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# **Webinar: 2019 Census Poverty Data and What COVID-19 Means for Kids**

**Tuesday, September 22, 2020**

# 2019 Census Child Poverty Data and What COVID-19 Means for Kids:

## *The Good, The Bad, The Ugly and The Way Forward*

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# The Good (ish): Data Collection, Funding, Community Engagement

- Data Collection--gives a general idea of socio-economic realities
- Determines Public Programs and Services
- Potential to positively impact state and local government funding
- Community Engagement



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# The Numbers: Highest Child Poverty Rates

States with the Highest Child Poverty Rates in 2019

State	Child Poverty Rate
Puerto Rico	56.8
Mississippi	28.1
Louisiana	27.0
New Mexico	24.9
Arkansas	22.1
Kentucky	21.7
Alabama	21.4
West Virginia	20.1
Oklahoma	19.9
South Carolina	19.7
Tennessee	19.7

States with the Largest Number of Poor Children in 2019

State	Number of Poor Children
Texas	1,400,918
California	1,363,574
Florida	737,415
New York	711,686
Ohio	466,168
Georgia	461,456
North Carolina	440,230
Illinois	436,327
Pennsylvania	434,904
Michigan	371,020

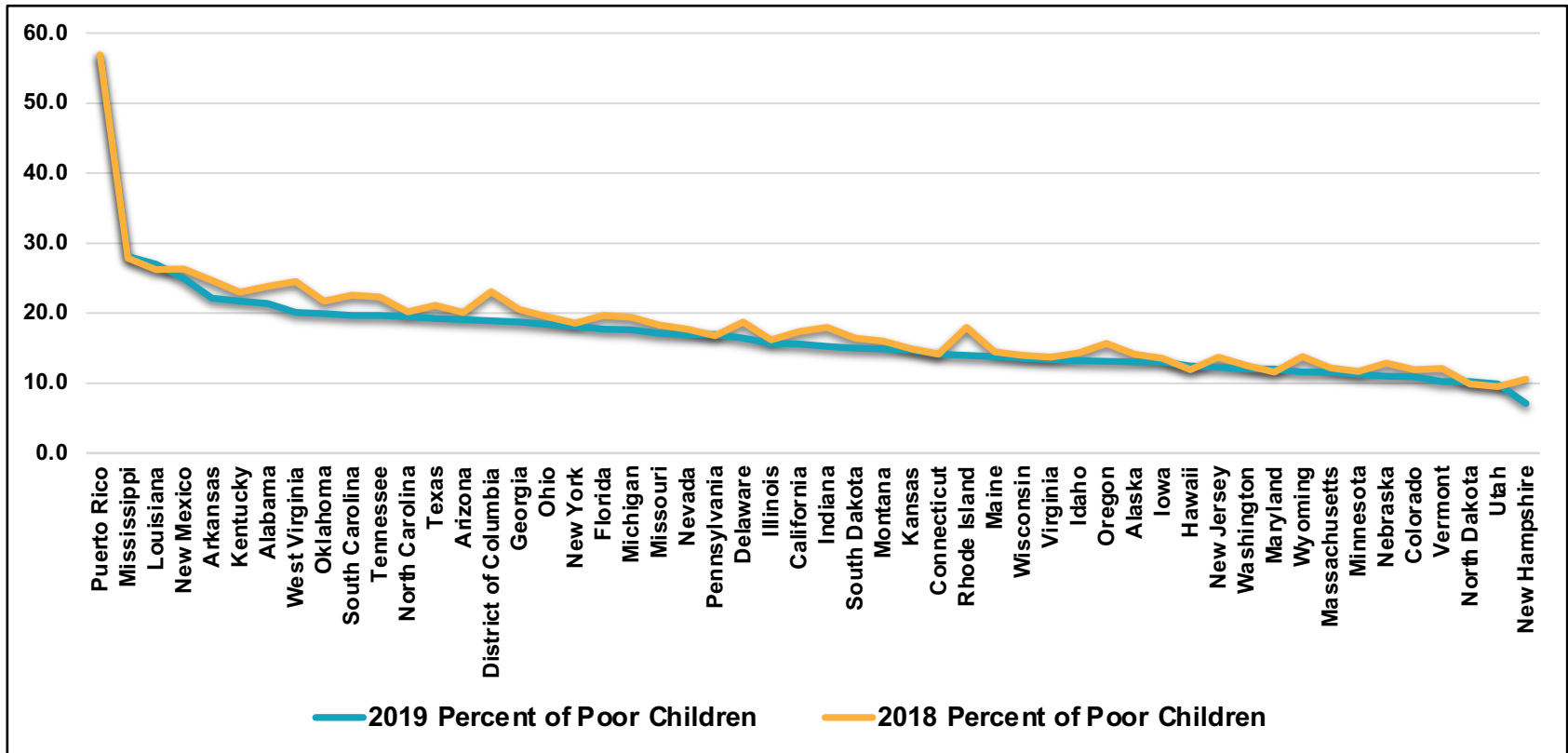
## More Stats

- **More than 1 in 3 Black children under 6 were poor** in 24 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.
- **More than 1 in 4 Hispanic children were poor** in 22 states and Puerto Rico.
- **More than 1 in 3 American Indian/Alaska Native children were poor** in 16 states



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# Percent of Poor Children in 2018 and 2019



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2020, American Community Survey (2019) and Current Population Survey (2019)

# The Bad: Pitfalls of Census Data and COVID-19

- Sample sizes not representative of population
- Poverty measurements fall short—  
dehumanizing of lived experiences
- Accessibility
- Low participation
- Not in real time
- Costly
- Privacy
- COVID-19 reversed \*progress\*



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# The Ugly: Implications of COVID-19 on Children and Families

- Structural/Systematic Racism and discrimination at the center of poverty---feelings of lack of confidence and relevance
