



July XX, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

We sincerely appreciate your leadership and the commitment your administration has made to addressing the needs of children and youth, and advancing equity. The pandemic has added stressors to the already challenging lives of children and youth. School closures and remote learning have limited opportunities to interact with peers, exercise, access healthy meals, and optimize learning. Economic pressures have exacerbated child poverty, substandard housing, mental health, education and long-standing racial disparities.

The American Rescue Plan (ARP) (P.L. 117-2) and the proposed American Families Plan and Jobs Plan will help lift millions of children out of poverty and take critical steps to support their nutrition, housing, health, childcare and education. The ARP investments alone total over \$360 billion for kids and will go a long way toward addressing many challenges exacerbated by the pandemic. We appreciate that you have taken decisive action. However, investing in “business as usual” ways of working will not create the sustainable change that children, youth, and families need. It’s not enough for individual agencies to check the box on siloed responsibilities without a broader coordinated strategy. We need a designated person or entity accountable for effective, equitable change in children’s real lives.

In keeping with your Executive Order, *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities through Federal Government*, real change will take a “whole of government” approach that prioritizes equity, collaboration, and the lived experiences of children, youth, and families. **That is why we call on your administration to establish a senior leadership position in the White House specifically focused on children and youth, as well as a Federal Children’s Cabinet to implement cross-agency collaboration and center our efforts on equity, elimination of child poverty and racial justice.**

We urge you to designate a leader and structure within the Domestic Policy Council (DPC) to serve as the nexus for all policies, investments and public-private partnerships impacting children and youth. This could be achieved through a White House Office on Children and Youth or a new Special Assistant for Children and Youth.

While critical, one single office or individual cannot effectively coordinate all children's policies and funding currently operating in silos. **We therefore recommend establishment of a Federal Children's Cabinet to foster alignment of investments and implementation of policies affecting children, youth and their families and to address immediate challenges stemming from the pandemic.** The Cabinet would coordinate with the DPC, the Office of Management and Budget; states, tribes, and localities; nonprofits; the philanthropic and private sectors; and children and families to optimize implementation of laws, regulations and policies impacting children, youth and their families. This new structure would align and more effectively coordinate the federal response to major issues such as the youth mental health crisis, rebuilding the child care sector, and eliminating child poverty. Together with the DPC, the Cabinet would ensure that the unique needs of children and youth are a major consideration throughout the development of new policies and legislation, with a focus on advancing equity.

State and local governments have seen the success of children's cabinets. Cabinets in states like Delaware and Indiana bring together leadership from governors' offices, state agencies, and the community to optimize coordination and accountability among state agencies. The Minnesota Children's Cabinet collaborated with state agencies to build an online child care hub to map out child care availability for families and offer child care providers information on resources ranging from securing business loans to obtaining personal protective equipment and accessing COVID-19 vaccines. In Hamilton County, Tennessee, the local children's cabinet has coordinated a cross-sector pandemic response that promotes equity by assessing children's unmet needs, connecting them with meals and creating a fund to purchase digital devices and internet hotspots for online learning. A federal Children's Cabinet could elevate and spread these successes and coordinate the federal response.

Finally, we believe a White House Conference on Children and Youth would be an effective venue to launch this leadership structure, solicit feedback from stakeholders, and draw attention to policies to advance equity for young people. A conference could spur collective action across the public, nonprofit, philanthropic and private sectors to move the needle on an ambitious vision and measurable goals to improve the lives of children and youth.

Thank you for your consideration. We stand ready to advise and assist your administration.

Sincerely,

[**CLICK HERE FOR SIGN-ON FORM**](#)

(Organizations listed below in alphabetical order)

National Organizations

State and Local Organizations