

NATIONAL  
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SERVICE  
INTEGRATION

WORKING  
PAPER

# Philanthropy, Advocacy, Vulnerable Children, and Federal Policy: Three Essays on A New Era of Opportunity

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## NATIONAL CENTER FOR SERVICE INTEGRATION

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In June 1995, the Child & Family Policy Center (CFPC) assumed responsibility to produce and disseminate NCSI publications. Although federal funding for NCSI has ended, NCSI continues to produce resource briefs, guidebooks, working papers, and other publications on issues communities and states face in developing more comprehensive community-based service systems. The work of NCSI has been supported by various foundations, including the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

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# FOREWORD

The three essays in this resource brief represent a broad view on both the past and potential future roles for philanthropy and child advocacy in influencing federal policy, as we move into a new political era.

The first part includes an essay about philanthropy and federal policy. It represents a longer version of the first part of a report, *The Rearview Mirror and the Road Ahead*, commissioned by Grantmakers for Children, Youth, and Families (GCYF) and used in their strategic planning process. *The Rearview Mirror and the Road Ahead*, available on GCYF's website, includes GCYF's own recommendations for action and deserves reading in its own right.

Since I wrote this essay in October, 2008, much has changed. President Barack Obama was elected President, the country has moved into a deep recession, and the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress has responded by enacting a Federal Recovery and Reinvestment Act that includes major new investments in children and families and is only beginning to be implemented. Although overshadowed by the enormity of the fiscal crisis in the country and the fiscal magnitude of the response, I believe there also is a new direction evident in the administration's approach to child and family policy that deserves philanthropic and advocacy attention. I have not revised the first essay to take into account these changes, but I have included a second essay that provides my perspective on shifts in thinking about child policy and government services. I have

included a third essay outlining the current status of investing in child advocacy and the gaps that philanthropy could fill. I believe that the biggest "missing piece" in developing the federal policies and investments our children deserve is in supporting the advocacy and mobilization necessary to make this happen.

These essays reflect much of my own journey over the last two decades. I thank Stephanie McGensey-Washington and Renee Carl at GCYF for offering me the assignment for the first essay, providing guidance and editorial support, and using much of the resulting materials in GCYF's strategic planning. I also thank Barbara Blum, Cornelia Grumman, Cheryl Hayes, Luba Lynch, Benita Melton, Christine Robinson, Ann Rosewater, and Lois Salisbury for consenting to interviews and providing valuable perspectives on the origin of the 1992 Memorandum, the development of philanthropy and federal policy since that period, and future challenges and opportunities. The specific quotes from these interviews only hint at the richness of their perspectives. The Urban Institute was gracious in sharing unpublished data from its excellent report on federal spending on children over the last half century and represents a model for professional collegiality.

The second part and the essays on child policy advocacy have been shaped by my own work with wonderful child advocacy colleagues across the country. I was fortunate to chair the Member Leadership Council of Voices for America's

Children in 2008, during a very exciting period of time. My work with Voices national staff and with member leaders, as well as leaders of other national child advocacy organizations, clearly enriched my thinking and provided me much richer insights.

Clearly, all the views, conclusions, and opinions expressed are my own and not necessarily those of GCYF, Voices for America's Children and its member leaders, or any of those interviewed as a part of the work. In fact, I hope that the essay will foster energetic dialogue about where philanthropy and federal policy should head in meeting the needs of all, but particularly our most vulnerable, children.

Charles Bruner, Director  
Child and Family Policy Center  
March 2009

Part One:

## **Philanthropy and Federal Policy**





# Executive Summary

## **The 1992 Federal Policy Landscape for Children, Youth, and Families**

In 1992, 41 foundations jointly authored and published a *Memorandum to President-Elect Clinton and the New Administration* outlining the vulnerability of too many of America's children, youth and families and calling for a closer partnership between government and philanthropy in addressing their needs. A year earlier, the Commission on Children issued its report, *Beyond Rhetoric*, that called for many of the same reforms to children, youth, and family policy outlined in the foundation-signed Memo.

The 1992 election was about “change,” and these two documents sought to respond to changes in the condition of children, youth, and families that included increases in single, adolescent parenting and youth violence as well as an overall increase in poverty among children, despite dramatic increases in the workforce participation of mothers. They called for changes to America's welfare policy to emphasize personal responsibility and work, changes to tax policy to better support working families, health care reform to ensure child health coverage, and modifications to many social programs to be more coordinated, preventive, and comprehensive in meeting child, youth, and family needs.

These recommendations also were based on the emergence of different programs and initiatives, some led by foundations, that showed promise in improving child outcomes. At that time,

foundations had only begun to work together and their overall grantmaking was about the quarter of the size it is today. Foundation leaders envisioned an increased role for grantmaking not only in supporting innovative programs and services, but also in influencing state and federal policy.

## **Federal Action on Children, Youth, and Families Under the Clinton and Bush Administrations**

While vulnerable children, youth, and families have never been a major Presidential campaign theme, the 1992 election did include significant focus upon both health and welfare policy.

President Clinton and his administration undertook a number of reforms to children, youth, and family policy that drew upon both public opinion and research. This included replacing the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program with the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) block grant, expanding the Earned Income Tax credit, and establishing a child tax credit. The Clinton administration increased funding for child care and Head Start and, while unsuccessful in enacting broad-based health care reform, established the State Child Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) that has been credited with providing health coverage for millions of children. The Clinton administration made significant moves toward more preventive and comprehensive approaches to child welfare through the Adoption and Safe Families Act

In both the Clinton and Bush administrations, the largest increases in funding for children came through the tax code.

and introduced 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Centers to expand the role of schools in supporting youth. Overall, investments in children, youth, and families grew substantially during the Clinton years, with the largest share of the new funding in tax policies benefiting working families with children.

Many of these initiatives continued through the Bush administration. During his first term in office, President Bush worked with Congress to enact the bipartisan No Child Left Behind Act, which involved substantial increased federal funding for education designed to reduce disparities in educational outcomes as well as improve results for all children. The Bush administration expanded tax cuts, particularly the child tax credit, for working families.

In terms of social policy, the Bush administration placed a new emphasis upon faith-based initiatives, including supporting community-based organizations in building capacity to secure federal and other funding support. Mentoring programs, adolescent pregnancy reduction programs, and ex-offender re-entry programs represented significant new emphases for the federal government. While the last several years of the Bush administration resulted in very little real growth in federal spending on children overall and actual cuts to discretionary programs, there was significant overall real spending growth on children, youth, and family programs during the Bush administration as well as the Clinton administration.

In both the Clinton and Bush administrations, the largest increases in funding for children came through the tax code, in expansions to the EITC and the child tax credit, the latter very definitely focused upon middle-class families. At the same time, real spending growth occurred all areas of federal child funding – Head Start and child care, child welfare services, education funding, and health care for children. A number of federal initiatives were developed to create more comprehensive, coordinated, and community-based responses to improve children youth, and family results that crossed agency boundaries.

### **Foundation Advances on Children, Youth, and Families from 1990 to 2008**

Over the same period, foundations dramatically expanded their own work on policy-related activities, including an increasing number of efforts financed by multiple foundations. This included efforts to track and inform federal policy through the Assessing the New Federalism Initiative, the Federal Enterprise Zone and Empowerment Community Initiative, and the Covering Kids Initiative. Foundations advanced the knowledge base on developing effective services and state and community policies in a number of areas:

- *Results measurement and outcome-based accountability*, including the Annie. E. Casey Foundation’s signature Kids Count Initiative;
- *Brain development and early childhood emphases*, including a series of initiatives from 1990 to the present with direct policy implications (the Children’s Initiative,

The discussion regarding struggling families has moved from addressing abuses in the system to supporting working parents in raising their children.

- Starting Points, Sparking Connections, Build, Strengthening Families through Early Care and Education, and the School Readiness Indicators Initiative);
- *Youth development initiatives*, including several directly linked to policy (Middle School Grade State Policy Initiative, Models for Change, the After-School Alliance, and Full Service Schools) and others focused upon child welfare reform (Family Preservation Services Initiative, Community Partnership for Protecting Children, Family-to-Family Initiative, and Families for Kids);
  - *Place-based initiatives* designed to improve children, youth, and family outcomes on a community-level through comprehensive neighborhood strategies (Neighborhood Improvement Initiative, Ventures Communities, and Making Connection); and
  - *Communications and evidenced-based advocacy* efforts designed specifically to influence both state and national policy (State Fiscal Analysis Initiative, Finish Line Initiative, Pre-K Now, the Birth to Five Policy Alliance and First Five Years Fund).
- Results as a driving force for change;
  - The early years as an opportunity for investment in prevention and healthy developmental;
  - Comprehensive and community-based approaches that cut across individual agency and department funding as a means to address the needs of vulnerable children, youth, and families; and
  - Communications and advocacy as elements necessary to secure investments and policy change in evidenced-based programs and strategies.

### **2008 Issues Facing Children, Youth and Families – Similarities and Differences from the 1992 Policy Landscape**

Since 1992 and in some measure due to both foundation and federal actions, there have been significant gains on some child outcome areas – notably adolescent parenting and youth violence have both declined. The size of the welfare population has declined substantially, and the discussion regarding struggling families has moved from addressing abuses in the system to supporting working parents in raising their children.

At the same time, however, there also have been other trends that place new demands and challenges on federal and state governments:

- *Persistence of poverty and growing gaps in income and wealth*, with continued high rates of child poverty compared with other age groups, and a growing separation between

While joint federal and foundation funding of initiatives rarely occurred, throughout this period foundation efforts informed and often influenced federal policy development and investment. In looking back, many of the major recommendations in both the Memo and *Beyond Rhetoric* were enacted and funded. Philanthropy, in particular, expanded its policy focus, with an increasing emphasis upon:

those at the top of the income and wealth strata with the rest of the population;

- *Growing diversity in the U.S. population*, with children leading the way and much more diverse than the adult, and particularly the older American, population, and projections for continued growth in diversity, with implications for all systems that serve children and youth;
- *Aging of society and resulting demands upon federal funding*, particularly around expenditures for retirement and for health care, with Medicare and social security expenditures growing at rates with serious implications to all other domestic spending, including those for children and youth;
- *Incarceration and family viability*, with the growth in incarceration having profound effects on the African American community, in particular; and
- *Continued geographic segregation*, with inner-city neighborhoods housing many of the poorest and most vulnerable children and youth, with limited access to opportunities for growth and achieving the American dream.

Issues of diversity and equity, in particular, are ones that must become more prominent on the foundation and policy landscape, both for children and society's future.

### **2009 as Year of Potential Convergence for Philanthropy and Federal Policy**

Over the last two administrations, philanthropy

has played a significant role in shaping federal policy, which can be used as a basis for examining its future role and opportunities.

Potential roles for philanthropy include:

- *Supporting effective practice and facilitating growth*, a traditional philanthropic role that can fill specific program and service niches;
- *Knowledge building on effective strategies*, particularly in testing new approaches to service design and delivery that can then be incorporated into public policy;
- *Building public system capacity and leverage systems change*, focusing upon engaging and supporting public systems, particularly at the state and community level, in making systems changes through supporting the necessary infrastructure to do so; and
- *Communications and political mobilization*, supporting evidenced-based advocacy and public messaging that is needed to create the public will and support to secure federal investment and policy change.

While all are important, the challenges confronting society and government in ensuring the healthy development of children, youth and families, coupled with the growing understanding of effective strategies to address them, suggest that foundations have a particularly key role to play in supporting evidenced-based advocacy. Ultimately, the investments needed in children, youth, and families must come through government; there simply is not enough funding in the private, foundation sector to meaningfully impact child,

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youth, and family outcomes on a population level.

In making such investments, foundations also need to be strategic and strengthen their and government's thinking and investments on the following:

- *Outcome accountability*, not only of individual programs and strategies but of the systems designed to meet children, youth, and family needs;
- *Sustainability*, ensuring that sufficient public funding is made available to continue proven, evidenced-based programs;
- *Public-private partnerships*, where foundation funding is used to leverage public investments and to support the infrastructure development needed to ensure their effectiveness;
- *Approaches to building resiliency*, including expanded efforts to use public funding to support resiliency, reciprocity, and community initiative as well as professional services;
- *Commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion*, continuing to place a focus upon reducing disparities and establishing strategies that are committed to achieving equity and inclusiveness in a growingly diverse society; and
- *Placed-based strategies*, building upon past efforts to seek solutions at the neighborhood as and community as well as the individual child or youth level.

# Introduction

In December 1992, through the coordination of Grantmakers for Children, Youth, and Families (GCYF), 41 foundations jointly authored and published *Vulnerable Children and Families: Philanthropic Perspectives on New Collaborations: A Memorandum to President-Elect Clinton and the New Administration* (the Memo).<sup>1</sup>

The Memo outlined the vulnerability of too many of America's children, youth and families; the lessons learned from Foundation programs and initiatives to better these children's lives; and the implications of these lessons to federal policy development. The document closed with an offer to establish a closer partnership between government and philanthropy, including establishing a White House liaison to advance collaboration and create opportunities for blending discretionary federal and philanthropic funds to create more comprehensive initiatives for families.

The Memo was developed by leaders within the philanthropic community bringing colleagues together to discuss and debate the role of foundations in influencing federal policy. Some foundations participating in the discussions declined to sign onto the final memorandum, but generally agreed that the process helped better raise key issues regarding philanthropy's role in larger social and governmental change.

The 1992 election itself was about "change." For vulnerable children, youth, and families,

there was growing public recognition that across-the-board tax reductions, block granting, and devolution had not reduced inequities and disadvantage. There was increasing recognition and press attention to high rates of adolescent and single parenting, school failure, and youth delinquency. The Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program, which had been the bedrock of America's welfare program for 30 years, was viewed as a failure by the public, by both political parties, and even by the majority of the families it was designed to serve. The new administration offered hope of providing change and a new direction in federal social welfare policy.

In many respects, the 2008 election also was about "change." There are many similarities – but there are important differences, as well – between 1992 and 2008. This essay tracks some of the changes – within philanthropy, within federal policy, and among vulnerable populations – that have occurred through this period and suggests new challenges and opportunities for philanthropy in the coming years.

