

Legislative Action

Kids Agenda: A 10-Year, \$500 Billion Investment

New investments in children and families are critical. Whatever their political persuasion, the vast majority of Americans want more investments in their children and grandchildren to improve each child's life chances for success, ensure the nation's global competitiveness, and share resources with our aging population.

We urge the President and Congress to:

Create a universal children's health insurance program similar to Medicare for the elderly

Over 8,000,000 children do not have health insurance and millions more are at risk of losing their coverage. Combining and expanding Medicaid, SCHIP, and employment-based insurance is achievable. ECM strongly opposes any attempt by the Administration and Congress to cut or block the Medicaid entitlement.

Lead a nationwide effort to reduce child abuse and neglect

Nearly three million reports of child abuse and neglect are made annually. Proven programs exist to prevent and treat child abuse, a widespread problem that contributes to many other social ills. ECM strongly opposes any attempt by the Administration and Congress to block the foster care program.

Promote after-school programs that provide learning activities and connect kids with caring adults

After-school programs have been shown to help prevent crime, drug use, and teen pregnancy. Millions of unsupervised children and teens would benefit. The 21 Century Community Learning Centers program has not seen an increase in federal funding in three years, resulting in fewer and fewer children being served. ECM supports a substantial increase in funding for after-school programs.

Ensure that every child, regardless

of income or background, has access to high quality pre-school education

Millions of eligible three and four year-olds are not enrolled in quality pre-kindergarten programs that can help prepare them for school. ECM opposes any effort by the Administration in Congress to block grant or cut funding for Head Start and supports universal access to pre-school education for 3 and 4 year olds as an alternative to Social Security privatization.

Extend the child tax credit to the working poor

Currently, families that make between \$10,500 and \$26,500 per year do not receive the \$1,000 per child credit that families with higher incomes receive even though they pay federal payroll taxes. ECM believes extending tax cuts to these families will help lift them from poverty and simply show fairness as trillion of dollars in tax cuts have gone to more fortunate individuals.