

KAMALA'S CHILDREN'S AGENDA

Kamala believes you should judge a society by the way it treats its children. And we know there's a lot at stake for them in this election. Every decision we make has a profound impact on our nation's youngest, most vulnerable residents. Whether it's improving our education system, ensuring access to health care and mental health treatment, protecting the environment, overhauling our criminal justice system, reforming our immigration policies, or supporting working families, it all affects our children.

From the beginning of her career until now, one of Kamala's highest priorities has been to fight for children. She believes that each and every child deserves a fair shot at success in life and that we have a responsibility to treat the children of the community as the children of the community. As President, she will put children at the center of her decision-making and treat their needs with the same urgency and importance as we treat any other national priority.

Key aspects of Kamala's Children's Agenda include:

Economic:

- **Guarantee up to six months of paid family and medical leave for workers nationwide.**
- **Cut child poverty by over 50% in her first term.**

Physical Health and Mental Health:

- **All children - whether they live in rural or urban areas - will have access to a nurse and social worker at their school.**
- **Invest in mental health and trauma-informed care, and provide toxic stress screenings for every child in the country.**

Criminal Justice Reform:

- **Stop the treatment of children as adults in the criminal justice system.**
- **Keep families together.** Unlike what Trump has done in immigration to lock up babies in cages and separate families, Kamala believes that we must strive to do the opposite and keep families together where possible.

Accountability:

- **Create a Bureau of Children and Family Justice to ensure Kamala's Children's Agenda gets done.**

HERE'S HOW SHE'LL DO IT

Create Equal Opportunity for All Children from Day One: Our nation's education system is supposed to be an engine of opportunity. Unfortunately, this is far from the reality for too many of our students, particularly low-income and rural students, students of color, and students with disabilities. Addressing this inequity requires a comprehensive approach that ensures all children have the opportunity to thrive from their earliest years. Kamala believes that meaningful access to education is a fundamental civil right, and, as President, she will continue to fight for all children to have access to a full continuum of early care and learning, and a safe, high-quality public education.

- **She'll guarantee up to six months of paid family and medical leave for all working people.**
 - Every year, millions of working families need to take time away from work to welcome a new child into their family or to address their own or a family member's serious illness. While the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) requires certain employers to provide up to 12 weeks of job-protected leave, that leave does not have to be paid and does not cover [about 40 percent of the workforce](#). In fact, only [19 percent of workers](#) currently have access to paid family leave and it is all up to their employer's discretion. For too many workers, particularly low-income workers and [workers of color](#), this sets up an impossible choice between caring for their family and their economic security.
 - Our nation must finally recognize the importance of paid leave and ensure that it provides sufficient time for healthy outcomes. In the case of new parents, [research](#) shows that a minimum of six months of paid leave offers parents the most benefits in terms of bonding with their children, attending well-baby doctor's visits and getting vaccinations, breastfeeding for a sustained period of time, and arranging for high-quality child care. Paid leave also helps defray the [high cost](#) of infant care, reduces [racial disparities](#) in maternal and infant mortality, and promotes [gender equality](#) in the workplace and at home. Without paid leave, nearly [1 in 4 mothers](#) return to work within two weeks of giving birth. This is simply unacceptable.
 - Paid family and medical leave can also be used to address a worker's own medical condition, or to care for a seriously ill loved one. Parents need time to care for a new baby, but also need the ability to be able to care for themselves or their families if tragedy strikes. Although [52 percent](#) of workers who use FMLA have children at home, almost two-thirds of them used leave for a reason other than new child leave. [For chronically ill children](#), for example, access to paid leave allows parents to be actively involved in their child's care and can help alleviate the financial burden that

comes with an illness like cancer. For families with children in which a parent needs to take family or medical leave, access to paid leave [reduces by half](#) the share of families that will fall below 200 percent of the federal poverty line compared to access only to unpaid leave.

