



Society for Research in Child Development
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March 4th, 2025

U.S. Senate Leadership
U.S. Senate
50 Constitution Ave NE,
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear U.S. Senate Leadership and Ranking Members of the Jurisdictional Committees,

The Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) urges Senate leadership and the Ranking Members of jurisdictional Senate committees to consider the significant body of evidence regarding the potential impacts of the U.S. House of Representatives' agreed [budget reconciliation](#) cuts on social welfare, healthcare, and housing programs as well as tax reforms. These cuts would negatively impact children and families nationwide.

[SRCD](#) is a nonpartisan, multidisciplinary professional membership association representing thousands of developmental scientists. Our members' work seeks to improve the lives of children and families by exploring how individual differences and complex systems influence human behavior. Their research informs policies and practices in homes, childcare environments, schools, pediatric practices, and public policy. Their research informs policies and practices in homes, childcare environments, schools, pediatric practices, and public policy.

As the Senate continues to discuss budget reconciliation provisions, we urge evidence-based policymaking that protects children and families. Programs like Medicaid, child welfare services, and housing assistance are fundamental to meeting the basic needs of families. Research consistently shows that these programs are vital in reducing child

poverty, preventing adverse health outcomes, and ensuring children grow up in stable environments.^{1,2,3} The proposed cuts could undermine decades of progress in these areas.

Healthcare

The House-agreed budget reconciliation includes at least \$880 billion in cuts through the Energy and Commerce Committee, potentially reducing federal funding for healthcare programs that provide critical care to children and low-income families. Reductions in Medicaid funding would limit access to essential healthcare services, including preventive care, for millions of children, potentially leading to worsened health outcomes and undiagnosed conditions. As children represent a significant portion of Medicaid enrollees⁴, the loss of Medicaid funding could disproportionately harm children's access to healthcare, which is critical for their growth and development⁵.

Moreover, these cuts could also impact the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which serves families who do not qualify for Medicaid but cannot afford private insurance. Research demonstrates that children enrolled in CHIP experience better health and improved long-term developmental outcomes, particularly in underserved populations.⁶ Cuts to Medicaid and CHIP would restrict access to vital services such as immunizations, check-ups, and mental health care, jeopardizing children's health and well-being.

Preserving Access to Nutrition, Housing, and Support for Children and Families

In addition, the House-agreed proposal includes at least \$230 billion in cuts to the Agriculture Committee, potentially affecting the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). It also directs the Ways and Means Committee to allocate \$4.5 trillion in

¹ National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2019). *A roadmap to reducing child poverty*. The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/25246>

² University of California. (2019). *The long-term impact of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) on children's health*. University of California, Berkeley. <https://www.ucberkeley.edu>

³ Society for Research in Child Development. (n.d.). *Income support*. Child Policy Hub. Society for Research in Child Development. Retrieved February 28, 2025, from <https://www.srcd.org/child-policy-hub/child-policy-briefs/poverty-and-income-support/income-support>

⁴ Kaiser Family Foundation. (2022). *Medicaid's role in financing healthcare for children*.

<https://www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/medicaids-role-in-financing-health-care-for-children/>

⁵ Vivier P. M. (2005). The impact of Medicaid on children's healthcare and health. *Current opinion in pediatrics*, 17(6), 759–763. <https://doi.org/10.1097/01.mop.0000187189.89542.b5>

⁶ Society for Research in Child Development. (n.d.). *Health care*. Child Policy Hub. Society for Research in Child Development. Retrieved February 28, 2025, from <https://www.srcd.org/child-policy-hub/child-policy-briefs/health/health-care>

tax cuts, which could impact programs like Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and limit the ability to expand tax credits benefiting low- and middle-income families, such as the Child Tax Credit (CTC)⁷.

Extensive scientific research has shown that each of these programs has led to a wide range of positive outcomes for children's development, including improved birth outcomes, newborn health, child outcomes, nutrition, reductions in poverty and criminal activity, higher educational attainment and college enrollment, positive economic and health outcomes in adulthood, and even the reduction of intergenerational poverty.^{8, 9, 10, 11} ¹². Programs like the Child Tax Credit have been proven to support educational success, economic mobility, and reductions in child poverty, particularly among low-income families.^{13, 14}

SRCD Urges Bipartisan Investment in Children

As this Chamber considers the House-agreed budget reconciliation, we strongly encourage the use of evidence to guide the policymaking of this Congress. With bipartisan support, key social programs such as Medicaid, SNAP, WIC, and TANF have provided a crucial safety net for low- and middle-income families. We urge continued bipartisan investment in these programs to sustain children's well-being and promote long-term positive outcomes for families and communities.

⁷ Urban Institute. (n.d.). *How would children fare under proposed cuts to federal spending?* Urban Institute. Retrieved March 3, 2025, from <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/how-would-children-fare-under-proposed-cuts-federal-spending>

⁸Mande, J., & Flaherty, G. (2023). Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program as a health intervention. *Current opinion in pediatrics*, 35(1), 33–38. <https://doi.org/10.1097/MOP.0000000000001192>

⁹ Society for Research in Child Development. (n.d.). *Poverty*. Child Policy Hub. Society for Research in Child Development. Retrieved February 28, 2025, from <https://www.srkd.org/child-policy-hub/child-policy-briefs/poverty-and-income-support/poverty>

¹⁰ Sonchak, L. The Impact of WIC on Birth Outcomes: New Evidence from South Carolina. *Maternal Child Health J* 20, 1518–1525 (2016). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10995-016-1951-y>

¹¹ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. (2023, December 13). *SNAP is linked with improved health outcomes and lower health care costs*. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Retrieved February 28, 2025, from <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/snap-is-linked-with-improved-health-outcomes-and-lower-health-care-costs>

¹² Kirkegaard, A., & Manoli, D. A. (2014). *The effect of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program on food security and health*. *American Economic Review*, 104(4), 1301–1335. <https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.20130375>

¹³ Journal of Family and Economic Issues. (2022). *Child Tax Credit and Family Stability: Evidence from Low-Income Families*. *Journal of Family and Economic Issues*, 43(1), 67-79.

¹⁴ Society for Research in Child Development. (n.d.). *Parent supports and programs*. Child Policy Hub. Society for Research in Child Development. Retrieved February 28, 2025, from <https://www.srkd.org/child-policy-hub/child-policy-briefs/family-and-parent-programs/parent-supports-and-programs>

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us. We work with Congressional offices regularly to help them create evidence-based policies to improve the lives of our nation's children and youth. We are always happy to help connect your office with experts who can give you nonpartisan advice on the science behind your work.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Suzanne Le Menestrel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Suzanne" and last name "Menestrel" clearly legible.

Suzanne Le Menestrel, PhD., CAE
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