# The 1992 Federal Policy Landscape for Children, Youth and Families

The 1992 federal policy landscape itself was an outgrowth of prior social and federal policy changes, particularly over the previous 12 years of the Reagan and Bush administrations. During that period, the “liberal welfare state” was under increasing attack, as a cause and not a solution to many social problems. Social conservatives pointed to the rise in adolescent childbearing and single parenting as a consequence of permissive public policies and generous welfare benefits which contradicted American values of hard work, personal responsibility, and responsible parenting.<sup>2</sup> While adolescent parenting rates had actually declined during much of this period,<sup>3</sup> the likelihood of adolescent mothers being married at the time of childbirth had declined dramatically, and declining birth rates among older women meant that the proportion of all births to unmarried adolescent women had increased substantially. Between 1960 and 1990, as highlighted in a Carnegie Commission report describing the “quiet crisis” affecting young children, the percent of all births to unmarried women had risen from 5 percent to 28 percent of births, and the rate of single parenting had risen from 10 percent to 25 percent of all households with children.<sup>4</sup>

Although the real benefits that poor families on AFDC received actually declined by more than one-third in the 1980s, as most states chose not to adjust benefit levels to account for inflation, both the AFDC rolls and public costs for the program increased in the 1980s. Moreover, while more single parent families actually were

in the workforce in 1990 than were working in 1970, the workforce participation of mothers in two-parent households had doubled during that period, due in large measure to declining real wages.<sup>5</sup> In 60 percent of married couple families with young children both parents were in the workforce, which made it difficult to justify monthly welfare payments to enable single parents to remain at home. States, perhaps best personified by Wisconsin, were seeking fundamental changes to the structure of AFDC and other social welfare programs – including time limits, work requirements, and emphasis upon personal responsibility as part of a family’s social contract with the state.

At the same time, the poverty rate among children, after a decade of very significant decline in the 1960’s, had risen from 15 percent of all children in 1970 to 20 percent of all children in 1990. In 1975, children passed seniors as the age group in society most likely to be poor, and the gap grew from that point to 1990, when children were nearly twice as likely as seniors to be poor.<sup>6</sup>

While AFDC and other federal safety net programs could not make claims to lift families out of poverty or into self-sufficiency in the 1970s and 1980s, there also was a general sense that many social programs were ineffective or even helped to perpetuate dependency. Lisbeth Schorr’s 1988 book, *Within Our Reach, Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage*, heartened many social activists by describing social interventions

that did make a difference in vulnerable children's lives.<sup>7</sup> Still, these exemplary programs were sometimes represented as exceptions to the rule and generally had not moved from pilot or demonstration projects to mainstream practice.<sup>8</sup>

During this same period, some high visibility foundation initiatives were exploring comprehensive, community-based approaches to poverty reduction, youth development, and school readiness and success, in part based upon applying the attributes of effective programs that Schorr's book described. These efforts were reaching beyond purely private sector efforts to seek to engage public sector support, primarily at the community level. The Annie E. Casey Foundation commenced its five city New Futures Initiative in 1987 designed to support comprehensive community and school efforts to improve school graduation, reduce adolescent parenting, and reduce youth unemployment.<sup>9</sup> The Carnegie Corporation was beginning its own major youth initiative, the Middle Grade School State Policy Initiative, after highlighting the needs of youth in a seminal report, *Turning Points*.<sup>10</sup> The Kellogg Foundation was completing the first five years of its Youth Initiative Partnership, launched in 1987 and working within five Michigan communities to strengthen youth development.<sup>11</sup> Communities that Care, an approach to preventing youth drug involvement through strengthening protective and reducing risk factors, was beginning to be initiated in different communities. Cities

in Schools (later to become Communities in Schools) continued to grow as a comprehensive approach to meeting both the educational and social needs of students. With respect to younger children, the Pew Charitable Trusts was in the process of developing its Children's Initiative to provide for a system of inclusion for young children that would improve their health, family stability, and school readiness within distressed urban communities.<sup>12</sup> The Carnegie Corporation was in its initial planning stages to highlight "the quiet crisis" facing America's youngest children and develop its Starting Points work.<sup>13</sup> While foundations continued to provide funding for individual programs focused upon the needs of vulnerable children and youth, there were increasing efforts to create links to local governments in planning, implementation, and eventual scale-up and sustainability.

At the federal level, recognizing the challenges facing both poor and middle-class children, Congress established the bipartisan National Commission on Children in 1987 "to serve as a forum on behalf of the children of the Nation." In 1991, the Commission, chaired by Senator John D. Rockefeller of West Virginia, issued its final report, *Beyond Rhetoric: A New American Agenda for Children and Families*.<sup>14</sup>

In a unique collaboration between the executive branches at the federal and state levels to address the country's educational needs, President George H. W. Bush and the nation's 50 governors, led by then Arkansas Governor Bill



The struggles of the middle class during this period also were paramount in the federal policy landscape.

Clinton, met in Charlottesville, Virginia in 1989 to fashion seven National Education Goals that were announced in 1990.

These actions all began to raise public visibility on the issues of vulnerable children, youth, and families and the federal government's role in addressing them, framed in terms of long-term societal viability and well-being. They contrasted America's poverty, single parenting, infant mortality, student achievement, and school completion rates with those of the nation's trading partners and competitors. They pointed to America's future as inextricably linked to the education, health, and productivity of the children who would become the country's 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce.

In addition, these actions embraced, explicitly or at least implicitly, an approach that reflected government's partnership role with families and communities, a preventive approach to social problems based upon families taking the first and foremost personal responsibility in raising their children.

In the end, *Beyond Rhetoric* recommended more than \$50 billion annually in new federal investments, with \$40 billion reflected in a \$1,000 refundable child tax credit on the federal income tax, \$9.1 billion for expanded health programs, and the rest for a relatively small amount for social programs, the majority for expansions to Head Start and compensatory education programs.<sup>15</sup> In order to gain bipartisan

Commission support, however, there was very limited recommended additional federal funding or investment in the types of social interventions that were highlighted in *Within Our Reach* or under development within such foundation initiatives as New Futures, Turning Points, the Youth Partnership Initiative, the Children's Initiative, or Starting Points – although there were policy recommendations for changes in existing federal programs to reflect more holistic, community-based practice.

The struggles of the middle class during this period also were paramount in the federal policy landscape. Married couple families responded to declining real wages over this period by working more, with both parents in the workforce even when their children were very young. The availability and affordability of child care was emerging as a major middle-class concern. Rising health care costs threatened family economic stability and security. America's employer-based health insurance system was under strain, with rising costs, and this was reflected most in the provision and costs for family coverage. Congress and the President had responded in the 1980s by decoupling Medicaid eligibility from AFDC eligibility in order to provide avenues for low-income pregnant women and children to receive health coverage, but, even with these efforts, in 1991 one-quarter (8.3 million) of the estimated 32 million uninsured Americans were children.<sup>16</sup>

Meanwhile, as Arkansas Governor, President-

President Clinton promised activism in meeting the needs of the future generation, but under a different social compact than had given rise to many of the preceding government social welfare programs.

Elect Bill Clinton had been a proponent of expanding prevention and school readiness programs while at the same time reforming public welfare programs to be time-limited and based upon work expectations and supports. His Presidential platform for children and families was based upon government providing opportunity through education and training and selected government supports for health coverage and tax relief, and parents taking personal responsibility for bettering themselves and meeting their children's needs. President Clinton promised activism in meeting the needs of the future generation, but under a different social compact than had given rise to many of the preceding government social welfare programs.

### **The Grantmakers for Children, Youth, and Families 1992 Memorandum**

It was within this context that Grantmakers for Children, Youth, and Families (GCYF) convened colleagues to discuss philanthropy's role in federal policy development. The GCYF *Memorandum* was produced shortly after the 1992 election of President Clinton, but was based upon considerable deliberation, work and dialogue among foundation leaders in the months preceding the election. At the time, these foundation leaders saw the opportunity for new roles for philanthropy and its relationship to federal policy. The document itself spoke to the opportunities for both the federal government and foundations "to foster innovation and reform on behalf of vulnerable children and families,"<sup>17</sup>

with a particular emphasis upon comprehensive services and family economic security.

At the time of the Memo, there were limited joint foundation efforts or collaborations in existence to tackle important children, youth, and family issues. Foundations were only beginning to work collaboratively with one another; GCYF itself was a relatively new venture. On an annual basis, philanthropies provided about \$11 billion in giving at the start of the new administration, one-quarter the amount they provide today.<sup>18</sup> Of the amount given today, 57 percent (\$24.5 billion) is devoted to health, education, and human services.<sup>19</sup>

Still, foundations had engaged in some foundation-government collaborations, particularly at the community level, related to low-income children, youth, families and communities. The Memo provided a particular frame of the lessons learned from foundation experiences that could be applied to federal policy and action:

- Prevention is more effective and less costly than responding to consequences and crises through expensive treatments and remediation.
- Successful interventions ensure that children's basic developmental needs are met in the family and in out-of-home setting such as child care and preschool programs.
- Successful strategies give attention both to family income security and to

comprehensive services for dealing holistically with family and community needs.

- Current welfare policy must be replaced by new policies that provide for incentives to work, for strengthening families and for comprehensive approaches to services.
- Local empowerment and community and economic development are vital for improving outcomes for low-income children and families.
- In the best of interventions, families are involved as an active partner in the design and implementation of services intended for them and their children.<sup>20</sup>

The Memo continued by focusing upon two policy issues that merited priority attention: strengthening family income security and advancing comprehensive services.

To strengthen family income security, the Memo emphasized “a combination of strategies to lift working families above the poverty line,” which were primarily economic and specifically including expanding the earned income tax credit, creating a child tax credit, increasing the minimum wage, transforming the child support system, and increasing federal support for the JOBS program.<sup>21</sup> Investments in child care were not explicitly mentioned, although child care was acknowledged as an economic factor placing some families at risk. While there was some mention of racial gaps in child poverty, race, language, and immigration were barely

mentioned as major policy concerns.

Regarding advancing comprehensive services, the Memo made particular note of the “categorical and linear service delivery” structure associated with most federal funding and the need for more comprehensive and holistic approaches to service delivery. While foundation-sponsored initiatives were showing promise in developing more integrated and comprehensive approaches, the memorandum noted “such activities have been undertaken largely in the absence of nurturing federal policy or administrative change.”<sup>22</sup> The Memo called for a new form of service provision that would address many of the deficiencies that had been cited at the time – that current systems were too reactive, arbitrary, fragmented, deficit-based, and crisis-oriented to be a good match with what vulnerable families needed in supports to protect and raise their children.<sup>23</sup>

The federal government had not been without any activity in this area, however. In the Comprehensive Child Development Act of 1988, Congress created a Comprehensive Child Development Grant program involving 21 community initiatives to deliver comprehensive services to vulnerable young children and their families, patterned after the Center for Successful Child Development (also known as the Beethoven Project) in the Robert Taylor Homes in Chicago that had been developed and supported by the Harris Foundation. This initiative also had a federal evaluation

The concluding recommendation of the Memo was for a new relationship between the federal government and philanthropy.

component, which ultimately proved to be discouraging to advocates of family support.<sup>24</sup> The concluding recommendation of the Memo was for a new relationship between the federal government and philanthropy – a partnership that would advance innovation and demonstration activities, particularly to develop comprehensive solutions to the needs of vulnerable children, families, and communities. The specific measures for doing so were to:

- Establish in the White House a lead person responsible for developing and advancing opportunities for collaborations between government and the philanthropic sector.
- Explore opportunities for using federal discretionary funds of \$50 million to \$100 million for demonstration projects in which foundations join government in advancing innovation.
- Create an executive/legislative/private sector task force responsible for improving policy to enhance current efforts and develop new comprehensive initiatives for families.<sup>25</sup>

Although these specific recommendations were not adopted, much experimentation and significant innovation have taken place both at the federal level and within foundations to strengthen family economic security and to advance comprehensive services much along the lines of the 1992 Memo, which itself had much in common with the work of the Commission on Children.<sup>26</sup> Many federal and philanthropic actions have advanced in these directions, although not necessarily of a magnitude to

fully address needs, meet demand, or counter other demographic trends. The 1992 Memo embodied much of the thinking of the time regarding the federal role in making needed actions to better serve vulnerable children, youth, and families. Actions taken over the ensuing two administrations have followed the journey spelled out in significant measure in the memorandum and produced their own lessons learned, along with new challenges and opportunities.

## Historical Perspectives on Philanthropy and Public Policy\*

The development of the *Memorandum* was a little controversial – in 1992 it was unusual for Foundations to take positions on political and policy matters. It also was unusual for foundations to collaborate. Since then, there have been more foundation collaborative efforts and a growth in the emphasis upon policy development and implementation, particularly at the state level. Foundations also have played a key role in research and evaluation, but more work is needed in distilling research and its policy implications. The *Memorandum* itself was evidence of a growing effort within philanthropy to look systemically at children and their policy needs. – Barbara Blum

*At the time of the Memorandum, GCYF was only emerging, with a part-time staff and only the beginning development of foundation affinity groups. Barbara Blum was instrumental in facilitating a lengthy process of dialogue among GCYF members on examining foundation roles in supporting public policy for children. The Memorandum was valuable in creating dialogue on important foundation strategic issues. Since that time, GCYF has grown and foundation collaborative efforts have developed in multiple areas, including a number of joint projects and initiatives focused upon children, youth, and families.*  
– Christine Robinson

At the time of the *Memorandum*, the philanthropic map was small in terms of public awareness and recognition related to children's issues and policy – Ford, Carnegie, and Rockefeller. Interestingly, there is a much broader field today, although the initial philanthropic brand names are no longer as active. While there are many more foundations today involved in child issues and the policy implications, there also has not been the convening or facilitating effort to produce a national foundation perspective or presence on the direction of philanthropy and policy. – Lois Salisbury

*The Memorandum was developed at a time before funding collaboratives had become a way of life. The impetus for the Memorandum in part was because of an expectation that there would be some people going into the Clinton administration who could use the memorandum and the foundation community to leverage administrative policy actions, although that did not prove to be the direct case. The statement was useful for those who wrote it and helped strengthen collaborative thinking, but it was more important for the process of coming together than for the specific recommendations it contained.* – Luba Lynch

CGYF played an instrumental early role in getting foundations to interact with one another, and the *Memorandum* was an outgrowth of that interaction. While pooling of foundation and federal funds or a white house liaison did not emerge, there was a great deal more intentionality in foundation work to examine policy connections and often to inform federal policy initiatives, and particularly state policy initiatives, as a result. Foundation collaboratives also often emphasized the need for data and research and a focus upon results that contributed to federal policy work, as well. At least during the Clinton administration, there was an exchange of ideas and knowledge across foundation and federal initiatives that was synergistic. – Ann Rosewater

*The Commission on Children report aligned very well with the Memorandum and showed the beginnings of significant connections between foundation and federal work. Both reports took a very ecological approach to responding to children's needs, and the emphasis upon comprehensive and community-based approaches still remains, despite siloed funding. The hopeful sign is that a lion's share of the Commission on Children recommendations actually have been enacted, not through revolutionary change but through incremental actions. Philanthropy itself has moved over the last fifteen years and one of the biggest shifts has been toward investing in capacity building (community, state, organizational), particularly in public systems, and not just programmatic funding.* – Cheryl Hayes

\* Selected quotes from interviews with leaders in the field.