- As President, Kamala will work with Congress to create a national paid leave program to provide all workers with up to six months of paid family and medical leave.
 - Paid leave can be used for:
 - a worker’s own serious health condition, including pregnancy and childbirth recovery;
 - caring for an infant or a newly-adopted or fostered child;
 - caring for a family member with a serious health condition;
 - addressing certain military caregiving and leave purposes; and
 - addressing medical and non-medical needs when a worker or a worker’s minor child or dependent has experienced domestic violence, harassment, sexual assault, or stalking.
 - Paid leave must work for diverse family structures and caregiving responsibilities. Eligible family members include a worker’s spouse or domestic partner, child (or child-in-law), parent (or parent-in-law), sibling, grandparent, grandchild, and chosen family.
 - Paid leave will be available to all workers, including public sector workers, domestic workers, part-time workers, self-employed workers, and independent contractors.
 - Low- and middle-income workers making less than \$75,000 will receive full wage replacement during their leave, with benefits phasing down for higher-income households.
 - Workers will have job protection and protection against retaliation so they won’t have to worry about job loss or other consequences when taking care of themselves or a loved one. Workers can also choose to take leave intermittently as needed.
 - Support will be available to small businesses to help cover the cost of replacement workers or overtime for other employees while an employee is out on leave, and we’ll look to best practices from state and private sector paid leave programs as a guide to help minimize disruptions for employers.

- A new Office of Paid Family and Medical Leave will be established to administer the program, including determining eligibility, authorizing benefit payments, and educating employers and employees.
- The paid leave program will be funded through a mix of employer and employee payroll contributions and general revenues, which will cover benefits, program administration, education and outreach. The federal government's portion will be paid for by [fines on corporations that fail to close their pay gaps](#) and tax increases on the top one percent and big corporations.
- As we have [learned from states](#) around the country that have successfully implemented paid family and medical leave programs, paid family and medical leave works. It is a win-win for workers, employers and the community. Research on state programs shows that, once implemented, businesses have adapted well to paid family and medical leave programs. States have demonstrated the tremendous economic and public health benefits of investing in paid leave programs, and it's time to expand it nationwide.
- **She'll expand early childhood home visiting programs.**
 - Home visiting programs partner at-risk parents and their children with nurses, social workers, early childhood educators, or other providers who regularly meet with families through home visits, delivering information and support during pregnancy and the early childhood years. [Research](#) shows that evidence-based home visiting programs, like those funded under the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program, lead to better birth outcomes, greater maternal and child health, improved childhood development and school readiness, and economic security for families.
 - As President, Kamala will ensure evidence-based home visiting is covered under her Medicare for All plan in order to expand capacity and address unmet need. While more than 300,000 families received evidence-based home visiting services [last year](#), an estimated 18 million more women and their children could benefit from these services. Under this plan, home visitors will also be prepared to meet the support needs of diverse families, including single parents, LGBTQ+ parents, and parents with disabilities.
- **She'll ensure every family has access to affordable and accessible child care.**

- In communities across the nation, child care is one of the most expensive necessities for working families — often the single most expensive item in their budget. The cost of child care has increased [25 percent](#) in the past decade. In fact, the average cost of full-time care at a child care center now [exceeds the cost of in-state tuition](#) at a public 4-year college. This is not right, and it's time we change it.
- Kamala will fight to pass the Child Care for Working Families Act to ensure no family making under 150 percent of state median income spends more than 7 percent of their income on child care. The bill would also significantly improve the compensation and training of the child care workforce so these workers have the support they need to deliver high-quality care.
- Under the Child Care for Working Families Act, [three in four children](#) under the age of 12 would be income-eligible for assistance and the median family would spend no more than \$45 a week on child care. The plan would also create an estimated [2.3 million jobs](#) by enabling more parents to join the labor force and creating new, living wage jobs in the child care and early education field.
- **She'll provide universal access to high-quality preschool for all 3- and 4-year olds.**
 - Children who participate in a high-quality preschool program are more academically and socially prepared for kindergarten than their peers who did not, and those [benefits continue throughout childhood](#). Yet, depending on where you live, the average cost of preschool ranges from [\\$4,460 to \\$13,158 per year](#). Children shouldn't fall behind in school before they even start kindergarten just because their families cannot afford preschool.
 - As part of the Child Care for Working Families Act, Kamala supports providing incentives and funding to states to create high-quality preschool programs for low- and moderate-income 3- and 4-year olds during the school day.
 - Kamala will also increase funding for Head Start and Early Head Start to ensure all eligible children are able to receive access to these successful programs. Currently, only [31 percent of eligible children](#) are able to participate in Head Start, and that number goes down to 7 percent for children eligible for Early Head Start programs. She will also look to [state](#) and local models that help build the Head Start and Early Head Start workforce.