- Increases stress levels for children and families—negatively impacts development and overall wellness
- Continued and worsened conditions for Black, Latino, American Indian, AAPI children

## Household Pulse Survey Data

- **51%** HH w/ children lost employment
- **22%** of adults w/ children in HH fell behind on rent
- **14%** children not getting enough to eat
- **1.3 million** children living in poverty do not have consistent internet access for school



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# The Way Forward: Support, Communities Participation, and Innovation

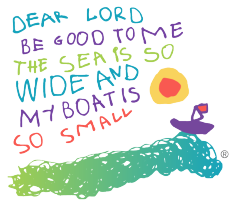
- Increased investment in Black and Brown communities/Historically oppressed and marginalized people
- Increased funding support and restructuring of public service programs
- Increased support to CBOs and groups on the ground—that engage communities more regularly
- Household Pulse Survey Data is a good start—innovative, time-sensitive, and culturally responsive measurements



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Thank you!



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**Monica Gonzales,  
Share Our Strength  
mgonzales@strength.org**

*I know that with COVID there are many needs that need met in our community, but even without the financial burden that this pandemic has caused, there are still many families who struggle to put food on the table. Not all people who are in need are below the poverty level, and families like ours are not eligible to receive any type of financial assistance from the government or from most agencies. ...Elizabeth*

*School meal recipient in Pennsylvania*



# Overview of Food Insecurity During Covid-19

- According to the USDA, in 2019, 5.3 million children were food insecure, the lowest number on record since these statistics began being tracked in 1998
- 1 in 6 adults, and 1 in 5 parents, remain food insecure.
- Black and Latino households with children have higher rates of food insecurity.
- More than 14-17 million children are food insecure.
- Some kids are still missing meals.

# Delivering School Meals During Covid-19

- Pre-pandemic
- Not business as usual
- Challenges and Barriers
- Child nutrition waivers are critical through the end of year, they provide certainty.