# Federal Action on Children, Youth, and Families Under the Clinton and Bush

Although vulnerable children and youth were never a major campaign theme in any of the four Presidential elections that resulted in President George Bill Clinton's and President George W. Bush's collective four terms in office, most of the policy recommendations included in the 1992 GCYF-sponsored memorandum and by the Commission on Children have been addressed in federal policy in some significant way. Senator Rockefeller has directed his staff to continue to track progress on enacting the recommendations in the report and estimates that 85 percent of them have been adopted, including the vast share of those involving federal funding.<sup>27</sup> The following sections break down some of the major domestic policy actions on children, youth, and families taken under the Clinton and Bush administrations.

***President Clinton and Children, Youth, and Family Policy.*** Welfare reform certainly was a centerpiece of President Clinton's domestic policy agenda, but very significant changes were also made to America's tax system to better support working families, through dramatic expansions of the earned income tax credit and establishment of a child tax credit of \$400. The Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program replaced AFDC in 1996 under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, further changing the program from a federal matching program to a block grant. At the same time, federal child care funding increased dramatically, both through expansion of direct federal spending and

options for the transfer of TANF funds within states for additional child care support.<sup>28</sup>

In addition, Congress and the President developed a new block grant to states to provide more preventive and family-oriented approaches to child welfare, first established as the Family Preservation and Family Support Services program (1993) and later reauthorized and renamed the Adoption and Safe Families Act (1997).<sup>29</sup> This legislation drew in significant measure from foundation initiatives – the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation's Family Preservation and Community Partnership initiatives, the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Family-to-Family Initiative, and the Kellogg Foundation's Families for Kids Initiative – to develop more comprehensive, community-based approaches to serving vulnerable children and their families.

The federal government also began testing new strategies to address the needs of vulnerable children, youth, families and communities, particularly through the Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community (EZ/EC) Initiative (with awards starting in 1994).<sup>30</sup>

The Corporation for National and Community Service was established in 1993, and expanded the Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) program and created the National Senior Service Corps from several existing programs involving seniors. The Corporation for National and Community Service provided substantial new

Much of President Clinton's emphasis in domestic policy, however, focused upon the middle class and involved a variety of tax policies, including establishment of a child tax credit and expansion of the earned income tax credit (EITC), to economically support families.

opportunities for community service, including youth and senior participation in nonprofit organizations which provided services and supports to vulnerable children, youth, and families.<sup>31</sup>

Although not able to enact his universal health insurance program, President Clinton and Congress established the bipartisan State Child Health Insurance Program (SCHIP – 1996) that, according to its proponents, has been successful in reducing the number of uninsured low-income children by one-third and lowering the overall uninsurance rate among children during the same period that, in large measure due to rising health insurance costs, adult uninsurance increased.<sup>32</sup> Also within the Clinton administration, Early Head Start was established (FFY1995) as another effort to provide a more comprehensive approach to enhancing the development of young children, with better initial evaluation results.

On education, Congress codified the national education goals and established the National Education Goals Panel within the Goals 2000: Educate America Act in 1994. Goals 2000, representing the reauthorization of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, also laid the groundwork for the Bush Administration's No Child Left Behind Act.

21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers were established in 1998 with a \$40 million investment that has grown to over a \$1 billion funding stream for after-school programs,

servicing over 8.5 million children since its inception. Originally designed as a way to expand public schools into community schools, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers transformed over time to become the single largest source of funding for afterschool programs.<sup>33</sup>

Much of President Clinton's emphasis in domestic policy, however, focused upon the middle class and involved a variety of tax policies, including establishment of a child tax credit and expansion of the earned income tax credit (EITC), to economically support families. This included establishment of substantial new tax credits and deductions to promote savings for and make higher education more affordable, including Hope and Lifetime Learning Credits (1997), a deduction on interest for student loans, and an exclusion for earnings from Coverdale savings accounts – new provisions at an annual cost to the treasury of \$4.6 billion.<sup>34</sup> A year earlier, through bipartisan action Congress also established Section 529 of the Internal Revenue Code providing federal tax relief for state college savings plans (1996).<sup>35</sup> While tuitions for higher education increased during the period of the Clinton administration, the different tax credits resulted in making higher education generally more affordable, particularly to those families in the middle three income quintiles.

During President Clinton's administration, the domestic economy grew robustly and lower- and middle-income families participated

While vulnerable children, youth, and families were beneficiaries of some of this investment and new programming, the major share of the investment was directed toward the middle class.

in this growth. Both welfare reform and the strong economy enabled states to dramatically reduce their welfare populations and redirect TANF funds for other social programs. Overall, federal investments in health, education, and social service programs for children, youth, and families grew, although the largest new investments in children and their families were made through the tax code.<sup>36</sup>

While vulnerable children, youth, and families were beneficiaries of some of this investment and new programming, the major share of the investment was directed toward the middle class. While higher education was made more affordable through incentives to parents to save toward the future, these investments generally have not extended to or benefited the most vulnerable and lowest income children, who are much less likely to complete high school, let alone attend post-secondary programs. While economic growth benefited all income levels, income and wealth gaps in American society also grew during the Clinton administration.<sup>37</sup>

***President Bush and Children, Youth, and Family Policy.*** Two recent reviews of domestic spending have concluded that children's programs have fared poorly, particularly relative to other parts of the budget. Both the Urban Institute's and First Focus' analyses of federal domestic spending have been widely cited as showing this decline. While this is true both for the longer period (from 1965 to 2008) and for the last several years of the Bush administration,

however, the fact is that federal investments in children's programs rose during both the Bush and Clinton administrations, although at a somewhat lower overall level during the Bush administration.<sup>38</sup>

Upon taking office, the Bush administration, working with Congress, called into question the effectiveness of the country's public education system in closing gaps by race and income and enacted major reform legislation to spur states to improve their education systems. The bipartisan No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 built upon the groundwork in standards and testing established in Goals 2000 and further raised achievement and accountability in public education. At its outset, NCLB expanded federal investments in education, with an overall increase from 2000 to 2007 of over \$15.1 billion, in real (inflation-adjusted) annual funding.<sup>39</sup> Over time, NCLB has come under greater scrutiny and received strong criticism among many educators, but the original authors of the bill stand behind it and are working to refine and reauthorize it, including additional funding for its mandates.

Another major piece of the Bush administration's domestic policy agenda were the tax cuts enacted during 2001 and 2003. The so-called "middle class" tax cuts and revisions included expanding the child tax credit from \$400 to \$1000, lowering the bottom tax rate to 10 percent, and providing some revisions to reduce the "marriage tax penalty," with an overall cost to the treasury (and



President Bush placed a major emphasis upon supporting faith-based initiatives, adolescent pregnancy prevention programming (including abstinence only programs), fatherhood initiatives, and ex-offender re-entry initiatives.

benefit to families) of \$90 billion projected out to 2012.<sup>40</sup> As with the Clinton administration, in terms of size of federal investments, the impacts to families with children of these changes in the tax code have been much greater than changes in child-focused domestic discretionary or mandatory spending.

In terms of developing comprehensive, community-based services and innovative approaches to addressing vulnerable children's needs, President Bush placed a major emphasis upon supporting faith-based initiatives, adolescent pregnancy prevention programming (including abstinence only programs), fatherhood initiatives, and ex-offender re-entry initiatives. The latter include the Going Home Initiative jointly supported by a number of federal agencies, the Second Chance Act, and mentoring of children of prisoners.

The White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives and the Centers for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives in 11 federal agencies have established new or expanded programs providing comprehensive, community-based services. The Administration for Children and Families' Compassion Capital Fund has helped faith-based and community organizations increase their organizational effectiveness and capacity. Overall, in terms of new federal grants and earmarks, the amount of new spending on such faith-based and community initiatives is in the billions of dollars, although some of this has been redirected from existing program

funding streams and much supports the same organizational work. While there often has been an ideological cast given to some of these efforts, the manner in which they have been implemented has been one that has generally been toward more community-based and holistic approaches to meeting family and child needs, often through mainstream community-based providers.<sup>41</sup>

The White House Task Force for Disadvantaged Youth was created in December 2002 and issued a final report in October, 2003. The report identified many serious issues facing young people and the fractured, uncoordinated system that was failing to serve them.<sup>42</sup> The report laid out a comprehensive set of recommendations to create action around a federal youth policy, but resulted in limited programs: the *Helping America's Youth* summits established by First Lady Laura Bush and the Department of Labor's *Shared Youth Vision*. Neither of these initiatives addressed the depth of action called for in the report. One Congressional effort, the Tom Osborne Federal Youth Coordination Act, was passed and signed into law, but the program has not yet been implemented.

Like his predecessor's, the Bush administration's changes in investments in children and families have been largest in the area of tax policy. Under the Bush administration, there have been real increases in entitlement spending (Medicaid, Social Security) on children and in overall investments in children's programs, but, with

Like his predecessor's, the Bush administration's changes in investments in children and families have been largest in the area of tax policy.

the exception of education, at a lower level than during the Clinton administration years. Most of this increase was in the first term of the Bush administration, however, and spending on children's programs between federal fiscal years 2004 and 2008 grew only 1.4 percent in real dollars overall, with discretionary program spending on children actually declining by 6.7 percent.<sup>43</sup>

# Foundation Advances on Children, Youth, and Families from 1992 to 2008

There has been a growing emphasis over the last several decades, often led by the foundation community, upon pooling, blending, or braiding federal, state and local public funding streams serving children and families in order to develop more holistic and ecological responses to vulnerable children, youth, and their families.<sup>44</sup> While the term “service integration” has largely disappeared from discussion,<sup>45</sup> cross-system planning, collaboration, and pooling, blending, or braiding of funds continues to be an emphasis in working to ensure vulnerable children, youth, and families get what they need to succeed. While the 1992 Memo recommended that the federal government and philanthropy work to co-fund innovative efforts and pool public and private funds, this largely has not occurred at the federal level. At the same time, both the federal government and foundations have continued to work to develop more comprehensive approaches and their work has informed one another and sometimes involved intentional coordination.

Early in the Clinton administration, foundations undertook specific collective efforts to influence, learn from, and support the implementation of federal initiatives. Multiple national foundations<sup>46</sup> pooled \$30 million in funds in an “Assessing the New Federalism” Project initiated in 1997 through the Urban Institute to track welfare reform and other federal policy devolution and to identify impacts, challenges, and opportunities. Similarly, an even larger group of foundations<sup>47</sup> pooled funding to provide

oversight of and technical assistance to the federal Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Community (EZ/EC) Initiative. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation provided substantial funding, under Covering Kids, to spur state efforts to enroll eligible children in state Medicaid and SCHIP programs. The fifty-state program, Covering Kids, was critical to realizing many of the objectives within SCHIP to reach uninsured children.

Federal policy also was influenced by foundation activities. As mentioned previously, much of the federal policy direction through the Family Support and Preservation Act and its successor Acts, drew from foundation initiatives in child welfare.

During this period, foundations also expanded their own efforts to influence public policy and develop comprehensive approaches to vulnerable children. This included a number of significant new or expanded emphases in philanthropy, several of which are highlighted in this section.

***Results measurement and outcome-based accountability.*** In many respects, the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s signature KIDS COUNT Initiative, commencing in 1989 and extending grants to nearly every state for state reports by 1994, ushered in an increased commitment within the foundation community to track important child outcomes and define foundation efforts in terms of improving results for children.<sup>48</sup> Increasingly, foundations

The long tenure of the Kids Count Initiative and its funding to state organizations also has led to the growing capacity of children advocacy organizations to engage in evidence-based policy advocacy.

defined their goals and initiatives in terms of outcomes – looking to impact infant mortality and low birthweight, adolescent pregnancies and parenting, school readiness, juvenile delinquency, school completion, and family economic stability. The long tenure of the Kids Count Initiative and its funding to state organizations also has led to the growing capacity of children advocacy organizations to engage in evidence-based policy advocacy.<sup>49</sup>

Foundation initiatives have made increasing use of logic models and theories of change<sup>50</sup> as evaluation tools to measure progress on addressing complex children’s issues, often requiring grantees to do the same and to focus upon outcome accountability. Foundations have been leaders not only in promoting traditional program evaluation strategies, but also in supporting the development of outcome-based evaluation approaches for systems change efforts. This has even extended to structuring evaluation strategies for advocacy efforts, increasingly in terms of their influence, leverage, and impact.<sup>51</sup>

***Brain development and early childhood emphases.*** The National Academy of Science’s *Neurons to Neighborhoods*, published in 2000, synthesized a vast amount of research and provided the scientific basis for an emerging movement to focus policy attention upon the earliest years of life.<sup>52</sup> Even before this publication, the Carnegie Corporation identified the “quiet crisis” facing very young children

in *Starting Points: Meeting the Needs of Our Youngest Children* in 1994, and started a multi-city and state Starting Points Initiative in 1996 to focus policy upon these youngest years.<sup>53</sup> The Kellogg Foundation followed with its Spark Initiative and helped launch and expand the Smart Start Technical Assistance Center, focused upon helping other states replicate or adapt North Carolina’s leading work on early childhood. From 2001 through 2004, the David and Lucile Packard, Ford, and Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundations collaborated in a seventeen-state School Readiness Indicators Initiative to develop indicator systems that could track child outcomes in the early years and raise awareness of the need for policy responses.<sup>54</sup>

The Early Childhood Funders Collaborative organized funding across more than a dozen foundations to create the BUILD Initiative in 2002, which now supports seven states in a learning community effort to build comprehensive early learning systems. As evidence of parallel play, a year later the National Maternal and Child Health Bureau established Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) planning grants to states for cross-system efforts to build comprehensive systems.

With a more narrow focus based upon both research and opinion polling, the Pew Charitable Trusts established a National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) and its Pre-K Now Initiative in 2002 explicitly to advocate for

adoption of preschool programs within states throughout the United States. The Doris Duke Foundation drew from the resiliency and risk and protective factor literature in developing a multi-state Strengthening Families Through Early Care and Education Initiative in 2006. Most recently, the Buffett Early Childhood Fund, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Irving Harris Foundation, the George Kaiser Family Foundation, and the Children's Initiative (a project of the J.B. and M.K. Pritzker Family Foundation) have jointly financed the First Five Years Fund, a project housed at the Ounce of Prevention Fund. The effort focused on improving the lives of at-risk children by leveraging cost-effective investments in early learning and increasing the number of policy makers, private foundations, and business leaders active on the issue.<sup>55</sup>

Foundations also have taken leads within states to develop early childhood systems. For over a decade, the Heinz Endowment and the William Penn Foundation are examples of regional foundations that have coordinated their grant-making work to advance early childhood systems development within a particular state (Pennsylvania) to support both service system design and the advocacy and will-building to produce change.<sup>56</sup> Additionally, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is contributing major funding to a ten-year, \$80 million Early Learning Initiative in two communities in Washington State (White Center and East Yakima) to provide coordinated early learning services for children

birth to five and their families.<sup>57</sup> In terms of direct partnerships with the federal government, since 1997 the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation has provided funding for the Hilton/Early Head Start Training Program to work with the federal Head Start Bureau to impact infants and toddlers with disabilities in Early Head Start.<sup>58</sup>

The foundation focus on early childhood over the last two decades has reflected several themes contained in the 1992 Memo:

- the identification of a gap in current investments and public policy;
- the presence of science and research that has lent itself to innovative approaches, within an outcome accountability framework around school readiness, as a means to address child outcomes; and
- the opportunity to take a more preventive, developmental, comprehensive, and asset-based approach to addressing social issues and concerns.<sup>59</sup>

**Youth development initiatives.** While not as prominent as early childhood programs or having a signature report for the time period like *Neurons to Neighborhoods*,<sup>60</sup> foundations have continued to focus substantial attention on youth development, particularly upon out-of-school time and school-linked services.