- **She'll make public education more equitable.**
 - America's public schools are [more](#) segregated today than when Brown v. Board was decided over 60 years ago. America's highest-need districts [receive](#) less state and local funding than wealthy districts, and for districts serving mostly students of color, the gap is even wider. Resource inequality drives the race-based achievement gap, which robs students of the equivalent of [1.5](#) years of academic progress and leads to worse postsecondary and workforce outcomes for students of color and students from low-income families. We must strive for a more equitable public education system that will lead to better school and life outcomes for all children.
 - Kamala will work with states to increase opportunity and ensure that all students, regardless of their background, have equitable access to the resources they need. This includes significantly increasing Title I funding for districts serving students from low-income families, making the Title I formula more equitable, and providing incentives to states to conduct racial and resource equity audits, increase their public school spending, and adopt more equitable funding formulas. Kamala also supports the Strength in Diversity Act, which would create a federal grant program to fund racial and economic school integration efforts across the country, and will fight to pass it into law.
 - As President, Kamala will also expand the Department of Justice's Educational Opportunities Section and the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights to enforce students' civil rights under the Constitution and Federal law and combat discrimination against students on the basis of sex, national origin, language barrier, religion, or disability.
- **She'll ensure every student can learn in a safe and inclusive environment.**
 - Schools should be places where students feel safe, comfortable, and accepted, not where they are fearful of the next school shooting or subject to bullying and harsh disciplinary practices. As President, Kamala will work to enforce civil rights laws and pass new policies designed to protect every child's right to an education. She will also grant state attorneys general authority to enforce federal civil rights laws.
 - Kamala will fight to pass the IDEA Full Funding Act to make sure that students with disabilities are learning in classrooms that have funding to ensure they can get the education they deserve, which is key to long-term economic opportunity. And she'll work to increase resources to better prepare teachers to meet the needs of students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms.

- Kamala will work to make our classrooms safe for all students and educators by appropriately restricting the use of seclusion and restraint in the classroom.
 - As Attorney General, Kamala investigated publicly-funded private special education schools over these practices and established the Bureau of Children’s Justice to make sure that schools were being held accountable.
- Kamala will reinstate the U.S. Department of Education’s guidance on school discipline and increase the Office of Civil Rights’ resources to hold schools accountable for discriminatory practices in suspensions and expulsions.
 - As Attorney General, Kamala launched an investigation into the Stockton Unified School District police department over concerns of racial discrimination in school discipline and school policing, including treatment of elementary school children. CA DOJ announced a [comprehensive settlement](#) in 2019 to resolve systemic civil rights violations of African American and Latinx students and students with disabilities.
- Kamala will double the size of the Department of Justice’s Civil Rights Division, bolstering resources to appropriately enforce Title IX and protect LGBTQ+ students from discrimination and harassment in school. She will also work to pass the Student Non-Discrimination Act into law, which would establish consistent protection from discrimination, bullying, and harassment for LGBTQ+ students in public K-12 schools.
- Kamala will work to pass her [gun violence plan](#) because kids should be allowed to attend school and focus more on learning than on active shooter drills.
- **She’ll raise teacher pay.**
 - At the most fundamental level, our children are being raised by two groups of people: families and teachers. Yet, we fail to pay our teachers their value. Public school teachers earn [11 percent](#) less than similar professionals, teachers are [more likely](#) than non-teachers to work a second job, and the average teacher earns [4.5 percent less](#) today than they did a decade ago. Paying teachers for the full value of their work is also central to our student’s success. Research shows that attracting and retaining more great teachers improves student performance, increases graduation rates, and leads to higher future earnings for our kids.

