

## *The Kid Angle*

*Kid-focused news from First Focus on Children*

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**Pandemic truths to be revealed in the numbers**

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You don't have to be a geek to love the census. So many stories tucked inside all those numbers....

Next week, the U.S. Census Bureau is scheduled to drop **two very important kid stories**:

1. The impact of the pandemic — and emergency aid — on child poverty
2. The trend of children without health insurance (again, during a pandemic...)

### **First, child poverty:**

The Census Bureau's report on [2020 poverty and health insurance statistics](#), to be released Tuesday, is expected to reveal **flat or slightly increased child poverty for 2020** — nine months of which were consumed by the pandemic, job losses, school closures and other chaotic developments. Even before the pandemic, [child poverty afflicted nearly 11 million children in the U.S., or 14% — higher than nearly any other industrialized nation.](#)

But whether the figure is up, down or flat, let the record reflect how much **worse child poverty would have been in 2020 without pandemic emergency assistance.**

Columbia University's Center on Poverty and Social Policy predicted early in the pandemic that the outbreak and its economic fallout [could increase child poverty by as much as 53%](#). The rate reflected in Tuesday's census figures likely will be far lower.

### **Why?**

- Because the numbers will [account for aid](#) delivered as part of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act and the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, both passed in March 2020. [Families First provided families and children](#) with increased food and nutrition assistance. The \$2 trillion CARES Act provided [emergency unemployment insurance](#) as well as [direct cash assistance to both adults \(\\$1,200\) and children \(\\$500\), and set aside more than \\$9 billion in food assistance to keep children and families from going hungry.](#) The catch in Tuesday's figures?

**They won't even reflect Congress' single most effective move against child poverty.**

Improvements to child-related tax credits and other [key provisions contained in the American Rescue Plan](#) and supported by the [American Families Plan](#) are projected to **cut child poverty in half in 2021 alone** and have created momentum to eradicate it altogether. Black, Hispanic and Native children are likely to benefit most, making the provisions a giant step for equity. [The effect already is being felt around the country.](#)

**What we're saying is:** For the first time, maybe in history, Congress is ahead of the curve. And they must hold on to that advantage.

Even as you read this, lawmakers are sketching the details of a \$3.5 trillion budget reconciliation deal with the **power to preserve these gains**. In particular, if Congress allows the expanded Child Tax Credit to expire (as scheduled at the end of this year), [taxes will rise for the families of more than 60 million children and the child poverty rate will nearly double.](#)

It took a crisis to bring us closer than we've ever been to eradicating the moral, economic, and social stain of child poverty. This long-term problem demands the long-term solution that waits at the tip of Congress' pen. [Nearly 300 national, state and local organizations](#) have joined First Focus Campaign for Children to demand the preservation of this progress.

### **Now, Health Insurance:**

It's harder to predict the pandemic's impact on the number of children without health insurance. To recap: 2019 marked the [third year in a row that children lost coverage](#). Hispanic children were hit hardest, with an uninsured rate of 9%.

Let's hope for better news on Tuesday. Especially as the rate of [child hospitalizations due to COVID sets new records](#).

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