

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

Kristy Benoit Allen, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Tennessee - Knoxville

Billie Jo Bakeberg, Director and President of South Dakota School Age Care Alliance

Richard P. Barth, PhD, MSW, Professor and Chair, Executive Committee of the Grand Challenges for Social Work, University of Maryland School of Social Work

William R. Beardslee, MD, Director, Baer Prevention Initiatives, Department of Psychiatry, Boston Children's Hospital

Harolyn M.E. Belcher, M.D., M.H.S., Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer, Director of the Office for Health, Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity, Kennedy Krieger Institute; Professor of Pediatrics, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, (Joint Appointment) Department of Mental Health, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

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

Christina Bethell, PhD, MBA, Director, Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative; Professor, Bloomberg School of Public Health, Johns Hopkins University

Allison Blake, MSW, PhD, Chief Executive Officer, Child and Family Agency of SECT; former Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Children and Families

Dale A. Blyth, PhD, Professor Emeritus in the College of Education & Human Development at the University of Minnesota

Oliver Brooks, MD, Immediate Past President, National Medical Association

Charles Bruner, Ph.D., Integrated Care for Kids -- InCK Marks National Resource Network Manager

Timothy A. Cavell, PhD, Professor, Dept. of Psychological Science, University of Arkansas, APA Division 53 (SCCAP), Council Representative

Nancy Cheak-Zamora, PhD, MA, Associate Professor, Department of Health Sciences; Research Affiliate, Population, Education, and Health (PECH); Research Faculty, Thompson Center for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders, University of Missouri

Teri Chenot, EdD, MS, MEd, MSN, RN, CCE (ACBE), FNAP, FAAN

Andrea Chronis-Tuscano, Professor and Clinical Psychologist, University of Maryland

Victoria E. Cosgrove, Ph.D., Clinical Associate Professor, Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Stanford University School of Medicine

Jennifer Davis, Senior Advisor, Harvard's Education Redesign Lab; former Clinton Administration Deputy Assistant Secretary of Education and Special Assistant to Secretary Richard W. Riley

Kristin L. Dean, PhD, ABPP, Clinical Psychologist, Department of Family Medicine, University of Tennessee Graduate School of Medicine

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

Robert Dugger, PhD, Co-Founder and Chair, Advisory Board, ReadyNation; retired partner, Tudor Investment Corporation

Arne Duncan, Managing Partner, Emerson Collective; former U.S. Secretary of Education

Kristin Dwyer, Director of Legislation, Delaware State Education Association

Maurice J. Elias, Ph.D., Professor and Director, Social-Emotional and Character Development Lab, Rutgers University

Dr. Gina Forchelli, Clinical Psychologist; Staff Psychologist, Learning and Emotional Assessment Program (LEAP), Department of Psychiatry, Massachusetts General Hospital; Instructor, Harvard Medical School

Ellen Frede, PhD, Senior Co-Director, National Institute for Early Education Research; Research Professor, Graduate School of Education, Rutgers University

Dylan Gee, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Psychology, Yale University

Jan Greenberg, MA, Senior Subject Matter Expert - Child Development, National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning

Charles J. Homer, MD, MPH, Chief Improvement Officer, Economic Mobility Pathways; Associate Professor (Part time), Harvard Medical School; former Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Human Services Policy, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Kathryn L. Humphreys, Ph.D., Ed.M., Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology and Human Development, Vanderbilt University

Stephanie Ingram, President, Delaware State Education Association

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

Scott Johnson, Statewide Coordinator, DULCE-Vermont

Patricia K. Kerig, PhD, Professor of Clinical Psychology, University of Utah; Editor in Chief, Journal of Traumatic Stress; Co-Director, Center for Trauma Recovery and Juvenile Justice

Russell S. Kirby, PhD, MS, FACE, Faculty Lead for Population Health Science, Distinguished University Professor, College of Public Health, University of South Florida

Wendy Klierer, PhD, Professor of Psychology, Virginia Commonwealth University

Milton Kotelchuck, PhD, MPH, Professor of Pediatrics, Harvard Medical School

Sherry Lachman, Executive Director, Foster America; former Domestic Policy Advisor to Vice President Biden; former Senior Policy Advisor, U.S. Department of Education