In 1989, the Carnegie Corporation published *Turning Points: Preparing Youth for the 21st Century*, and this comprehensive framework became the basis of middle grade reform in

Both the Coalition for Community Schools (1997) and America's Promise Alliance (1997) emerged, with foundation support, as new national networks to support comprehensive approaches to the education and development of America's youth.

1990, with the Middle Grade School State Policy Initiative.<sup>61</sup> Other foundations picked up on the pro-active youth development approach, the unique needs of adolescents and at-risk populations such as young people aging out of foster care, juvenile justice, homelessness and more.

The William Penn Foundation's youth development portfolio focuses on the communities and connections necessary for a young person to reach successful adulthood. The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Models for Change grew out of years of work on juvenile justice, including considerable investment in research to expand knowledge regarding adolescent development and delinquent behavior, and groundwork for significant changes in law, policy and practice.<sup>62</sup>

In 1995, Public/Private Ventures established a Community Change for Youth Development Initiative, funded by a broad array of foundations with commitments to serving youth<sup>63</sup> and also supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The project worked in six neighborhoods to strengthen out-of-school programs that both created youth opportunities and strengthened community.<sup>64</sup>

Foundations further have collaborated to focus attention out-of-school time, on mentoring, and on school and community partnerships. The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation was one of the leaders in establishing the After-School

Alliance in 2000, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Education, to provide research, technical assistance, and supports to schools implementing federal 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools programs.<sup>65</sup> Both the Coalition for Community Schools (1997) and America's Promise Alliance (1997) emerged, with foundation support, as new national networks to support comprehensive approaches to the education and development of America's youth. In an instance where federal and foundation funding were directly pooled, the Eisenhower Foundation secured federal earmark funding to replicate the Full Service School model in additional school districts in the country, starting in 2002.<sup>66</sup>

***Place-based Initiatives.*** In addition to these early childhood and youth initiatives, foundations have spearheaded a number of comprehensive community initiatives designed to change results for children and families within entire poor neighborhoods and communities. Poor child, as well as adult, outcomes are not evenly distributed around the country, but are concentrated within poor, disinvested neighborhoods that themselves are disproportionately within large urban areas.<sup>67</sup> Efforts to rebuild such neighborhoods are generally viewed as requiring comprehensive approaches that include health, education, and community development activities involving both economic and social capital development, the latter a source of new foundation and policy interest and attention through the work of Robert Putnam and others.<sup>68</sup> In addition, by focusing upon a specific neighborhood, it is possible to

Advances in neighborhood-level data collection and analysis...have shown the value of “democratizing information” and using neighborhood-level data to spur action and change.

begin to test issues of scale and critical mass in producing changes in child and family outcomes at a population level.<sup>69</sup>

In addition to the federal government’s EZ/EC Initiative, foundations have undertaken various comprehensive neighborhood-level change initiatives, often involving the development of physical, human, social, and economic capital. Among these ambitious efforts from the 1990s to the present day have been:

- the William and Flora Hewitt Foundation’s Neighborhood Improvement Initiative, designed to help three neighborhoods reduce poverty, build new leaders, and develop better services and more capable organizations (1996 to 2006)<sup>70</sup>;
- the Northwest Area Foundation’s Ventures program involving ten community and foundation partnerships in a long-term commitment to poverty reduction (1999 to 2016)<sup>71</sup>; and
- the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s Making Connections ten-year plus Initiative (1999 to 2012) in inner-city neighborhoods in ten American cities designed to close the gap in results experienced by children and families by working to ensure children start school healthy and ready for success, family social ties and connections are strengthened, and families experience greater economic stability and success.

While such place-based initiatives have yet to demonstrate unequivocal success at a

population level at producing dramatic gains in child and family outcomes, they have added to the understanding of the challenges to such comprehensive change efforts. Further, advances in neighborhood-level data collection and analysis, including the individual work of the thirty members of the National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership, have shown the value of “democratizing information” and using neighborhood-level data to spur action and change.<sup>72</sup>

***Investing in Communication and Evidenced-Based Advocacy.*** In addition to funding specific programs and initiatives and investing in state and community planning activities, foundations also have begun to invest in messaging, communication, and even policy advocacy, particularly since the turn of the century. This has been triggered in some measure by George Lakoff’s application of cognitive linguistics to politics in his book, *Moral Politics*,<sup>73</sup> as well as by some analyses of conservative philanthropy’s greater and more effective emphasis upon influencing policy through messaging.<sup>74</sup>

To that end, foundations have supported substantial polling and focus group efforts to determine what messages around children’s issues resonate with the public and policy makers. These have included communications strategies within initiatives that draw from the communications research on framing. The National Center for Children in Poverty’s “Let’s Invest in Families Today” (LIFT) was based

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upon extensive communications research on what poverty reduction messages resonated with the public and fit their political frames. The Pre-K Now Initiative made extensive use of polling to develop its campaign messages, including emphasizing education as opposed to child care and focusing upon voluntary and universal as opposed to targeted messages. The Packard Foundation enlisted Spitfire Strategies to create a story line for expanding child health coverage that has been employed by many groups in promoting expansion to the State Child Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) in 2007 and for state health expansion under its Narrative Communications and Finish Line Initiatives. Spotlight on Poverty was recently established as a multi-foundation communications project to focus electoral attention upon poverty reduction. Foundations have supported Demos in working to reframe for the public the role of government in addressing important social concerns. Communications organizations such as the Frameworks Institute, Communications Consortium, and Spitfire Strategies often have been brought in by foundations to describe and develop communications strategies for new initiatives for vulnerable children and families.

In addition, a number of foundations, in different ways, have begun to more explicitly support advocacy as a strategy to produce systems change. This has included investments at the federal level in policy advocacy, including leadership from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and Atlantic Philanthropies in

establishing First Focus to raise children's budget issues to greater prominence at the federal level, involving both a federal advocacy presence and strategic investments in state-based advocacy.<sup>75</sup>

The Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Open Society Institute, the Stoneman Family Foundation, the Public Welfare Foundation, and the John L. and James S. Knight Foundation have supported the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities in establishing state-based fiscal analysis capacity, through the State Fiscal Analysis Initiative (SFAI) initiated in 1993 and now operating in 31 states. SFAI has provided technical assistance and ongoing funding support to state-based organizations to analyze state tax policies and fiscal choices, with a particular focus on ensuring that states maintain adequate revenue bases to fund essential services and do so in a way that does not place additional burdens on those with the least ability to pay.

The Pew Trusts Pre-K Now Initiative represents a very explicit effort to invest in state-based advocacy to expand preschool programming, through direct advocacy than even allows grantees to use a share of the funding for lobbying activities.<sup>76</sup>

Foundations also have supported, through Every Child Matters, electoral advocacy efforts focused upon children's issues. The Buffet Foundation recently has developed initiatives



Insignificant measure due to the actions of foundations, many of the observations and recommendations in the GCYF 1992 Memo, if not entirely fulfilled, have been very much advanced.

to support advocacy on early childhood both in advancing Educare Centers at the state level through the Birth to Five Policy Alliance and (with other foundations) in supporting federal level investments through the Birth to Five Fund. Within early childhood, the School Readiness Indicators Initiative not only supported increased data collection and reporting on child outcomes in the earliest years, it did so largely through providing support to state-based child advocacy organizations to facilitate planning processes across state agencies to raise the visibility of young child issues.

To summarize the history since 1992, children, youth, and family philanthropy has undergone substantial evolution and development, with an increasing focus upon:

- results as a driving force for change;
- a particular focus upon the early learning years as an opportunity for investment, particularly around prevention;
- expanded efforts to develop comprehensive approaches within disinvested neighborhoods; and
- an emerging recognition of the importance of communications and advocacy in producing policy change.

Insignificant measure due to the actions of foundations, many of the observations and recommendations in the GCYF 1992 Memo, if not entirely fulfilled, have been very much advanced.

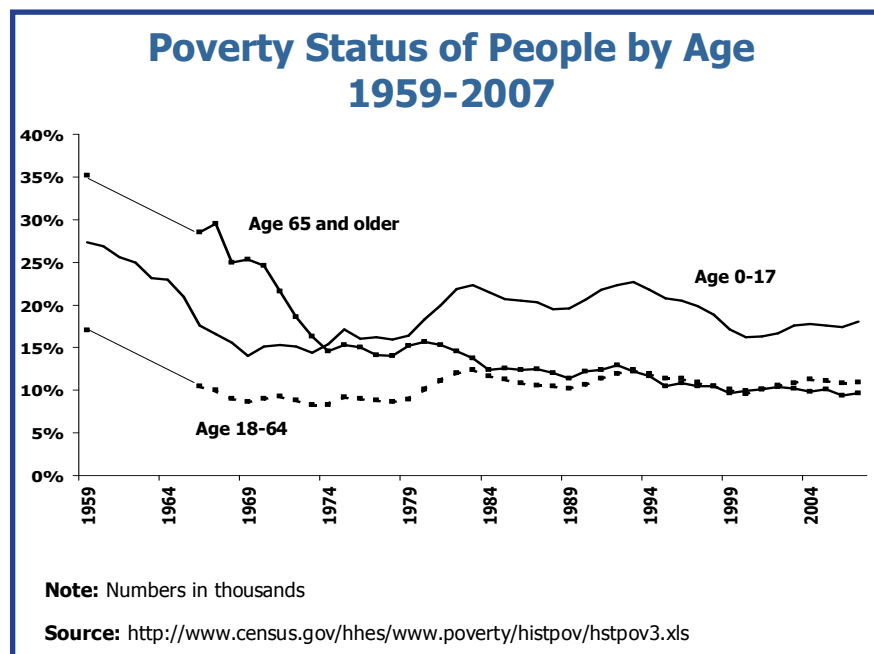
# 2008 Issues Facing Children – Similarities and Differences from the 1992 Policy Landscape

Clearly, there have been significant changes over the last two administrations in both philanthropic activities to address the needs of vulnerable children and federal policy designed to improve child and family outcomes. On some child outcome measures, particularly adolescent pregnancy and parenting and youth violence, there have been significant improvements from 1992 to 2008, although national rates still rank the United States high among industrialized countries in these areas. On others, however, including single parenting, low birthweight, and child poverty, progress has been slow, not occurred, or outcomes have actually worsened.

Some of the most significant challenges facing child philanthropy and the new administration

and 111<sup>th</sup> Congress are highlighted below.

***Persistence of Poverty and Growing Gaps in Income and Wealth.*** Between 1992 and 2008, on a purely fiscal basis, the federal government took its most significant actions on children, youth, and families in tax policies designed to support low- and middle-income working families. The value of the earned income tax credit to lower-income families quadrupled, and the federal government established a refundable child tax credit that, together with the EITC, now means that a four-person family making less than \$44,000 per year (twice the official federal poverty level) owes no federal income tax. The same family earning at the federal poverty level of around \$21,000 receives over \$3,000



In addition to poverty itself, income and wealth gaps in the United States have expanded steadily and significantly since 1992, in some measure due to federal tax cuts.

in the form of refundable credits, essentially a “negative income tax” that augments lower-wage employment.<sup>77</sup> The EITC is now the largest federal anti-poverty program, exceeding both TANF and food stamps in size. It is credited with lifting over 4.4 million individuals, over half of them children, out of poverty by 2003.<sup>78</sup>

At the same time, however, poverty, as measured by federal statistics, has remained at a much higher level for children than for other segments of the population, as the updated and adapted chart from *Beyond Rhetoric* shows.<sup>79</sup> While child poverty declined somewhat during the years of the Clinton administration, that reduction largely has been reversed in the years of the Bush administration.

The official federal poverty level has long been regarded as archaic and there are increasing calls for its revision, but it does provide long-term comparative trend data that has validity in making comparisons over time.<sup>80</sup> The persistence of poverty among children, youth, and families, because it undergirds child outcomes across health, education, justice system involvement, and social well-being, continues to be an underlying focus of philanthropic effects directed to children, youth, and families and has re-emerged as a political issue, as well.<sup>81</sup>

In addition to poverty itself, income and wealth gaps in the United States have expanded steadily and significantly since 1992, in some measure due to federal tax cuts.<sup>82</sup> Some international

research suggests that large gaps in wealth within a society are unhealthy in terms of children’s well-being, even irrespective of absolute measures of income.<sup>83</sup>