# Advocacy and Legislative Priorities

- Some programs and authorities sunset on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020.
- Urge USDA to extend child nutrition waivers before September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020.
- Urge Congress to include language in the Continuing Resolution to extend authorities and programs.
  - *CR's are the legislative vehicle to fund the government and must be passed by September 30<sup>th</sup>.*
- Passage of a relief package that includes these provisions:
  - Extension of USDA's authorities
  - Funding for school nutrition budgets
  - Extension and Expansion of P-EBT



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Early connections last a lifetime



# 2019 Census Child Poverty Data and What COVID-19 Means for Kids

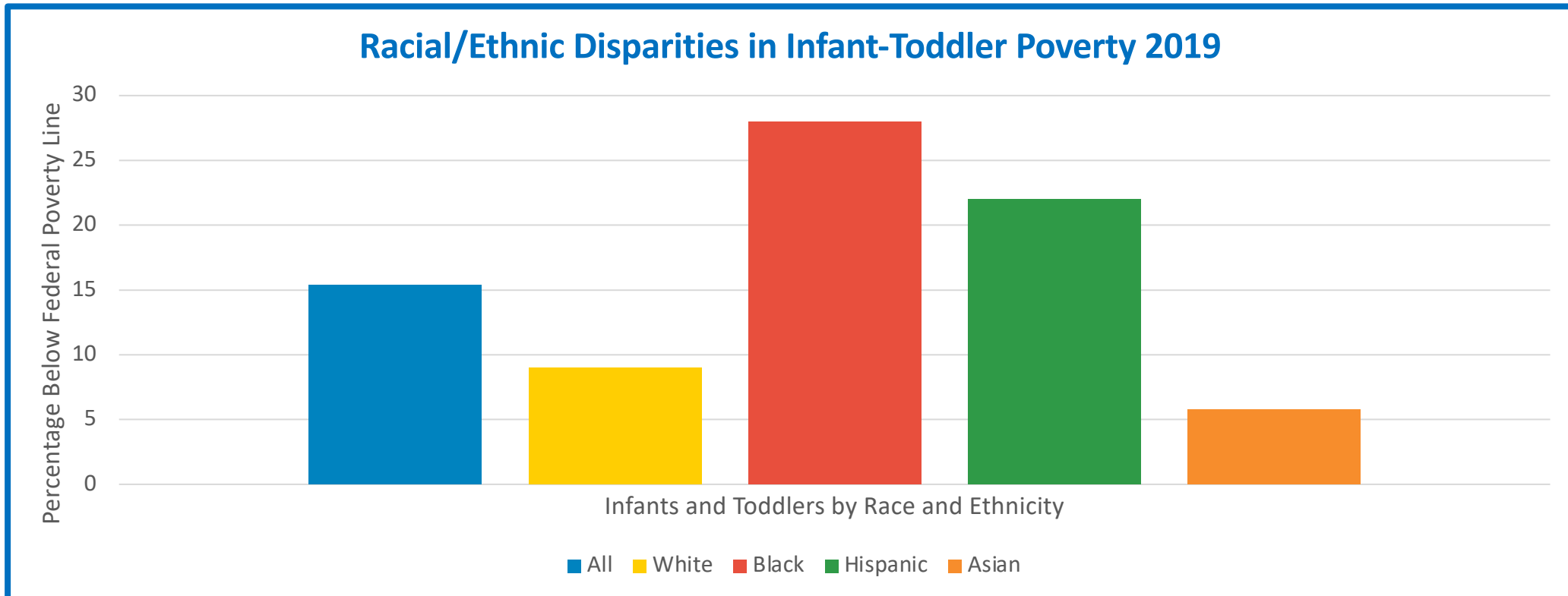
Myra Jones-Taylor  
Chief Policy Officer  
September 22, 2020

# Infants and Toddlers in Poverty: Fragile Gains Could Be Wiped Away



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- 15.4 percent (1.8 million) of children under 3 were poor in 2019, down from 17.8 percent in 2018
- Showing improvement does not mean young children are in a good place