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- As President, Kamala will make the largest investment in teachers in American history and provide the average teacher a \$13,500 raise, entirely closing the teacher pay gap. Her [teacher pay plan](#) will also support programs dedicated to teacher recruitment, training, and professional development—particularly at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)—to help elevate the teaching profession and address the significant underrepresentation of teachers of color.

Cut Child Poverty By Over 50%: Children in the United States disproportionately experience poverty compared to adults, jeopardizing their futures and our economy. Nearly 1 in 5 American children - [11.9 million](#) - live in poverty, and the rates are even higher for Black and Hispanic children. Child poverty can [lead to](#) poorer health, gaps in cognitive development, and lower academic outcomes, as well as increase a child's risk of hunger and homelessness. It also has long-term costs for our society: one [study](#) estimates that the cost of child poverty in the United States is \$1.03 trillion a year. In the richest country in the world, this reality is unacceptable – particularly when we know how to address it. As President, Kamala will cut child poverty by over 50% in her first term and prioritize economic policies that support these children and their families.

- **She'll sign an Executive Order to End Child Poverty and establish a Federal Interagency Working Group to coordinate federal action.**
 - Ending child poverty starts with accountability. The Executive Order to End Child Poverty will marshal the power of the federal government to address this critical issue. Housed under her new Bureau of Children and Family Justice, Kamala will also establish a Federal Interagency Working Group to End Child Poverty that will be tasked with developing and carrying out a national plan to reduce child poverty. The Working Group will start by looking to [existing proposals](#) for child poverty reduction and consulting with experts and entities providing direct services to low-income children and their families.
- **She'll increase investments in existing safety net programs and policies that work.**
 - Over the last 50 years, child poverty has been [cut in half](#) with the help of benefits like refundable tax credits, nutrition assistance, and housing vouchers. In 2017 alone, 7 million more children would have been in poverty without this assistance. Kamala believes we must build on this progress immediately, particularly for children in deep poverty.
 - Refundable tax credits like the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC) are some of the most effective tools we have for reducing child poverty and improving long-term outcomes for children. [Research](#) shows that children whose families receive the EITC and CTC are

more likely to be healthier, do better in school, attend college, and earn more as adults. Kamala supports further expanding these programs to support our poorest families.

- Kamala supports proposals like the Working Families Tax Relief Act, the American Family Act, and others that would expand the EITC for families and former foster youth; increase the CTC and make it fully-refundable; expand the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit; and create a Young Child Tax Credit to provide extra support to families with children under five, who [research](#) says need it most.
- In America, no child should ever have to wake up, go to school, or go to sleep at night hungry. Funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) food assistance program must not only be protected, but expanded to help feed our nation's most vulnerable children and help them reach their full potential.
 - Kamala will fight to pass legislation like the SNAP for Kids Act, which would increase food assistance for school-age children (5-17 years old) by \$42 per child per month, a 27 percent increase, and adjust the formula for benefit calculations to make certain that families don't fall behind as food prices rise.
 - Kamala will also work to protect and strengthen the National School Lunch and School Breakfast programs to help keep our students fed and ready to learn. And she'll work to provide children who receive free or reduced-price school meals with additional SNAP benefits over the summer to further reduce the risk of food insecurity.
- **She'll pass her LIFT Act and Rent Relief Act that will lift [millions](#) out of poverty.**
 - 40 percent of Americans don't have enough savings to cover a \$400 emergency expense. For a family, this could mean not being able to cover emergency child care if a parent is called into work or the emergency room bill for a child's broken arm. Kamala's [LIFT Act](#) would provide low- and middle-income families with a refundable tax credit of up to \$6,000 a year - or up to \$500 a month - to address the rising cost of living.
 - Additionally, the lack of affordable rental housing is a national emergency that is particularly pronounced for low-income families who face impossible choices between paying rent and meeting other basic needs. Kamala's [Rent Relief Act](#) would create a new, refundable tax credit for families spending more than 30 percent of their income on rent and utilities.
- **She'll pass her plan to close the pay gap.**