### ***Growing Diversity of the U.S. Population.***

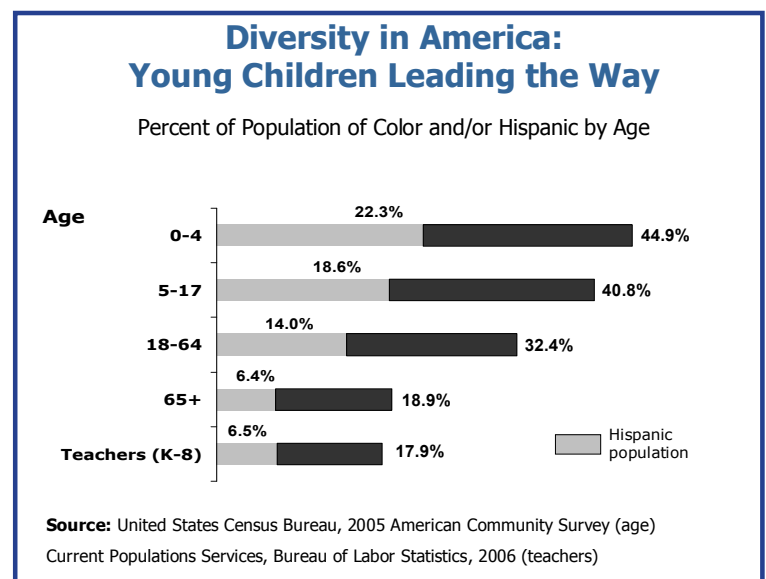
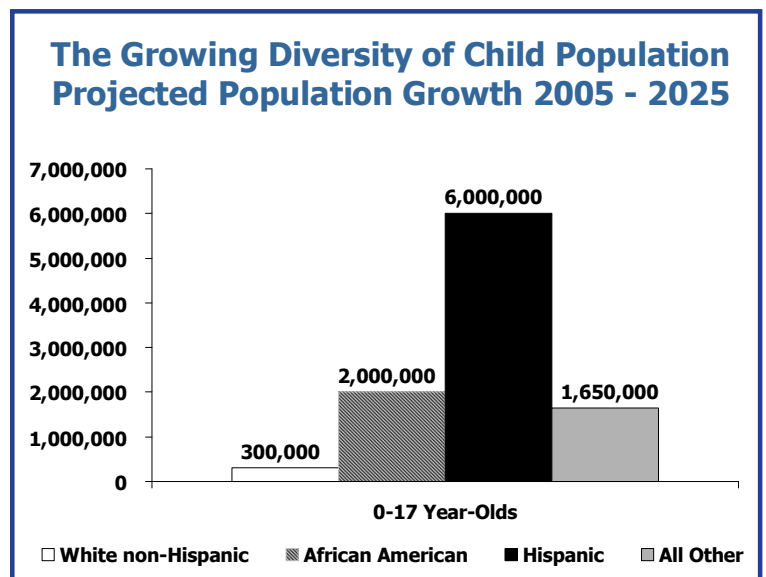
America is often described as a nation of immigrants, and America’s population, particularly its child and young adult population, continues to become more diverse. In fact, comparisons of the United States with many other countries on measures of child well-being to some degree mix apples and oranges, as America is much more diverse in its child population than most other industrialized countries. Moreover, this growth in diversity in America has become much more pronounced over the last decade and is projected to continue to grow. Between 1980 and 2007, the White, non-Hispanic child (0-17) population actually declined in the United States (down 4.4 percent), while the Hispanic child population nearly doubled (up 98.8%) and other non-Hispanic minority children increased by more than one-quarter (up 28.3%). In 2007, 58.0 percent of all children in America were White, non-Hispanic, with 21.2 percent Hispanic.<sup>84</sup>

The two charts on the next page further illustrate both current and future challenges and opportunities facing the United States in addressing the needs of its diverse child population. The first chart shows children clearly are leading the way in the growing diversity of the country’s population, yet the current

workforce (and particularly those charged with educating children) is not reflective of the diverse racial, ethnic, language, and cultural background of the child population. The second chart offers projections over the next two decades in the growth of the child population, showing nearly all growth is for children of color, with particular implications to constructing an education system that can respond to this language, racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity.<sup>85</sup>

The growing diversity might not be a cause for significant concern in relation to vulnerable children, were it not the fact that there are profound disparities in child outcomes by race, language, and ethnicity – in income security, health, education, justice system involvement, and wealth and opportunity. The Appendix provides a compilation of different child and family outcomes, broken out by White non-Hispanic, African American, and Hispanic populations – that shows the breadth and magnitude of these disparities.

The federal debates over immigration policy and the sharp emotions these produce in the American electorate point to the sensitivity as well as the importance of these issues. The absence of a consistent immigration policy and the sporadic and sometimes hard-line enforcement of existing laws through high visibility raids has produced major trauma among affected immigrant populations, with serious concerns raised about the ramifications to the well-being of children and even to their



While one major demographic trend is the growing diversity of American society, a second trend is its aging and, in particular, the impending retirement of the “baby boom” generation.

stability and continuity of care and protection by their parents.

While America has come a long way in addressing issues of prejudice, views on race, language, and culture remain sharply divided, but often unspoken, within America,<sup>86</sup> Some foundations efforts, including the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s Race Matters activities and the Open Society Institute’s work, are seeking to directly raise these issues within a public policy context.<sup>87</sup>

***The Aging of Society and Demands on Federal Funding.*** While one major demographic trend is the growing diversity of American society, a second trend is its aging and, in particular, the impending retirement of the “baby boom” generation. While the population in America is projected to grow overall by 13 percent from 2005 to 2025, the over sixty-five population is projected to grow by 80 percent.<sup>88</sup> Medicare and Social Security both were established as federal programs to serve retired and disabled Americans (and constitute a major reason for the reduction in poverty among senior citizens). These programs will continue to grow as a share of the federal budget, with “business as usual scenarios” showing they could crowd out virtually all other domestic investments, including those made in children, youth and families.<sup>89</sup>

This growth in the senior population also is a growth in the senior population as a demographic

voting block, and the distribution of wealth has increasingly moved into this age group. Many of these seniors, however, also are grandparents and concerned about their own grandchildren and society’s future. Despite rising health care costs and in large measure due to federal programs, they have greater economic security than at any time in the past. Organizations such as Generations United and AARP are seeking to avoid a bifurcation of federal debate that pits the old against the young. The aging of American society also brings with it the need to ensure the productivity of the non-elderly workforce. Still, unless there are effective strategies developed to contain health care costs, the federal budget will not be able to sustain, let alone provide, new investments in children or to continue to provide comprehensive health and income support services to all seniors.<sup>90</sup>

***Incarceration and Family Viability.*** As the Table in the Appendix describing child outcomes by race and ethnicity shows, African American children fare dramatically worse than White, non-Hispanic children on virtually all measures, and often substantially worse than other ethnic groups, as well. Nowhere is this more pronounced than with respect to justice system involvement, both at the juvenile and adult levels.

Since 1980, due in part to drugs and crime but in large measure to sentencing policies and practices, incarceration in America has more than quadrupled, with two million people

Incarceration in America has more than quadrupled, with two million people behind bars and two million children with an incarcerated parent.

behind bars and two million children with an incarcerated parent. On a very disproportionate basis, incarcerated young men (those most likely to be behind bars), are African American. In 2005, nearly one in ten African American young (20-35) men were behind bars, a rate that had doubled since 1990,<sup>91</sup> and up to one-third were actively involved in the criminal justice system (on probation, parole, or in jail or prison).<sup>92</sup>

In 1964, the Department of Labor issued the controversial and so-called Moynihan Report, *The Negro Family in America*, that spoke to the “breakdown of the Negro family” and the need to change parenting practices.<sup>93</sup> At the time, the single parenting rate among African American families was 25 percent, about what it is today among White, non-Hispanic families. Today, however, the opportunity for two-parent families within the African American community is severely compromised simply (but not solely) by the level of justice system involvement of its “marriageable males.”<sup>94</sup> African American two parent families with children are in the distinct minority, at only 42.8 percent of all families with children. Far too many African American children must deal with the absence of two economic sources of support from their parents and deal with the social and psychological implications of a father in prison or under supervision by the law.

Some foundations, including the Open Society Institute and the Public Welfare Foundation, have begun to take on the issue of incarceration

and its racial effects. During the Bush Administration, the federal government also has sought to foster state innovation through several initiatives (both secular and faith-based), some involving multiple federal agencies. At the same time, however, the magnitude of the issue and its implications for closing disparities and improving child outcomes for vulnerable children remain profound.

***Geographic Segregation.*** While there is renewed interest in and emphasis upon addressing poverty among children, youth, and families, most of the policy emphasis is based upon individually focused strategies which see the issue of poverty in terms of “personal responsibility and opportunity,” with resultant strategies focused upon individuals (either providing work pathways to family-sustaining employment or offering work supports needed to transition there). At the same time, for disinvested communities, particularly those highest poverty areas within central cities, these approaches are unlikely to be sufficient and ones that stress “social justice and community building” are needed.<sup>95</sup> Neighborhoods with the highest proportions of risk factors related to successful child, youth, and family well-being also are those most likely to be of color; the issues of race and place cannot be disaggregated.<sup>96</sup>

Although there have been significant foundation efforts focused upon improving healthy child development within poor and disinvested neighborhoods, these neighborhoods remain

Neighborhoods with the highest proportions of risk factors related to successful child, youth, and family well-being also are those most likely to be of color; the issues of race and place cannot be disaggregated

as the places where vulnerable children disproportionately reside – and where policy and action need to occur that can demonstrate results on a neighborhood-wide level. Lessons must be learned from prior efforts and built into subsequent efforts, if America is not to either “write off” these neighborhoods and their vulnerable children or repeat previous incomplete approaches that have not produced the level of success children in those neighborhoods need.

# 2009 as a Year of Potential Convergence for Philanthropy and Federal Policy

As the preceding sections show, both philanthropy and federal policy have grown and developed over the last two administrations. Many of the specific federal child policy recommendations that were put forward – in the Commission on Children report and in the foundation *Memorandum* – have been enacted. Foundations have helped to advance knowledge in the field on addressing the needs of vulnerable children, and the federal government has responded with initiatives of its own, frequently drawing upon experiences and lessons learned from foundation efforts.

At the same time, many of the challenges facing vulnerable children, youth, and families in 1992 remain today, and some have even greater magnitude and most have an even greater race, language, and culture dimension. There are more tools in the toolbox to serve vulnerable children and address their needs, but the issues of using them together and creating sufficient toolboxes to meet their needs remain.

At the risk of oversimplification, it is useful to outline different potential roles for foundations and philanthropy in addressing the needs of vulnerable children.

- ***Supporting Effective Practice and Facilitating Growth.*** First, a large share of foundation and other philanthropic activity regarding vulnerable children has been to finance direct services and their infrastructures – to support specific

organizations and agencies working with vulnerable children and their families, either through supporting general operations and their costs, aiding in building or establishing endowment campaigns, or enabling organizations to expand to new services. This often has been seen as the “traditional” approach to philanthropic efforts to improve services for vulnerable children. Often, foundation funding can provide the start-up costs necessary to develop new programs and services that then can access traditional funding sources, both public and private.

- ***Knowledge Building on Effective Strategies.*** Second, a significant share of national foundation activity has been involved in testing out new ideas and approaches, through demonstrations or high impact initiatives (some of which have been cited in this report). Venture philanthropy (also sometimes described as social entrepreneurship) emerged as an articulation of this approach early in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and has been applied to a number of the foundation initiatives discussed earlier.<sup>97</sup>
- ***Building Public System Capacity and Leveraging Systems Change.*** Third, foundations increasingly have engaged in supporting states and communities in planning and governance efforts to strengthen public system responses to vulnerable children. Sometimes referred to as “systems change” or “systems building”



Effective federal policy advocacy ultimately requires state- and district-level activity and constituency mobilization, and this is a very new area of foundation investment and support.

efforts and sometimes including emphases upon “public-private” partnerships, these efforts often draw upon the foundation imprimatur in enlisting policy maker support. Foundations have found that they can influence (and sometimes leverage additional resources as a result) public systems to engage in collaborative planning activities while offering technical assistance to guide this work.<sup>98</sup> These efforts generally recognize that, while foundations can play a role in innovation and selective financing of programs, the major resources needed to affect the lives of vulnerable children must come from government.<sup>99</sup> Most of this foundation work has been at the state or community level and not the federal level, although some investments also have been made in education efforts directed toward senior executive branch officials and members of Congress and their staff.<sup>100</sup>

- ***Communications and Advocacy.*** Fourth, foundations have begun to support efforts to communicate to the public and to policy makers about the need to make investments and public commitments to children and create the overall political climate needed for policy change. These efforts have included investments in communications organizations to do messaging and marketing, incorporating technical assistance to grantees to aid them in their communications and messaging, and investing directly in public education and advocacy efforts to inform

and influence policy. To date, however, philanthropic investments in political advocacy on behalf of vulnerable children, youth, and families – both at the federal level and within states and communities – have been generally small and typically focused upon a discrete policy issue.<sup>101</sup> In many instances, funds that are provided come with a stipulation that they cannot be used for either direct or grassroots lobbying, although some funding then directs attention to supporting state-level applications of these messages. Effective federal policy advocacy ultimately requires state- and district-level activity and constituency mobilization, and this is a very new area of foundation investment and support.<sup>102</sup>

As philanthropy explores its future role to influence federal policy on children, youth, and families, it will need to assess the opportunities and needs within each of these different types of giving and investment. As this essay suggests, while there has been substantial progress made over the last two administrations in *knowledge development* regarding effective practices and their systems implications to better meet the needs of vulnerable children, federal policies have fallen short in incorporating them into policy. While major changes have been made at the federal level in tax and fiscal policies related to lower-income families, much less has been accomplished in going beyond *building public systems capacity* to actually investing in systems changes and expansions. While strides have

Outcome accountability should avoid reductionistic applications that limit investments only to the already proven, but instead take a knowledge development and continuous improvement approach to tackling important issues for which current research is not definitive.

been taken to develop a *communications and advocacy* framework for effective advocacy, the actual investments in that advocacy have tended to be small and discrete and not toward building a sustained presence at the federal level.

Ultimately, for philanthropy to play a significant role in addressing the needs of vulnerable children will require attention to federal policy. While states and communities assume most of the responsibility for designing, implementing, and regulating specific programs, the federal government is a critical financing partner and must play a leadership role in guiding state and community action. This, in turn, will require philanthropic attention to filling gaps in *knowledge development* to address unanswered questions, helping to *build public systems capacity* that can design and implement effective policies, programs, and practices, and supporting *communications and advocacy* to hold federal policy makers accountable for making needed investments and policy changes.

As this work proceeds, there are several particular issues that have been raised in this essay that also should be considered in guiding the next generation of philanthropy for vulnerable children, youth, and families:

- **Outcome accountability.** Accountability based upon achieving results needs to reflect more than a programmatic focus or adaptation of evaluation methodologies designed for discrete programmatic

interventions. This requires further development of systems evaluation approaches and better use of theories of change that can assign collective accountability for results.<sup>103</sup> Outcome accountability should avoid reductionistic applications that limit investments only to the already proven, but instead take a knowledge development and continuous improvement approach to tackling important issues for which current research is not definitive.<sup>104</sup>

- **Sustainability.** Particularly when engaging in venture philanthropy, it is important from the outset to critically think about the role of government as an eventual financier to ensure the growth and sustainability of initiatives that demonstrate their value and potential. In the private sector, venture capitalists identify their potential market (e.g. a specific consumer base) very early for the products they are developing. In venture philanthropy, particularly related to developing more effective strategies for vulnerable children, youth, and families, there likely is not a private sector, consumer market, that can purchase the product, but instead a public sector one. Organizations in which foundations invest to create the new venture often do not have the connections to public sector decision-makers to *sustain* their initiatives beyond foundation funding, although foundations may ask them to develop such sustainability plans. If the market for the venture philanthropy product

It also is critical to better define government's role in the development of supporting family and community connections that are at the heart of removing many children, youth, and families from vulnerability.

is the public sector, the venture capital analogy suggests that philanthropy also then must invest in marketing to that public sector. Clarity at the outset on the locus for sustainability is needed to develop effective strategies to secure it.