# COVID-19: Families with Children Experiencing Financial & Material Hardship

## Families with babies and children who faced challenges *before* the pandemic disproportionately affected

- Families with low income (included 42% of babies in 2018)
- Families of color (more than half of all babies; more likely to be in poverty)

## As of August, material hardships persisted as economic recovery slowed & critical CARES Act supports expired

- **All Households with Children (*Household Pulse Survey*):**
  - **38%** said it was somewhat or very difficult to pay for usual household expenses
  - Over **30%** expected to lose income in the next 4 weeks
  - **51%** of households with children have experienced loss of employment income since mid-March
- **Households with young children (*Rapid-EC Survey*):**
  - **40%** anticipated difficulty paying for basic needs--double the rate when CARES was in effect
  - About **60%** within specific subgroups of caregivers (Black and Latinx households, single parent households, and lower income households) worried about basic shelter and food for their families
  - **1 in 3** households with above low income now report financial difficulties



# Material Needs: Economic Security and Housing

## *Housing Instability Exacerbated*

- *Before the pandemic:* **1 in 6** babies were living in crowded housing; more in Latinx and Black families.
- *In August:* Of all households with children--
  - **> 20%** were behind on rent payments
  - **23%** had little or no confidence in their ability to make next month's rent payment

## *High Levels of Food Insecurity for Families with Children Continues*

- *Before the pandemic:* 1 in 6 households with babies were food insecure
- *In August:*
  - Nearly **40%** of caregivers of young children were worried that they would not have enough food for their families in the next month.
  - Disparities persist in families that know hunger—compared with White households with children:
    - **Black households were twice as likely** to report not having enough to eat in the past week (20% vs. 9%)
    - **Latinx households were 50% more likely** to report not having enough to eat (16% vs. 9%)

# *Financial Difficulties & Material Hardships Lead to a Hardship Chain Reaction*



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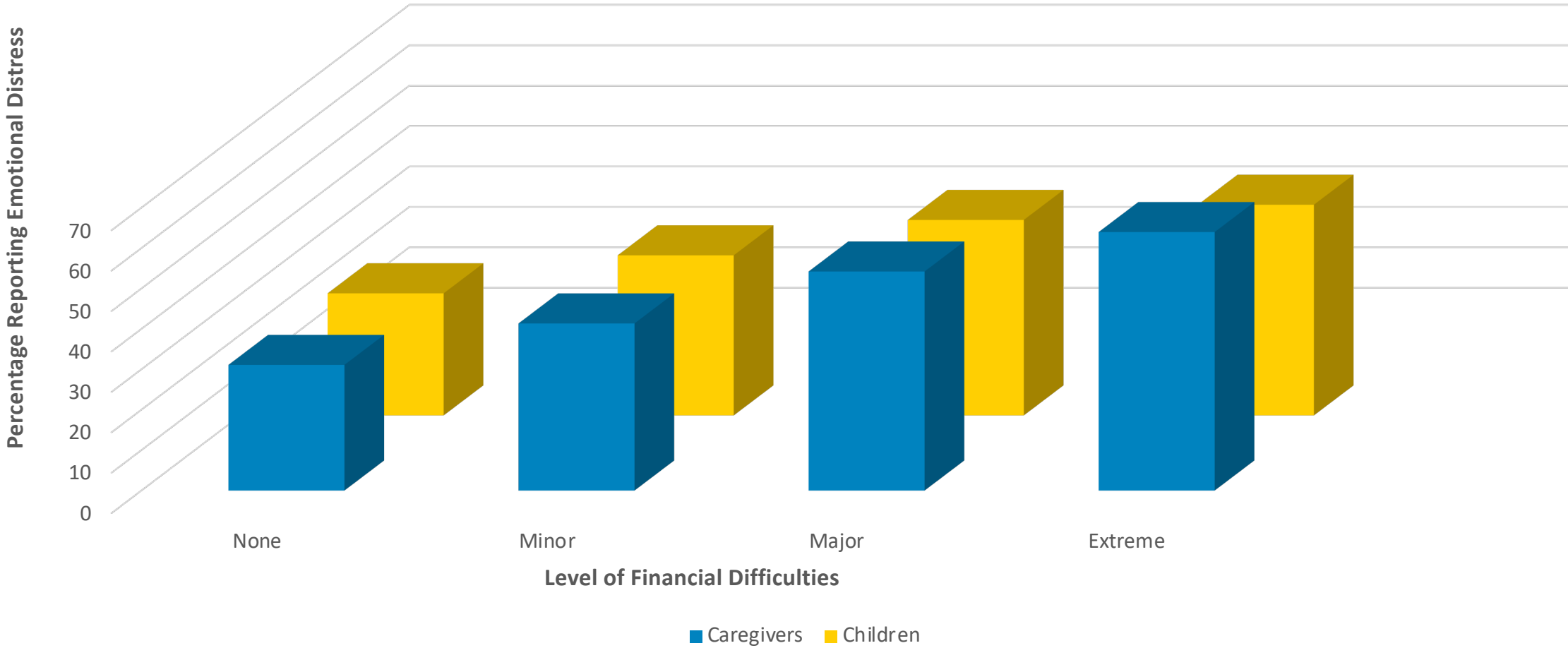