- In America today, women who work full time, year round are paid just [82 cents](#), on average, for every dollar paid to men. Closing the pay gap would have an outsized impact on children in poverty, with a [2017 analysis](#) finding that equal pay would cut the poverty rate for children with a working mother in half, lifting 2.5 million children out of poverty.
- Under the most aggressive [equal pay proposal](#) in history, Kamala will require corporations to show they're not engaging in pay discrimination, and fine companies that fail to close their pay gaps. Companies would also be required to collect and report on pay gaps, broken down by race and gender. Fines would be invested in Kamala's universal paid family and medical leave program.
- **She'll fight for workplace protections that make it easier for families to support their children.**
 - This work begins with finally increasing the minimum wage to \$15 an hour. Millions of families with children struggle to make ends meet, particularly when parents are working low-wage jobs. A parent with two children who works a full-time, minimum wage job at \$7.25 an hour earns [\\$4,669](#) below the poverty level. Reducing child poverty goes hand-in-hand with raising wages for their hard-working parents.
 - Kamala is a co-sponsor of the Raise the Wage Act, which would raise the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour, index it to median wage growth, and phase out the subminimum wage for tipped workers and workers with disabilities. As President, she will make the fight to raise the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour a top priority.
 - This means guaranteeing comprehensive paid family and medical leave, paid sick days, and fair scheduling practices for workers. These policies allow parents to spend time with their children during their earliest years, take time off to tend to a sick child or more quickly recover from a personal illness, and create a more predictable and stable home life for their children.
 - Kamala will work with Congress to enact her plan guaranteeing up to six months of paid family and medical leave to all working people.
 - Kamala will work to pass the Healthy Families Act, which allows workers to earn up to 7 paid sick days each year. Currently, [34 million](#) workers do not have access to paid sick days, and this disparity is worse for workers of color.

- Finally, Kamala will work to pass the Schedules That Work Act, which empowers workers with the right to request more flexible or predictable schedules. Unpredictable schedules are particularly harmful to the more than [6 million](#) low-wage parents, making it more difficult to arrange for child care or know if there will be enough money to make ends meet.
- This means making sure every worker is able to join a union and bargain for better wages, benefits, and conditions at their workplaces.
 - Kamala will fight to pass legislation like the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act, which bans so-called “right-to-work” laws, strengthens workers’ rights to join together and negotiate for better working conditions, and penalizes corporations that violate these rights. She also supports the Public Sector Freedom to Negotiate Act, which would ensure that public sector employees are able to exercise their rights to collectively bargain.
- And this means making sure workers who are unemployed, earning low-wages, or facing a job change are able to get the education and training they need to succeed in today’s workforce.
 - In the Senate, Kamala introduced the [21st Century SKILLS Act](#), which provides up to \$8,000 for workers who are unemployed, dislocated, or underemployed to use for skills training and other educational opportunities, including apprenticeship programs through unions, to secure good-paying jobs linked to local employment demand. These funds can also cover other costs associated with training, such as child care and transportation, to ensure families have the full support they need to access high-quality training that leads to high-quality jobs.

Ensuring Children’s Health and Safety: All children need access to affordable, comprehensive health care - including mental health treatment - that will set them on a path for healthy development. Maintaining a healthy and safe environment is also critical to children’s development, as they are especially vulnerable to environmental hazards and exposure to violence. As President, Kamala will fight to ensure every child has access to health care and can grow up in a safe and healthy environment.

- **She’ll pass her Medicare for All plan.**
 - In America, health care should be a right, not a privilege only for those who can afford it. When children have health insurance, they are more likely to get medical care and have higher health and educational outcomes. Unfortunately, [4.3 million](#) children still lack the health coverage they need to survive and thrive, and millions more face other barriers to care, such as

difficulty accessing health services and high out-of-pocket costs. Instead of expanding access to health care, the Trump Administration has threatened to block grant Medicaid and take care away from the children who most need support to obtain care. Under his watch, the number of uninsured children has grown for two years in a row, with [half a million children](#) losing health coverage between 2017 and 2018.