- **Public-Private Partnerships.** There is a good deal of interest in new, public-private partnerships to address child needs, particularly around school readiness initiatives, where some business leaders have played prominent roles in spurring state investments. While voices from business and other non-traditional child advocates can play a key role,<sup>105</sup> it is unlikely that a significant share of the actual investments needed in early childhood will come from the private sector. Again, clarity on the realistic expectations on private sector investments needs to be established.
- **Approaches to Building Resiliency.** While much of the thinking on public and private partnerships relates to business, it also is critical to better define government's role in the development of supporting family and community connections that are at the heart of removing many children, youth, and families from vulnerability. The resiliency, risk and protective factor, family support, social capital, and reciprocity literature all emphasize that children's healthy growth and development is dependent upon consistent and positive social ties that enable children

and their parents to achieve success through exerting effort and contributing to the well-being of themselves and others.<sup>106</sup> Most publicly funded programs for vulnerable children, youth, and families, however, employ a professional services approach that does not include more ecological mutual assistance opportunities for growth.<sup>107</sup> In some respects, the emphasis upon "faith-based" initiatives opens the door for a more intentional and concerted exploration into how public funding can move beyond professional service approaches to fostering self-help, mutual assistance, and community building, even drawing upon the power of spirituality in personal growth and development. At this point, however, the knowledge of effective practice and, in particular, the diffusion of effective practice (which is intensely relationship-based), represents an area where knowledge building is imperative.

- **Equity and Diversity.** Given the great and growing diversity of children and families in the United States and the often profound disparities in health, education, wealth, justice system involvement, and opportunity they face, there are few strategies to address child vulnerability that do not need to have a central focus upon issues of race, language, and culture and address, in a serious way, institutional racism. This applies, in particular, to creating workforce and career opportunities that ensure a culturally diverse

and responsive field of professionals serving vulnerable children and their families.<sup>108</sup>

- ***Place-Based Strategies.*** Despite many different federal, state, and foundation initiatives to rebuild disinvested neighborhoods and communities, there are no clear “research-based” programs or initiatives that have produced neighborhood-wide changes that have dramatically reduced gaps in child and family outcomes. At the same time, it is not possible to truly address issues of vulnerable children and close racial and ethnic disparities without developing such strategies. The opportunities for returns-on-investment from successful strategies<sup>109</sup> are sufficient to embark on a next generation of such strategic efforts, provided that funders do learn from and build upon past experiences.<sup>110</sup>

## Future Challenges and Opportunities for Philanthropy and Federal Policy\*

I would start with the issue of poverty and family self-sufficiency. This underpins so many children's issues and concerns. Managerial issues worry me with respect to foundations, with a lot of micro-managing and agenda setting established within the foundation offices and not by the field. Foundations need to make investments in competent organizations and give them a fair amount of elbow room to design and adapt their agendas, particularly in policy work. Foundations should identify and invest in organizations and leaders in social policy development and endow and then support and learn from them. – Barbara Blum

*Foundations are taking steps to invest in advocacy and strengthening a social movement on behalf of children. Philanthropy needs to be a risk taker in this respect. The larger philanthropic role is to take risks the public sector is not able or willing to take – and to support efforts that can deal with current market failures for child well-being. Foundations also need to have self-scrutiny and avoid top-down thinking and credit-taking. – Cornelia Grumman*

Regional and local foundations have much to draw upon from national philanthropic efforts and do not need to “reinvent the wheel”; such foundations can play a critical role in providing direction at the state and community levels that can complement national foundation efforts. There now is both collaboration and diffusion across philanthropy, but there is not a clear or sufficiently focused agenda or collective vision within the child advocacy field. It is for this reason that some foundations have stepped in with their own specific policy initiatives (e.g. Pre-K Now). The advocacy community needs to have a focused and defined agenda, if it is to realize success in federal policy. – Lois Salisbury

*Today, there is significant new energy around finding solutions to poverty; welfare reform had one significant effect of reframing the issue from welfare abuse to the needs of working families. If foundations can listen to, learn from, and elevate the work of their grantees in presenting policy options, rather than solely taking a top-down approach of serving as the spokespersons for change, there is a potential for federal and state policy to take advances in this area. – Ann Rosewater*

Philanthropy can play a critical and unique role as a convener of policy makers at both the state and federal levels. This convening function includes senior staff and elected legislative and executive branch officials. The family impact seminars in the 1990's for senior Congressional staff and the Carnegie Aspen Congressional retreats are examples; but these can be further amplified and offer an opportunity to introduce policy makers in a neutral venue to leaders in policy change. Organized philanthropy still has an old guard; and there is a need to examine new approaches to communication, convening, and policy articulation from foundations. – Luba Lynch

*There is an increasing responsibility for foundations to help build capacity within the nonprofit sector, recognizing how rapidly that sector is growing and how outdated the concepts are of what these organizations are and how they operate. Philanthropy can help create truly sound and sustainable organizations, but this requires sound fiscal management and governance in an increasingly complicated world. There is little help for nonprofits even in the same manner there is for small business. In addition to managing effective organizations, nonprofits can and should play a role in policy development and implementation, but this requires additional expertise and support for them. – Cheryl Hayes*

\* Selected quotes from interviews with leaders in the field.

## Conclusion

Ultimately, greater evidenced-based advocacy for vulnerable children is likely to be key to advancing and sustaining the policies – at the federal, state, and community levels – necessary to produce significant and lasting change.

This review of the evolution of philanthropy and federal policy toward vulnerable children, youth, and families over the past two administrations should both hearten and challenge foundation leaders.

On the one hand, much of what was presented as a challenge in 1992 in the *Memorandum to President Clinton* has received concerted philanthropic and federal attention. Many of the specific policy recommendations have been advanced. The understanding of the needs of vulnerable children and effective government responses to them has grown.

On the other hand, demographic changes and the continued vulnerability of too many American children indicate that both philanthropy and government need to pay much greater attention to the needs of vulnerable children, youth, and families. “Business as usual” is not enough. Philanthropy can continue to play an important role in knowledge building and capacity building for systems change, but it also will

have to be much more concerted in its attention to communications and political mobilization. This means investing in advocacy. Ultimately, greater evidenced-based advocacy for vulnerable children is likely to be key to advancing and sustaining the policies – at the federal, state, and community levels – necessary to produce significant and lasting change.

### **Grantmakers for Children, Youth & Families Companion Publication**

A version of Part One was used by Grantmakers for Children, Youth & Families (GCYF) for a November, 2008 Policy Summit of almost 50 policy-oriented grantmakers. The Summit is summarized in the concluding section of *The Rearview Mirror and the Road Ahead: Child, Youth, and Family Philanthropy and Federal Policy: 1992 to 2008*, available on the GCYF website, [www.gcyf.org](http://www.gcyf.org)

## Appendix I

### Child Health Disparities in Context: Selected Indicators of Child Health, Healthy Development, and Family and Community

	White N	Black NH	Hispanic	Source
<b>Child Health Indicators</b>				
Infant Mortality (1,000 live births)	5.7	13.8	5.6	A
Low Birthweight	7.2%	13.4%	6.8%	A
Elevated Blood-Lead Levels	2.6%	4.3%	3.1%	B
Current Asthma Prevalence (under 18)	8.0%	13.0%	8.6%	C
New AIDS Cases 13-17/100,000	.1	4.0	.5	D
Child (1-14) Death Rate/100,000	19	29	18	A
Teen Death (15-19) Rate/100,000	63	81	64	A
6-11 Overweight	11.8%	19.5%	23.7%	E
19-29 Overweight	12.7%	23.6%	23.4%	E
<b>Child Health Service Indicators</b>				
No Health Insurance Cover 0-17	6.4%	6.9%	19.5%	D
No Reported Specific Source of Care 0-17	3.3%	5.8%	24.1%	D
Late/No Entry Into Prenatal Care	11.0%	24.1%	23.5%	D
No Dental Visit (2-17 year-olds)	41.4%	63.2%	63.3%	D
Immunizations Not Complete (19-35 mos)	16.7%	25.5%	21.3%	D
Asthma Hospital Admissions (0-4) /100,000	15.3	120.0	54.0	D
Hospital Admin Ped. Gastrointes. (0-17)/100,000	81.7	84.1	108.9	D
2-5 Year-old untreated dental caries	14.5%	24.2%	29.2%	F
<b>Healthy Child Development Indicators/Education</b>				
Below Basic 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade Reading Proficiency	22%	54%	50%	G
Below Basic 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math Proficiency	18%	53%	45%	G
15-24 Drop-Out Rates	6.0%	10.4%	22.4%	H
Non-Completion of High School	24.1%	48.8%	46.8%	I
<b>Healthy Child Development – Other</b>				
16-19 Year-Old Youth not in School or Working	6%	12%	12%	A
Foster Care Placement (0-17)/1,000	4.9	15.8	6.5	J
20-24 Males in State/Federal Prison /1,000	9.5	63.4	24.9	K
<b>Family and Community Indicators</b>				
Children in Poverty	11%	35%	29%	A
No Parent Employed Year-Round	27%	51%	39%	A
Children in Single-Parent Families	23%	65%	36%	A
Teen (15-19) Birth Rate	2.6%	6.3%	8.3%	A
Living in High Risk Neighborhood	1.7%	20.3%	25.3%	L
Median Household Net Worth	\$74,900	\$7,500	\$9,750	M
<b>Child Population</b>				
2000 Population	44.0 M	10.9 M	12.3 M	
% of Total Child Population	60.9%	15.1%	17.1%	
Projected 2020 Population	42.5 M	12.4 M	18.9 M	
% of Total	52.9%	15.4%	23.6%	

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## Appendix II

### Federal Spending on Children – 1990 to 2007

The Urban Institute’s Report, *Kids’ Share – 2008*, provides both historical data and projections on federal government spending on children, starting with 1960 and going through 2007.

The Urban Institute provided the Child and Family Policy Center (CFPC) with unpublished tables that provide a detailed breakdown of federal spending on children for the federal fiscal years 1990, 2000, and 2007, in order to examine federal spending changes during both the Clinton administration years and the Bush administration years. CFPC requested spending information for the 1992 federal fiscal year, but the Urban Institute data only provided earlier year fiscal spending analyses every five years. The Urban Institute data provided comparable federal spending information within 30 different categories, some of which contained more than one federal program or line item and some of which have changed in name or configuration over the different budget years. The Urban Institute has provided a detailed appendix describing the methodology for their categorizations and what is contained within each of the categories.

CFPC then further combined different spending categories and looked at changes in federal spending between 1990 and 2000 (the Clinton administration years) and between 2000 and 2007 (the Bush administration years). A very simplified table describing these changes, in real (inflation-adjusted dollars), is

shown below.

This table shows that there have been differences in spending increases for children’s programs between the years covering the Clinton and the years covering the Bush administrations, although in both administration years real spending on all these simplified subcategories has increased. While the years of the Clinton administration saw overall real spending increase by 65% and the Bush administration saw real spending increase by 31%, spending exceeded

<b>Federal Spending Changes on Children: 1990 to 2007 – Billions of Dollars and Percent of Budget</b>		
	<b>1990 to 2000 (Clinton Admin)</b>	<b>2000 to 2007 (Bush Admin.)</b>
Child Welfare Increase	\$ 3.0	\$ 1.0
Percent Change	121%	19%
Child Care/TANF Increase	\$ 8.3	\$ 1.8
Percent Change	60%	8%
Education Increase	\$ 7.0	\$ 15.1
Percent Change	49%	71%
Child Health Increase	\$ 15.5	\$ 18.8
Percent Change	111%	64%
Child Tax Benefit Increase	\$ 51.2	\$ 24.4
Percent Change	106%	24%
Other Increase	\$ 15.7	\$ 19.2
Percent Change	25%	24%
All Spending Increase	\$ 100.7	\$ 80.4
Percent Change	65%	31%
GDP Percent Change	27%	17%

the growth of the gross domestic product (GDP) substantially in both periods.

There were significant differences where the increased spending occurred, however. In dollar terms, the largest spending increases were for tax benefits (the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit accounting for all the change). Child welfare (foster care and adoption assistance) spending grew much more dramatically during the Clinton administration than the Bush administration years, with the establishment of new provisions within both Title IV-e and Title IV-b in the Clinton administration. Child care and TANF spending (Child Care and Development Block Grant, child care entitlement, Head Start, and TANF) grew much more substantially during the Clinton administration years than during the Bush administration years, and during the Bush administration years actually growth lagged growth in the GDP. The growth during the Clinton administration included initially expanded funding under TANF and child care while AFDC was converted from a state entitlement program to a grant program, which provided some long-term federal capacity to constrain costs. Alternatively, in education spending increased much more substantially in the Bush administration years than the Clinton years, in significant measure due to increased funding through No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Child health expenditures (Medicaid and SCHIP) grew substantially under both administrations, with lower relative growth

during the Bush administration. Some of the Medicaid and SCHIP growth is related to health costs as well as service provision, and the largest share of SCHIP's growth was during the Bush administration, as states began to exercise options under the program and expand their enrollment, particularly after the turn of the century and the program's initial enactment.

Overall, the data provide more detailed information for the summaries on spending during the two administrations that are provided in the body of the essay. The more detailed information on all thirty spending categories is provided in a second table following this narrative.

It should be noted that the data do not negate some of the conclusions drawn from the First Focus report, *Children's Budget 2008*, regarding some declines in spending under the Bush administration from 2003 to 2007. The First Focus report does not cover the earliest years of the Bush administration and does not include tax spending. The data also cover children 0-17 and therefore do not include changes in older youth and higher education spending, including both loan and grant programs for higher education, tax benefits for higher education, and workforce development programs.

Further, the data do not negate any projections made in the Urban Institute report on the likely decline in public spending on children relative to the federal domestic budget over the next two

decades, as a result of demographic changes and demands under non-child Medicaid, Medicare, and social security spending.

What the data do show, however, is that child spending advanced during the periods of both the Clinton and Bush administrations, although in different areas. Moreover, the data show that tax expenditures (not even including higher education tax expenditures or “middle-class” tax provisions related to the tax treatment of married couples and to lower-income tax brackets) represented by far the single largest share of that spending growth.

Special thanks is due the Urban Institute, who graciously shared the detailed data on spending in 1990, 2000, and 2007 developed for the *Kids’ Share* reports.

