Children in California: Our Moral Imperative

October 8, 2020
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Our Work
Children’s Defense Fund-CA

POLICY ADVOCACY
Analyze public policy and advocate for solutions driven by racial justice at the state and county level by promoting policies and practices that result in better outcomes for children, youth and families, and challenging those that don’t.

RESEARCH JUSTICE
Conduct literature reviews and landscape analyses of current issues that address systemic inequity and the social determinants of health; provide research and evaluation design for projects that lead to ideas to address inequities.

Community-Centered Programs
Through our CDF Freedom Schools & CDF Beat the Odds programs, children and youth are given an opportunity to challenge the hegemonic narratives that erase historical injustices and blame them for the structural violence they are experiencing. We also support children and youth in achieving their college and/or career dreams.

SYSTEMS CHANGE
Ensure institutions and decision-makers collaborate with communities on the ground and adopt equitable practices; we work to create structures and opportunities that allow community voices to be amplified.
CDF-CA brings to light injustices and disparities, and works to dismantle the structurally racist systems and center our action on justice.

Source: *Grantmaking with a Racial Justice Lens* located at [Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity](http://www.racialjusticeinitiative.org)
Early Childhood Investments are Critical to Ending Child Poverty

1 in 5 of California’s Children live in poverty (Est. 1.6M)

Black, Indigenous and children of color experience poverty at higher rates compared to White children

- White: 8.9%
- African American/Black: 28.6% – 3.2x higher
- Indian/Alaska Native: 26.3% – 2.96x higher
- Hispanic/Latinx: 24.2% – 2.72x higher
- Asian American: 10% – 1.12x higher
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander: 14.4% – 1.61x higher

Source: kidsdata.org, U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (Sept. 2018)
THE FIGHT FOR ECONOMIC JUSTICE

STRENGTHENING THE SAFETY NET SYSTEMS

- CALWORKS
- CAL-FRESH
- CHILD CARE
- CAL-EITC
- PARENTAL LEAVE
- TARGETED CHILD TAX CREDIT

CLOSING THE RACIAL WEALTH GAPS

- GUARANTEED INCOME
- CHILD ALLOWANCE
- BABY BONDS
- CHILD SUPPORT

Solidarity Economics
Health Justice

Insurance Coverage
• Pre-pandemic, California currently has at least 334,034 children without insurance coverage

Children also Impacted by COVID-19
• Children with insurance are missing well-child checks and timely immunizations
• All children are affected mentally and physically by the pandemic

What’s Needed?
• Solutions that integrate services so that families have what they need to thrive
• Prioritize families in vulnerable communities by equipping medical professionals, community health workers and promotoras
• Support children’s mental health and trauma-informed care
COVID-19 Impact on Children in Custody

Education Equity Calls for:
- More robust distance learning
- More state oversight of county offices of educations’ juvenile court schools and county community schools
- More LCFF guardrails to promote districts to share decision-making with students, families and the community

Youth Justice Calls for:
- Reduction of juvenile lock-up populations by releasing: 1) all pre-adjudication youth; 2) all youth found to have committed technical probation violations, misdemeanors and low-level felonies
- Limit the number of additional youth detained & expansion of diversion programs
Choose Children for a Collective Future

California is facing $54.3 billion shortfall in this year’s operating budget but an austere budget that leaves more children and families behind is not the answer.

- By passing #Prop15 this fall, we can bring critical long-term resources to youth and communities to help all Californians thrive!

- Continued expansion of income and cash supports to reach those in deepest poverty will be critical for 2021
Thank You!

Our sincere thanks to The Early Childhood Funders for the opportunity to present the critical work of the Children’s Defense Fund-California.