- Under Kamala's Medicare for All plan, all children will have access to all medically necessary health services including emergency room visits, doctor visits, hearing aids, vision, dental, mental health and substance use disorder treatment, and long-term services and supports, and these benefits will be covered with no deductibles and no copays for high-quality care. All Medicaid benefits to children, such as the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) benefit and school-based health services, will also be covered under her Medicare for All plan.
- Uninsured children and newborns will be automatically enrolled into the Medicare Transition Plan with an opt-out provision for parents who have employer-sponsored coverage. Children currently covered by the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and Medicaid will have a pathway to transition onto the Medicare Transition Plan and ultimately into the Medicare for All system after the 10-year phase in period. During this period of transition, all child-specific pediatric quality, networks, cost, and access protections and standards from Medicaid and CHIP will be incorporated into the Medicare for All plan before children are enrolled.
- Kamala's Medicare for All Plan will also have a comprehensive maternal & child health program to dramatically reduce deaths, particularly among women and infants of color. And she'll work to pass her [Maternal CARE Act](#) to address implicit bias in our health care system and ensure all moms and babies get a strong start.
- **She'll ensure all children - whether they live in rural or urban areas - have access to a nurse and social worker at their school.**
 - Access to school-based health services not only improves a child's health but also has a positive impact on absences, dropout rates, disciplinary problems, and other academic outcomes. The American Academy of Pediatrics has recognized the critical role that school nurses play in children's health and has [called](#) for a full-time nurse in every school. Yet, [40 percent of schools](#) across the country only have enough money to support a part-time nurse, and over 25 percent of schools do not employ a school nurse at all. Even fewer have social workers who can help address children's unmet physical and emotional needs that interfere with their ability to learn.

- As President, Kamala will ensure that all students have access to school-based health services and a nurse and a social worker at their school.
- She'll also create a federal grant program, [similar to the one authorized in the Affordable Care Act](#), to help schools address their capital needs like construction, renovation, and equipment so they can improve and expand physical *and* mental health care services.
- **She'll invest in trauma-informed care and ensure every child is screened for toxic stress.**
 - Children who have experienced adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) like domestic violence, abuse, and neglect are more likely to have developmental delays and health problems later in life, including diabetes, heart disease, cancer, depression, and substance use disorder.
 - As San Francisco District Attorney, Kamala helped create the Center for Youth Wellness, which is a national leader in responding to significant ACEs and toxic stress in children.
 - As California Attorney General, Kamala established the Bureau of Children's Justice, which includes a focus on childhood trauma and exposure to violence, and she led an effort to develop a statewide strategy for better serving children exposed to traumatic events.
 - As President, Kamala will increase public awareness about the prevalence and impact of ACEs and toxic stress, and the solutions that exist.
 - She'll invest in training in trauma-informed practices for health care providers; school personnel, including administrators, teachers, and specialized instructional support personnel; and others individuals interacting with children.
 - Kamala will also integrate an ACEs risk screening into the EPSDT benefit for all children under her Medicare for All plan and ensure children and families with toxic stress receive treatment to mitigate potential effects on their health. And she'll work to help expand the availability of, and access to, high-quality, evidence-based trauma services in communities across the country to ensure that children and families who need assistance are able to get it.
 - Experiencing toxic stress can also [increase the likelihood](#) of future mental health issues. Almost [one in five](#) children show signs or symptoms of a mental health disorder and [half](#) of all cases of mental illness begin by the age

of 14.