**Federal Spending on Children  
Federal Fiscal Years (in millions)**

	Real Dollars													
	1990 nominal dollars		2000 nominal dollars		2000 real dollars		2007		1990-2000		2000-2007		1990-2007	
	1990 nominal dollars	1990 real dollars	2000 nominal dollars	2000 real dollars	2000 real dollars	2007	Change 1990-2000	Percent Change 1990-2000	Change 2000-2007	Percent Change 2000-2007	Change 1990-2007	Percent Change 1990-2007		
Adoption Assistance	\$ 143	\$ 228	\$ 129	\$ 155	\$ 155	\$ 1,883	\$ (74)	-32.2%	\$ 1,728	1115.5%	\$ 1,655	724.3%		
Foster Care	\$ 1,378	\$ 2,201	\$ 4,356	\$ 5,231	\$ 5,231	\$ 4,545	\$ 3,030	137.6%	\$ (686)	-13.1%	\$ 2,344	106.5%		
<b>Child welfare subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 1,521</b>	<b>\$ 2,430</b>	<b>\$ 4,485</b>	<b>\$ 5,386</b>	<b>\$ 5,386</b>	<b>\$ 6,428</b>	<b>\$ 2,956</b>	<b>121.7%</b>	<b>\$ 1,042</b>	<b>19.3%</b>	<b>\$ 3,998</b>	<b>164.5%</b>		
Child Care and Development Block Grant	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,070	\$ 1,285	\$ 1,285	\$ 2,135	\$ 1,285		\$ 850	66.2%	\$ 2,135			
Child Care Entitlement	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,237	\$ 2,686	\$ 2,686	\$ 2,994	\$ 2,686		\$ 308	11.4%	\$ 2,994			
Head Start	\$ 1,304	\$ 2,083	\$ 4,463	\$ 5,360	\$ 5,360	\$ 6,804	\$ 3,276	157.3%	\$ 1,444	26.9%	\$ 4,721	226.6%		
TANF	\$ 7,417	\$ 11,849	\$ 10,778	\$ 12,943	\$ 12,943	\$ 12,094	\$ 1,095	9.2%	\$ (849)	-6.6%	\$ 245	2.1%		
<b>Child Care/TANF subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 8,721</b>	<b>\$ 13,932</b>	<b>\$ 18,548</b>	<b>\$ 22,274</b>	<b>\$ 22,274</b>	<b>\$ 24,027</b>	<b>\$ 8,342</b>	<b>59.9%</b>	<b>\$ 1,753</b>	<b>7.9%</b>	<b>\$ 10,095</b>	<b>72.5%</b>		
Medicaid	\$ 8,278	\$ 13,224	\$ 22,557	\$ 27,089	\$ 27,089	\$ 41,077	\$ 13,865	104.8%	\$ 13,988	51.6%	\$ 27,853	210.6%		
SCHIP	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,220	\$ 1,465	\$ 1,465	\$ 6,000	\$ 1,465		\$ 4,535	309.5%	\$ 6,000			
Nt. Inst. Child Health (NICHD)	\$ 444	\$ 709	\$ 769	\$ 923	\$ 923	\$ 1,237	\$ 214	30.2%	\$ 314	33.9%	\$ 528	74.4%		
<b>Child Health subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 8,722</b>	<b>\$ 13,933</b>	<b>\$ 24,546</b>	<b>\$ 29,477</b>	<b>\$ 29,477</b>	<b>\$ 48,314</b>	<b>\$ 15,544</b>	<b>111.6%</b>	<b>\$ 18,837</b>	<b>63.9%</b>	<b>\$ 34,381</b>	<b>246.7%</b>		
Child Nutrition	\$ 4,977	\$ 7,951	\$ 9,187	\$ 11,033	\$ 11,033	\$ 13,031	\$ 3,082	38.8%	\$ 1,998	18.1%	\$ 5,080	63.9%		
WIC	\$ 2,121	\$ 3,388	\$ 3,950	\$ 4,744	\$ 4,744	\$ 5,309	\$ 1,355	40.0%	\$ 565	11.9%	\$ 1,921	56.7%		
<b>Child Nutrition subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 7,098</b>	<b>\$ 11,339</b>	<b>\$ 13,137</b>	<b>\$ 15,776</b>	<b>\$ 15,776</b>	<b>\$ 18,340</b>	<b>\$ 4,437</b>	<b>39.1%</b>	<b>\$ 2,564</b>	<b>16.3%</b>	<b>\$ 7,001</b>	<b>61.7%</b>		
Social Security	\$ 11,520	\$ 18,403	\$ 18,378	\$ 22,070	\$ 22,070	\$ 26,000	\$ 3,667	19.9%	\$ 3,930	17.8%	\$ 7,597	41.3%		
Supplemental Security Income	\$ 1,077	\$ 1,721	\$ 4,822	\$ 5,791	\$ 5,791	\$ 6,718	\$ 4,070	236.6%	\$ 927	16.0%	\$ 4,997	290.5%		
Veteran's Benefits	\$ 766	\$ 1,224	\$ 1,271	\$ 1,526	\$ 1,526	\$ 2,120	\$ 303	24.7%	\$ 594	38.9%	\$ 896	73.2%		
<b>Child Share of Security Benefits subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 13,363</b>	<b>\$ 21,347</b>	<b>\$ 24,471</b>	<b>\$ 29,387</b>	<b>\$ 29,387</b>	<b>\$ 34,838</b>	<b>\$ 8,040</b>	<b>37.7%</b>	<b>\$ 5,451</b>	<b>18.5%</b>	<b>\$ 13,491</b>	<b>63.2%</b>		
Education for the Handicapped	\$ 1,617	\$ 2,583	\$ 4,949	\$ 5,943	\$ 5,943	\$ 11,543	\$ 3,360	130.1%	\$ 5,600	94.2%	\$ 8,960	346.9%		
Dependents' Schools Abroad	\$ 865	\$ 1,382	\$ 905	\$ 1,087	\$ 1,087	\$ 1,002	\$ (295)	-21.4%	\$ (85)	-7.8%	\$ (380)	-27.5%		
Grants to Disadvantaged	\$ 4,494	\$ 7,179	\$ 8,529	\$ 10,242	\$ 10,242	\$ 14,843	\$ 3,063	42.7%	\$ 4,601	44.9%	\$ 7,664	106.8%		
School Improvement	\$ 1,189	\$ 1,899	\$ 2,550	\$ 3,062	\$ 3,062	\$ 7,697	\$ 1,163	61.2%	\$ 4,635	151.3%	\$ 5,798	305.2%		
Impact Aid	\$ 816	\$ 1,304	\$ 877	\$ 1,053	\$ 1,053	\$ 1,446	\$ (250)	-19.2%	\$ 393	37.3%	\$ 142	10.9%		
<b>Education subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 8,981</b>	<b>\$ 14,347</b>	<b>\$ 17,810</b>	<b>\$ 21,388</b>	<b>\$ 21,388</b>	<b>\$ 36,531</b>	<b>\$ 7,041</b>	<b>49.1%</b>	<b>\$ 15,143</b>	<b>70.8%</b>	<b>\$ 22,184</b>	<b>154.6%</b>		

**Federal Spending on Children (Continued)**  
**Federal Fiscal Years (in millions)**

	Real Dollars													
	1990 nominal dollars		1990 real dollars		2000 nominal dollars		2000 real dollars		2007		Percent Change			
	1990	2000	1990	2000	2000	2007	2000	2007	2000	2007	1990-2000	2000-2007	1990-2007	
Social Services Block Grant	\$ 1,451	\$ 2,318	\$ 939	\$ 1,128	\$ 1,121						\$ (1,190)	-\$ (7)	-\$ (1,197)	-51.6%
Food Stamp Program	\$ 7,436	\$ 11,879	\$ 9,385	\$ 11,270	\$ 17,177						\$ (609)	\$ 5,907	\$ 5,298	44.6%
Section 8 Housing	\$ 7,157	\$ 11,433	\$ 11,785	\$ 14,153	\$ 18,606						\$ 2,719	\$ 4,453	\$ 7,173	62.7%
Low Income Energy Assistance	\$ 604	\$ 965	\$ 605	\$ 727	\$ 1,172						\$ (238)	\$ 445	\$ 207	21.5%
Child Support Enforcement	\$ 1,061	\$ 1,695	\$ 3,006	\$ 3,610	\$ 3,721						\$ 1,915	\$ 111	\$ 2,026	119.5%
Low Rent Public Housing	\$ 1,190	\$ 1,901	\$ 2,093	\$ 2,513	\$ 2,827						\$ 612	\$ 314	\$ 926	48.7%
<b>Other Supports subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 18,899</b>	<b>\$ 30,191</b>	<b>\$ 27,813</b>	<b>\$ 33,401</b>	<b>\$ 44,624</b>						<b>\$ 3,209</b>	<b>\$ 11,223</b>	<b>\$ 14,433</b>	<b>47.8%</b>
Child Tax Credit	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 20,140	\$ 24,186	\$ 47,081						\$ 24,186	\$ 22,895	\$ 47,081	
Dependent Care Credit	\$ 2,840	\$ 4,537	\$ 1,743	\$ 2,093	\$ 2,013						\$ (2,444)	\$ (80)	\$ (2,524)	-55.6%
Dependent Exemption	\$ 21,321	\$ 34,060	\$ 31,241	\$ 37,517	\$ 32,908						\$ 3,457	\$ (4,609)	\$ (1,152)	-3.4%
Earned Income Tax Credit	\$ 6,155	\$ 9,833	\$ 29,821	\$ 35,812	\$ 41,973						\$ 25,979	\$ 6,161	\$ 32,140	326.9%
Exclusion of Employer Provided Child Care	\$ 240	\$ 383	\$ 670	\$ 805	\$ 1,170						\$ 421	\$ 365	\$ 787	205.2%
<b>Tax Benefits subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 30,316</b>	<b>\$ 48,430</b>	<b>\$ 82,945</b>	<b>\$ 99,609</b>	<b>\$ 123,975</b>						<b>\$ 51,179</b>	<b>\$ 24,366</b>	<b>\$ 75,545</b>	<b>156.0%</b>
<b>Total All</b>	<b>\$ 97,621</b>	<b>\$ 155,950</b>	<b>\$ 213,755</b>	<b>\$ 256,698</b>	<b>\$ 337,077</b>						<b>\$ 100,749</b>	<b>\$ 80,379</b>	<b>\$ 181,127</b>	<b>116.1%</b>

Source: Unpublished data provided by the Urban Institute as part of a special request

	1990	2000	2007	Change 1990-2007	Change 2000-2007	percent change 1990-2007	percent change 2000-2007
CPI (month of March for each year)	128.7	171.2	205.6	76.9	34.4	59.75%	20.09%
	1990	2000	2007	Change 1990-2007	Change 2000-2007	percent change 1990-2007	percent change 2000-2007
Gross Domestic Product (nominal dollars)	\$ 5,735.4	\$ 9,709.8	\$ 13,667.5	\$ 7,932.1	\$ 3,957.7	138.30%	40.76%
Gross Domestic Product (real dollars)	\$ 9,162	\$ 11,660	\$ 13,667.5	\$ 4,505.2	\$ 2,007.0	49.17%	17.21%

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Representatives of Grantmakers for Children, Youth and Families (December, 1992). *Vulnerable children and families: Philanthropic perspectives on new collaborations: A memorandum to President-elect Clinton and the new administration from the philanthropic community*. Council on Foundations. In future footnotes, this document will be referred to as *Memorandum*.

<sup>2</sup>Murray, C. (1984) *Losing ground: American social policy 1950-1980*. Basic Books. Murray argued that welfare dependency is a function of the generosity of the welfare system, with unmarried childbearing becoming a lifestyle as an alternative to work and responsibility. A counter to Murray's thesis is presented in Ellwood, D. (1989). *Poor support: Poverty in the American family*. Basic Books. Ellwood offered an economic analysis that disputes Murray's claims that adolescent childbearing rose because of generous welfare benefits.

<sup>3</sup>Singh, S. and Darroch, J. (1999). Adolescent pregnancy and child-bearing: Levels and trends in developed countries. *Family planning perspectives*. Vol. 32, No. 1. Retrieved at: [www.guttmacher.org/pubs/journals/3201400.html](http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/journals/3201400.html). The adolescent birthrate (births to 15-19 year old females per 1,000 15-19 year-old females) declined in the United States from 1970 to 1985 from 68.3 to 51.0, then rose to 59.9 in 1990 before declining again to 54.4 in 1995. These rates, however, were much higher than for most other countries examined, as were the abortion rates among the population. Since 1995, the rates have continued to decline, now down to 41.9 in 2006. There is wide variation by race and ethnicity, however, with the adolescent birth rate ranging from 26.6 for White, non-Hispanic females to 83.0 for Hispanic females and 63.7 for Black, non-Hispanic females. See: Child Trends DataBank. Later figures were retrieved at: <http://www.childtrendsdatabank.org/figure/13-figure-1>.

<sup>4</sup>Carnegie Task Force on Meeting the Needs of Young Children (1994). *Starting points: Meeting the needs of our youngest children*. Carnegie Corporation: New York, NY.

<sup>5</sup>See, for instance: Iowa Kids Count (1994). *Family matters: Trends in family well-being: The next quarter century*. Child and Family Policy Center: Des Moines, IA. That report showed that the percentage of Iowa mothers working in two parent families rose from 50.2% in 1971 to 72.1% in 1992, while the percentage of mothers working in single parent families rose from 63.1% to 68.3%. Despite working, mothers in single parent families also were much more likely to be poor in 1992 than 1971. The figures suggest that the public opinion polling for "welfare reform" may have been a reflection of economic changes that now required two parent families to both be in the workforce and a resulting rejection of a perceived double standard that would provide income supports for single parents to remain at home, in fact the predicate for the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program.

<sup>6</sup>National Commission on Children (1991). *Beyond rhetoric: A new American agenda for children and families: Summary*. U.S. Government Printing Office: Washington, DC. Page 25, Figure 6. This Figure is updated and presented later in this report.

<sup>7</sup>Schorr, L. with Schorr, D. (1988). *Within our reach: Breaking the cycle of disadvantage*. Random House: New York, NY.

<sup>8</sup>In a debate with Lisbeth Schorr, Charles Murray described such programs as "hothouse epiphenomena" that will always exist within society through the efforts of exemplary individuals, but can never be replicated or move beyond the hothouse. Schorr's analysis of the attributes of effective programs are themselves subject to both explicit efforts of replication and to measurement, but most actual replication efforts to date have focused upon replicating program structure and curricula rather than the attributes that Schorr described as essential to their effectiveness. Conversation with Lisbeth Schorr.

<sup>9</sup>Center for the Study of Social Policy (1998). *The Annie E. Casey Foundation's new futures initiative: Strategic planning guide*. Annie E. Casey Foundation: Greenwich, CT. CSSP later provided a detailed assessment of the initiative, and the Annie E. Casey Foundation published a summary of its experiences and lessons learned. Both were designed to help guide future efforts in the field to address underlying child and family problems in a comprehensive way. Center for the Study of Social Policy (1995). *Building new futures for at risk youth: Findings from a five-year multi-site evaluation*. Washington, DC. Annie E. Casey Foundation (1995). *The path of most resistance: Reflections and lessons learned from New Futures*. Baltimore, MD.

<sup>10</sup>Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989) *Turning points: Preparing American youth for the 21<sup>st</sup> century*. Carnegie Corporation: New York, NY.

<sup>11</sup>Kellogg youth initiative partnerships, 1987 – 1997: *Lessons learned from the crucial first decade of positive youth development through community-based programming* (2001). W.K. Kellogg Foundation: Battle Creek, MI.