Lisa A. Lauxman, PhD, M.B.A., Consultant, former Director, Division Youth and 4-H, National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Daniela Lewy, EdLD, MPH, Managing Partner, Social Determinants of Health Consulting LLC; former Executive Director, Virginia Governor's Children's Cabinet

Michele A Lloyd-Puryear, MD, PhD, FAAP, American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics; former Special Advisor at the Office of the Director and Senior Medical and Science Advisor at the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Joan Lombardi, PhD

Rafael López, former Commissioner, Administration on Children, Youth and Families-U.S. Department of Health & Human Services; former Senior Policy Advisor, The White House

Megan Louderman, Clinical Psychologist, Children's Hospital Colorado

Josette D. Manning, Cabinet Secretary for the Delaware Department of Services for Children Youth and Their Families, State of Delaware

Mary Ann McCabe, Ph.D., ABPP, Associate Clinical Professor of Pediatrics, George Washington University School of Medicine

Molly McNulty, JD, Assistant Professor of Public Health Law and Policy, College of Arts & Sciences, University of Rochester

Stephanie Monaghan-Blout, Psy.D., Pediatric Neuropsychologist, Neuropsychology & Education Services for Children & Adolescents

R. Lawrence Moss, MD, FACS, FAAP, President and CEO, Nemours Children's Health System

Cynthia Newman, MSW, LCSW, Regional Director, Mid-Jersey Regional Early Intervention Collaborative

Tanya M. Nichols, Ph.D., Licensed Clinical Psychologist, University of Mississippi

Jennifer Park, Ph.D., Chief Operating Officer and Early Learning Principal, Lastinger Center for Learning, College of Education, University of Florida

Trenee Parker, Director of the Division of Family Services, State of Delaware

Stephen Patrick, MD, MPH, MS, FAAP, Director, Center for Child Health Policy, Associate Professor of Pediatrics and Health Policy, Division of Neonatology, Vanderbilt University School of Medicine

James M. Perrin, MD, John C. Robinson Distinguished Chair in Pediatrics, MassGeneral Hospital for Children; Professor of Pediatrics, Harvard Medical School

Cheryl Polk, PhD, Licensed Clinical Psychologist in CA & MI; Chief Program Officer, Safe & Sound; former President, HighScope Educational Research Foundation; former Board Member, ZERO TO THREE; former Executive Director, The Lisa and John Pritzker Family Fund

Joshua Pollack, Executive Director of Special Projects, Stockton Unified School District; Former Special Assistant to the Secretary, U.S. Department of Education

Nuri Reyes, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, University of Colorado

Carlos Santos, PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Social Welfare, University of California Los Angeles

Robert Sege, MD, PhD, Director, Center for Community-Engaged Medicine, Tufts Medical Center, Professor of Medicine and Pediatrics, Tufts University School of Medicine

Kathy Stack, Chief Executive Officer, Kathy Stack Consulting; former Deputy Associate Director for Education, Income Maintenance and Labor, Office of Management and Budget

Lauren Sterling, former Cabinet Director, Maine Governor's Children's Cabinet; Consultant, Child & Youth Philanthropy, Programs, and Policy

Jeff Taschner, Executive Director, Delaware State Education Association

Lauren Tobing-Puente, PhD, Licensed Psychologist, Private Practice; Board Member, National Autism Association-New York Metro Chapter

Deborah Klein Walker, EdD, Adjunct Professor, Boston University and Tufts University; Past President, American Public Health Association and Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice

Kara Odom Walker, MD, MPH, MSHS, FAAFP, Senior Vice President and Chief Population Health Officer, Nemours Children's Health System; former Secretary, Delaware Department of Health and Social Services

Dianne Ward, EdD, FTOS, FACSM, Professor of Nutrition, Gillings School of Global Public Health at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Director, Children's Healthy Weight Research Group

David W. Willis, MD, FAAP, Senior Fellow, Center for the Study of Social Policy

Barry Zuckerman, MD, Professor and Chair Emeritus Of Pediatrics and Public Health, Boston University of School of Medicine; Co-founder of Reach Out and Read, Health Leads, Healthy Steps

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