National Consortium for African American Children

National Crittenton

National Eating Disorders Association

National Family Support Network

National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health

National Head Start Association

National Institute for Children's Health Quality

National League for Nursing

National Medical Association

National Prevention Science Coalition to Improve Lives

National Summer Learning Association

National Women's Law Center

NEA Foundation

ParentChild+

Parents as Teachers National Center

Partners for Our Children

Partnership for Children & Youth

PolicyLink

Prevent Blindness

Prevent Child Abuse America

Prevention Institute

PRIME Center for Health Equity, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Albert Einstein College of Medicine

Psychology Consultation Specialists

Reach Out and Read

Ready for School, Ready for Life

Redstone Global Center for Prevention and Wellness

ResourceFull Consulting, LLC

School-Based Health Alliance

Search Institute

Society of Behavioral Medicine

Society of Pediatric Psychology

Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine

Society for Child and Family Policy and Practice

Society for Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics

Society for Research in Child Development

StriveTogether

Together for Girls

The Trevor Project

Trust for America's Health

University of South Carolina Research Center for Child Well-Being

UPLIFT

Values to Action

Vanderbilt Center for Child Health Policy

Well Being Trust

YMCA of the USA

Youth Development Resource Center

Youthprise

ZERO TO THREE

State and Local Organizations

Advocate Children's Hospital

Akron Children's Hospital

Amherst H. Wilder Foundation

Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago

Arizona Center for Afterschool Excellence

Blank Children's Hospital - UnityPoint Health

Blue Shield of California Foundation

Boston Children's Hospital

Boston College Center for Optimized Student Support

California AfterSchool Network

The California Children's Trust

CareerSource Central Florida

Ceres Community Project

Children's Health Alliance of Wisconsin

Children's Home Society of North Carolina

Children's Home Society of Washington

Children's Hospital Colorado

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

Children's Mercy Kansas City

Children's Minnesota
Children's National Hospital
Children's Wisconsin
ChristianaCare
Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York
Colorado Association for School-Based Health Care
Colorado School Medicaid Consortium
Connecticut After School Network
Connecticut Association for Human Services
Connecticut Children's Collective
DC Action for Children
Delaware Academy of Medicine / Delaware Public Health Association
Delaware Department of Education
Delaware State Education Association
Early Childhood Alliance Onondaga
Early Learning Multnomah's Parent Accountability Council
Families Forward VA
Family & Children's Trust Fund of Virginia
First 5 Alameda County
First 5 Association of California
First 5 California
Florida Children's Council
Foundation for a Healthier West Orange
Georgia Dental Hygienists' Association

Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare

Groundwork Ohio

Hathaway Sycamores

Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of Georgia

Healthy Start Coalition of Orange County FL

IMPACT Autism Lab/Dell Children's Medical Center

Indiana Afterschool Network

Juliette's House Child Abuse Intervention Center

Kansas Action for Children

Lamoille Family Center

Lanai Community Health Center

Laraway Youth & Family Services

Latino Coalition for a Healthy CA

The Los Angeles Trust for Children's Health

Maine Children's Alliance

Maryland Early Childhood Leadership Program, University of Maryland, Baltimore County

Maryland Out of School Time Network

Maryland State Family Child Care Association

Massachusetts Citizens for Children - "MassKids"

MassGeneral Hospital for Children

Mental Health America of Georgia

The MetroHealth System

Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board

Mississippi Center for Advanced Medicine

Missouri AfterSchool Network

Missouri KidsFirst

MnAEYC-MnSACA (Minnesota Association for the Education of Young Children - Minnesota School-Age Care Alliance)

MSU Denver's Early Family Literacy Program

Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital

MUSC Health / Medical Univ of South Carolina

National Autism Association NY Metro Chapter

Nationwide Children's Hospital

NC Center for Afterschool Programs

NC Child

New England Center for OCD and Anxiety, Boston

New Hampshire Afterschool Network

NJSACC: Statewide Afterschool Network

Northeast Kingdom Community Action

Nutrition Policy Institute, University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources

Ohio Afterschool Network

Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy

Oregon Child Abuse Solutions

OregonASK

Pediatric Physicians' Organization at Boston Children's Hospital

Pennsylvania School Age Child Care Alliance

Prevent Child Abuse Alabama

Prevent Child Abuse Arizona

Prevent Child Abuse NC

Prevent Child Abuse Vermont

Primary Children's Hospital

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT

Rodel Foundation of Delaware

Rutgers University

SaySo Strong Able Youth Speaking Out

Scarsdale Village CBT

School's Out Washington

The Scott Foundation

Seattle Children's

Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida

The Society of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology, American Psychological Association,
Div 53

SouthSide Early Childhood Center

St. Joseph's Children's Hospital

St. Louis Children's Hospital

Tennessee Justice Center

Tufts Children's Hospital

Turner Psychological & Consulting Services, LLC

UNITE-LA

United Way of the Columbia-Willamette

University of Rochester

University of South Carolina/ALL4SC

Virginia Partnership for Out-of-School Time (VPOST)

Voices for Georgia's Children

Wake Forest School of Medicine and Brenner Children's Hospital

West Orange Healthcare District

Wolfson Children's Hospital

Wyoming Afterschool Alliance

Yamhill Community Care

Individuals

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Michele Berk, Assistant Professor, Stanford University School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry, Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

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Cyrus E. Driver, Senior Director, National Public Education Support Fund, and the Partnership for the Future of Learning

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Susan Jacobs, Ambassador, Career Foreign Service Officer and First Special Advisor for Children's Issues, Department of State, 2010-2017; Chair, Governing Board, International Social Services

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