- Early diagnosis and treatment of mental illness is key; unfortunately, millions of Americans face a shortage of mental health providers. For example, over 20,000 additional child and adolescent psychiatrists are needed to meet demand for treatment of depression and other child and adolescent mental illnesses.
 - In the Senate, Kamala introduced the [Mental Health Professionals Workforce Shortage Loan Repayment Act](#) to authorize a new educational loan forgiveness program for mental health professionals that agree to practice in areas with a shortage of mental health professionals. She'll fight to pass this bill to ensure children can get mental health care when and where they need it.
- **She'll fight for a fair and just immigration system that protects immigrant children and keeps families together.**
 - Kamala believes in an America where families are kept together, not torn apart. An America where children are cared for, not kept in cages. And an America where DREAMers are finally recognized for what they are: Americans.
 - In the Senate, Kamala led the charge against President Trump's extreme anti-immigrant agenda and championed legislation to reunite families, ensure immigrants have access to legal counsel, and halt the expansion of ICE detention centers. As President, Kamala will work tirelessly to protect the physical and mental health and safety of immigrant children, keep immigrant families together, and implement her [plan](#) to provide a path to citizenship for DREAMers.
 - **She'll protect children from violence and human trafficking**
 - Since she was District Attorney, Kamala has been a leader in combating human trafficking and protecting children from violence and sexual abuse. As President, she'll invest in proven strategies to prevent and address violence against children, particularly those in the foster system.
 - President Obama and Attorney General Holder created the Defending Childhood Initiative to address childhood violence. As President, Kamala will fully implement the recommendations from the [Report of the Attorney General's National Task Force on Children Exposed to Violence](#). In addition, recognizing the unique needs and challenges that Native American children face and the federal government's role in creating those challenges, she'll make it a priority to fully implement the recommendations of the [Attorney General's Task Force on American Indian and Alaska Native](#)

[Children Exposed to Violence.](#)

- Kamala will reinstate the U.S. Department of Education’s guidance on school-based sexual violence under Title IX and require primary, secondary, and postsecondary schools across the nation to take sexual violence seriously on their campuses and ensure all students are safe to learn.
- Over [700,000 children](#) are served by the foster care system each year. Kamala will invest in evidence-based violence prevention to reduce the number of children in foster care and promote safe, healthy families and communities. She’ll work to ensure a successful transition to the Family First Prevention Services Act, which expanded states’ flexibility to use federal child welfare funding under Title IV-E for prevention services, including in-home parent skill-based interventions and mental health and substance use treatment, so that fewer children end up in foster care in the first place. In addition, she’ll fight to add \$1 billion in funding under the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) to invest in community-based, two-generation approaches to violence prevention. She’ll work to increase funding for the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program. And she’ll work to guarantee the right to counsel for children and parents in dependency proceedings.
- An estimated [60 percent](#) of child victims of human trafficking have been involved in the child welfare system. Kamala will seek additional funding under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) to prevent and address the needs of victims, especially foster youth. In addition, she’ll fight to ensure that safe harbor laws protect child victims of trafficking from being prosecuted for crimes they’re induced into committing by their abusers. An estimated [700 American children](#) are arrested for prostitution each year in the U.S. A child cannot consent to sex, so they cannot and should not ever be prosecuted for it; it’s as simple as that.
- Kamala will fight to disrupt the [sexual abuse to prison pipeline](#) for girls. The majority of girls in the juvenile justice system have been victims of sexual abuse, which too often leads to their incarceration rather than the services they need to heal. In addition to the trauma-informed screenings and comprehensive health care services described above, Kamala will invest in high-quality training for foster families and professionals in the child welfare system to prevent, identify, and respond to the needs of victims and prevent criminal justice system involvement.
- **She’ll ensure every child can grow up in a healthy environment.**
 - Kamala’s [Climate Plan for the People](#) is a comprehensive agenda to

empower all Americans as we tackle the climate crisis, build a clean economy that creates millions of family-sustaining jobs, and guarantee every person's right to breathe clean air and drink clean water. Our children are especially vulnerable to the catastrophic and life-threatening consequences of climate change, and it is our responsibility to protect their future. We must act now.