**Will the pandemic be indelibly imprinted on young children's development?**

Source: Rapid-EC Survey<sup>5</sup>

# Pandemic Hardships Lead to Emotional Distress in Families With Young Children

Caregiver and Child Emotional Distress Levels as Financial Hardships Increase





# Child Care System on the Brink of Collapse

## Child Care Providers Reported in July (*NAEYC survey*):

- 20% remained closed
- 40% of providers responding would have to close permanently without assistance
- 86% of those open were at less than full capacity—on average, about one-third of enrollment
- 70% incurred additional expenses because of COVID-19

## Parents Report Struggles with Care (*BPC/Morning Consult Survey*):

- 1 in 7 report their provider has closed permanently
- 54% of all families can't find quality care they can afford:
  - 72% of families with low income
  - 61% of rural families
- They are wary of formal programs while the coronavirus circulates:
  - 59% do not plan on sending children back to programs any time soon
  - 22% will not do so until there is a vaccine



# Policy Solutions that Build for the Future

## Child Care:

- Comprehensive, high-quality system that compensates EC educators for highly skilled work

## Early Head Start:

- Expanded funding to serve all eligible infant and toddlers and reach more pregnant women

## Economic Security:

- Guarantee of living wage; child allowance through CTC with higher young child credit; promote equity in accumulating nest eggs for children through mechanisms like Baby Bonds

## Transformed Pediatric Care:

- Holistic approach to supporting families and child development in a trusted setting

## Family Security:

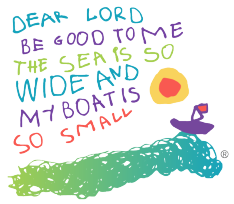
- Permanent Paid Family and Medical Leave, Paid Sick Days
- Other workplace protections such as Fair Work Schedules and Pregnant Workers Protections

## Family Support:

- Robust funding for broad-based family support networks in communities to strengthen families
- Transformed child welfare policies for infants and toddlers to promote child and family wellbeing

# 2020 Census Will Shape Children's Services in the Future

- **The entire 2020 count is imperiled, but young children are in even more danger of being left out**
  - In 2010, about 2.2 million children < 5 were missed--about 10% of that age group.
  - Children most likely to be missed? The same groups most likely to live in poverty, experience homelessness, and live with stress
- Roughly **300 federal programs** use Census data to allocate more than **\$675 billion** each year
  - These programs **help families meet their basic needs** in terms of good health, strong families, and positive early learning experiences
- **Consequences of an undercount of children:**
  - overcrowded classrooms
  - child care even scarcer in some states
  - fewer children served by special education services
  - Reduced access to health care
- **What can we do?**
  - Encourage our networks to fill out the Census and reach out to undercounted populations
  - Support legislation to push back the hurried deadline for ending Census follow-up



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