- Kamala will work to pass her [Climate Equity Act](#), which would ensure that no one, especially our nation's children, is left behind as we hold polluters accountable and put the nation on a path to a clean economy by 2045.
- Kamala will work to pass her [Clean School Bus Act](#), which would assist school districts around the country, particularly those serving low-income communities, in replacing traditional diesel school buses with new, electric buses in order to mitigate students' exposure to harmful pollutants and help address the climate crisis.
- She'll also work to pass her [Water Justice Act](#), which declares a Drinking Water Infrastructure Emergency and invests \$250 billion over the next five years to repair and replace drinking water infrastructure, provides aid to rural families to upgrade and maintain their well water and septic systems, creates a new low-income assistance program to help households pay for high drinking water and wastewater utility bills, and addresses sustainable water supply in a changing climate.
- Finally, she'll provide educators with the resources to increase climate literacy through proposals like the Climate Change Education Act and programs like NOAA Sea Grant. We must equip our students, teachers, and workforce with the knowledge and skills necessary to understand the impacts of climate change and build a clean economy.
- Kamala will also work to pass the Rebuild America's Schools Act which would fund \$70 billion in grants and \$30 billion in bonds to help address critical physical and digital infrastructure needs in schools across the country. We must ensure that our school environments are safe and secure so our children can learn and thrive.

Fighting for Children's Justice: [Several studies](#) have demonstrated that children's earliest life experiences – from nourishment and reading to poverty and exposure to violence – have profound effects on their brain development and long-term health and safety. Even later in childhood, the [brain maturity](#) of our young people is fundamentally different from adults. As a result, children must be treated differently by our government,

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from the child welfare and education systems to our criminal justice system. As President, Kamala will ensure we treat children as children in our criminal justice system, including by:

- Investing money in states and localities to end juvenile incarceration in favor of restorative justice programs and wrap-around services, except for the most serious crimes.
- Ending life sentences of children and offering opportunities for sentence reduction to young people convicted of crimes.
- Ending the transfer of children to adult prisons.
- Ending solitary confinement for children.
- Investing money in states to stop criminal charges for school-based disciplinary behavior.
- Ensuring children in the juvenile justice system have equal access to education and health care services.
- Ensuring that children exiting the juvenile justice system are enrolled in health care coverage and transitioned to care.

Leading by Example: Ensuring children are well-represented starts with leadership from the White House. As President, Kamala will create the infrastructure, transparency, and accountability necessary to elevate and act on children's priorities.

- **She'll create a Bureau of Children and Family Justice.**
 - As the Attorney General of California, Kamala created the Bureau of Children's Justice to focus on children's civil rights in the child welfare, education, and juvenile justice systems.
 - As President, she will build and expand upon that idea by creating the Bureau of Children and Family Justice, headed up by the Chief Child Advocate, to ensure family engagement in all policies impacting children and to work across agencies – and with states and localities – to implement her Children's Agenda.
 - The Chief Child Advocate will have an advisory position in the White House so children are fairly represented in presidential decision making.
 - The Bureau will also lead an Executive Branch-wide youth engagement

initiative to empower young leaders on issues of importance to them and the country, and elevate their voices in the decision-making process.

- **She'll increase transparency on federal spending on children.**
 - Even though children account for nearly [25 percent](#) of our population, the share of federal spending on children reached an all-time low last year of just [7.21 percent](#) – a 10 percent decline since 2015. The federal government spent more paying interest on our national debt than we did on our children.
 - In the Senate, Kamala introduced the [Focus on Children Act](#) to increase transparency about federal investment in the health and well-being of our children.
 - As President, Kamala will direct the Executive Branch to submit a comprehensive document outlining the impact of the President's budget and actual federal spending on children. This will provide a full picture of current investment and help inform future spending decisions.
- **She'll submit the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child to the United States Senate for ratification.**
 - The Convention on the Rights of the Child is the world's most comprehensive framework for the protection of children's rights. It includes protections for children from discrimination, violence, abuse, and neglect, and grants all children the right to health care, education, and freedom of expression. It also includes safeguards for parents to take care of their children.
 - While the United States signed the treaty nearly 25 years ago, it has never been sent to the Senate for consent and approval. The United States is now the only country that has failed to ratify the Convention. Ratifying the convention will require us to finally put children's human rights at the forefront of our laws and practices.

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