<sup>12</sup>The Children's Initiative was planned in 1990 and 1991 and then launched in 1992 with the selection of five states as a ten-year, \$56 million initiative, but abandoned a year later, after determination that its goals could not be achieved within the funding and time frame laid out in the initiative.

<sup>13</sup>*Starting points, op. cit.*

<sup>14</sup>*Beyond rhetoric, op. cit.*

<sup>15</sup>*ibid.* Table Two, page 91. There was bipartisan agreement on the tax recommendations, but a minority of commissioners did not endorse the \$9.1 billion for health care. Similar to some of the debate today, the minority recommended restructuring tax subsidies and expanding

consumer choice rather than expanding federal insurance programs and mandating coverage.

<sup>16</sup>*ibid.* The 1991 estimates of the numbers of uninsured children were provided by Lewin and Associates for the Commission. There are different estimates of the number of uninsured children that have been provided over time; and a different database has been used by others in assessing the impact of SCHIP, which shows a somewhat higher number of uninsured children at this time.

<sup>17</sup>*Memorandum, op. cit.*, p. 2.

<sup>18</sup>Foundation Center (2008). *Highlights of foundation yearbook – 2008 edition*. New York: New York.

According to this and earlier yearbooks, the growth in foundation giving has been from \$11.1 billion in 1993 to \$42.9 billion in 2007. See also: Fleishman, J. (2007). *The foundation: A great American secret: How private wealth is changing the world*. Public Affairs: United States of America.

<sup>19</sup>*Highlights, ibid.* Far from all of this is directed to children, youth, and families, however, and even less to more vulnerable children, youth, and families. The investments are broken down as 24% for education (much for colleges and universities), 21% for health (much for research into and treatment of different diseases, many in adults), and 15% for human services (much for services to the elderly and other populations as well as children, youth, and families).

<sup>20</sup>*Memorandum, op. cit.* p. 5-7.

<sup>21</sup>*ibid.* p. 8

<sup>22</sup>*ibid.* Quotes in paragraph, p. 9 and 10.

<sup>23</sup>These issues were the subject of a 1991 National Forum on the Future of Children and Families sponsored by the National Academy of Sciences. The proceedings include a compendium of articles stressing the need for more comprehensive, seamless, community-based services. Schorr, L., Both, D., and Copple, C. (eds.) (1991) *Effective services for young children*. National Academy Press: Washington, DC. This characterization is drawn from commentary by Doug Nelson, p. 33. Toward the end of the first Bush administration and under the leadership of Martin Gerry, Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation within the Department of Health and Human Services, a National Center for Service Integration (NCSI) was established through a competitive grant in 1990 and community-based service integration projects were also funded. NCSI operated with federal funding from 1990 to 1994, but federal funding support was not continued beyond that time by the Clinton administration. Generally, there was consensus that “top down” integration of services had not produced results and that community-based strategies that involved collaborative planning and governance were needed to address issues of service silos and getting vulnerable and children what they need to succeed. An analysis of the federal

experiences in service integration from the Allied Services Act onward is found in: Office of the Inspector General, United States Department of Health and Human Services (1991). *Services integration: A twenty-year retrospective*. Washington, DC. The U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services also coordinated at that time to support school-linked services and community-school strategies, including the publication of a guide on school-community collaborations. Blank, M. and Melaville, T. (1993) *Together we can: Crafting a profamily system of education and human services*. United States Departments of Education and Health and Human Services: Washington, D.C.

<sup>24</sup>Abt Associates conducted a million dollar evaluation of the Comprehensive Child Development Program (CCDP), with its major conclusion very bluntly stated that “intensive case management services to low-income families ... does not lead to improved outcomes for children and families.” St. Pierre, R., Lazyer, J., Goodsen, B., & Bernstein, L. (1997). *National impact evaluation of the comprehensive child development program: Final report*. Abt Associates: Cambridge, MA. Citation from Executive Summary, p. EX-18. The research on most family support strategies remains equivocal, although a variety of exemplary family support programs clearly have showed success. For a discussion of the family support literature, see: Bruner, C. (2006). “Developing an outcome evaluation framework for use by family support programs,” in Dolan, P, Canavan, J. & Pinkerton, J. *Family support as reflective practice*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers: London, UK. P. 237-249.

<sup>25</sup>*Memorandum, op. cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>26</sup>In fact, there was significant overlap and cross-fertilization between foundations, the Commission on Children, and other government entities. Cheryl Hayes served as Executive Director of the Commission on Children and subsequently became the Executive Director of the Finance Project, funded by multiple foundations, to develop financing tools for improving children’s services, with a particular initial emphasis upon welfare reform. Ann Rosewater, the writer of the Memo, served as the lead staff for the Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families and later became part of the Clinton administration, serving under Mary Jo Bane in the Department of Health and Human Services. Individual foundation leaders also played significant roles in helping to inform the work of the Commission on Children.

<sup>27</sup>The recommended \$1,000 child tax credit represented approximately \$40 billion of the \$51-55 billion in investment recommendations and has been enacted (although not adjusted for inflation), along with major expansions of the Earned Income Tax Credit. SCHIP has contributed substantially to the \$9 billion health recommendations. Senator Rockefeller’s senior

staffperson, Barbara Prior, provided the 85% figure, indicating that the biggest disappointments have been on the absence of headway on the child support recommendations and on redirecting more child welfare resources under Title IV-E to preventive services. Author's conversation with Barbara Prior on September 2, 2008.

<sup>28</sup>Collectively, this resulted primarily in a shift in federal funding from direct transfer payments through welfare benefit checks to recipients to child care subsidies for TANF recipients and other families while they worked or were in training and education programs. It also provided states flexibility in the use of TANF funds that enabled them to finance many prevention-oriented programs. The Center for Law and Social Policy reviewed the impact of these changes nationally and through special analyses in five states – Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Texas, and Washington. Mezey, J., Schumacher, R., Greenberg, M., Lombardi, J., & Hutchins, J. (2002). *Unfinished agenda: Child care for low-income families since 1996: Implications for federal and state policy*. Center for Law and Social Policy: Washington, D.C.

<sup>29</sup>It also was expanded to include time-limited family reunification services and adoptions promotion and support activities and incentives. In its reauthorization during the Bush administration, it was renamed the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Act.

<sup>30</sup>This was part of the Clinton-Gore administration's Community Empowerment Agenda to stimulate economic opportunity in distressed communities and involved major commitments of resources to a select number of Empowerment Zones (\$100 million over ten years plus additional opportunities to secure tax credits and federal funding resources) and lesser funding for a larger number of enterprise communities. A foundation consortium (the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Cleveland Foundation, East Bay Community Foundation, Ford Foundation, Greater Kansas City Community Foundation, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and Rockefeller Foundation) developed to provide technical assistance to these communities and issued a report on their experiences and lessons learned. Joseph, M. & Levy, J. (2002). *Voices from the empowerment zones: Insights from launching large-scale community revitalization initiatives*. Annie E. Casey Foundation: Baltimore, MD.

<sup>31</sup>When the Comprehensive Education and Training Act (CETA) was replaced by the Job Training Partnership Act in 1982, significant emphasis and resources moved away from providing employment opportunities within nonprofit and public sector organizations and the emphasis was clearly upon private sector businesses. In many respects, the Corporation for National and Community Service

brought back some of the opportunities that previously had existed under CETA.

<sup>32</sup>Center for Children and Families (2006). *Too close to turn back: Covering America's children: Building on the success of the children's coverage through SCHIP and Medicaid*. Georgetown University: Washington, DC. The report indicates that uninsurance among low-income children (under 19) declined from 22.3 percent in 1997 to 14.9 percent in 2005. The Georgetown report used the most comparable data over time on the number of uninsured children, from the health insurance questions on the current population survey, which only identify children who have been uninsured throughout the year (and therefore under-represent those who are not insured at any point in time and do not reflect those who are only insured during part of the year). These data also show that the overall number and percentage of uninsured children has declined since the start of the SCHIP program in 1997, but not as much as for low-income children. Data show a rise in uninsured children between 1990 and 1997 that added impetus to passage of SCHIP – from 8.5 million children (13.0%) in 1990 to 10.7 million (15.0%) in 1997 to 8.2 million (11.0%) in 2007. DeNavas-Walt, C, Proctor, B., & Smith, J. (2008). *Income, poverty and health insurance coverage in the United States: 2007*. Current Population Reports: U.S. Bureau of the Census: Washington: D.C. P. 64. Source for first two years: Annie E. Casey Foundation (2001). *Kids count special report: Trends in child poverty: 1976 – 1999*. Baltimore, MD.

<sup>33</sup>See: [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).

<sup>34</sup>Jackson, P. (2006). *Higher education tax credits: Test an economic analysis*. Congressional Research Service: United States Congress: Washington, D.C. p. CRS-1. According to one analysis, the primary beneficiaries have been taxfilers in the middle range of incomes (\$30,000 to \$70,000), with limited access to lower-income filers. Long, B. (2003). *The impact of federal tax credits for higher education expenses*. NBER (National Bureau of Economic Research) Working Paper Series, Vol. w9553.

<sup>35</sup>Unlike Hope and Lifetime Learning Credits, 529 Plan benefits tend to be skewed to upper-income individuals and often include state as well as federal tax benefits. According to the College Savings Plan Network, an estimated \$70 to \$100 billion is expected to be invested in 529 Plans over the next five years. Information retrieved from Network website: <http://www.collegesavings.org/history.aspx>.

<sup>36</sup>*Kids' share – 2008, op. cit.*

<sup>37</sup>Reich, R. (2007). *Supercapitalism: The transformation of business, democracy, and everyday life*. Vintage Books: New York, NY. In addition to a concentration of income and wealth, particularly within the top one percent of income earners and wage holders, there also has been an income and wealth shift by age, with greater affluence



(as well as sheer numbers) among those over sixty-five. Sawhill, B. (2008), "Paying for investments in children," in: First Focus. *Big ideas for children: Investing in our nation's future*. Washington, D.C. p. 30-48. In posing a 2 percent reduction in federal spending on the elderly to produce a 7 percent increase in spending on children, Sawhill presents data showing that retirees in the next decade and one half will have median income levels a little over \$100,000 per year, 50% higher than those retiring today. Federal tax policies need to take into account such accumulated wealth and income. Currently, those over 65 have equivalent incomes to those under 65, but fewer expenses (the majority own their homes, without mortgage payments) and nearly three times the household net worth.

<sup>38</sup>Carasso, A., Stuerle, C., Reynolds, G., Vericker, T. & Macomber, J. (2008) *Kids' share 2008: How children fare in the federal budget*. Urban Institute: Washington, DC.

Linden, M. (2008). *Children's budget 2008*. First Focus: Washington, D.C. The Urban Institute report notes that children's spending declined as a share of federal domestic spending between 1960 and 2007 from 20.2 percent down to 16.2 percent. In fact, however, it rose as a share of domestic spending from about 11 percent in 1990 to 16.2 percent in 2007, primarily as a result of expanded federal tax credits and increased Medicaid expenditures. Federal discretionary spending fares worse. The Urban Institute further projects out to the year 2018 to show that, under a "business as usual scenario," children will receive a decreasing share of all federal domestic spending, down to 13.8 percent, due to the aging of American society and the costs associated with social security and Medicare. The First Focus report examines spending by program and does not include tax expenditures, focusing upon the federal fiscal years from 2004 through 2008. While mandatory spending increased during this period by 1.7 percent in real (inflation-adjusted) dollars, primarily from increases in Medicaid, discretionary spending declined by 6.7 percent during this period.

<sup>39</sup>See the appendix for changes in real spending on a variety of education programs used by the Urban Institute in its analysis on spending.

<sup>40</sup>Bruner, C. (2008). *Children and the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress: Context, challenges, and opportunities for a new future*. Child and Family Policy Center Policy Brief: Des Moines, IA. p. 6. The \$90 million estimate was provided by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and was developed for 2012, the time at which these tax provisions enacted in 2001 and 2003 will fully expire if not re-enacted by Congress. Under current PAYGO rules, any Congressional action to retain these provisions requires off-setting expenditure cuts or tax increases, so retaining these middle-class provisions will require finding other revenue sources to pay for them, or altering PAYGO rules.

<sup>41</sup>The White House website indicates that there are 170

federal programs available to faith-based and community initiatives, and an Associate Press report indicated that spending on faith-based programs was a billion dollars in 2003, with substantial additions through federal earmarks. While some of this funding has gone to faith-based organizations who view faith as central to their service, much also has gone to mainstream service providers with affiliations with religious organizations. Bane, M., Coffin, B., and Thiemann, R. (2000). *Who will provide: The changing role of religion in American social welfare*. Westview Press: Boulder, CO.

<sup>42</sup>See: [www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/content/docs/white\\_house\\_task\\_force.pdf](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/content/docs/white_house_task_force.pdf)

<sup>43</sup>*Children's budget 2008, op. cit.* See Appendix for overall federal tax and budget expenditures for the overall period from 1992 to 2006.

<sup>44</sup>See, for instance: Johnson, K. & Knitzer, J. (2006). *Early childhood systems that spend smarter: Maximizing resources to serve vulnerable children*. National Center for Children in Poverty: New York, NY.

<sup>45</sup>*Kids' share – 2008, op. cit.*, and *Children's budget 2008, op. cit.*

<sup>46</sup>In its 2005 report, the Urban Institute's *Assessing the New Federalism* publication lists the following foundations as its funders: the Annie E. Casey Foundation, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and The Ford Foundation. Golden, O. (2005). *Assessing the new federalism: Eight years later*. Urban Institute: Washington, DC.

<sup>47</sup>According to its final report, the consortium included the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Cleveland Foundation, East Bay Community Foundation, Ford Foundation, Greater Kansas City Community Foundation, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and Rockefeller Foundation. Joseph, M. & Levy, J. (2002). *Voices from the empowerment zones: Insights from launching large-scale community revitalization initiatives*. Annie E. Casey Foundation: Baltimore, MD.

<sup>48</sup>Kids Count has been a signature program for the Annie E. Casey Foundation, with a well-organized press strategy constructed around its national Annual Report and lead essay, which features a specific child policy theme. Kids Count also directly funds state organizations in the fifty states, District of Columbia and certain territories to complete state Kids Count reports.

<sup>49</sup>Approximately two-thirds of the state organizations funded are advocacy organizations seeking to influence state child policies. The \$75,000 annual grants they receive are viewed as core funding by many of these organizations and represent the single largest commitment of foundation funding to state-based child advocacy that

exists for such advocacy.

<sup>50</sup>Theories of change were introduced as an approach to evaluating comprehensive community change initiatives and were employed by foundations as least as early as the Carnegie Corporation's Starting Points Initiative. They now are in widespread use, although they often end up representing frameworks for explaining the interconnection of factors rather than means to make assumptions about strategies explicit and capable of measurement. The Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change has taken leadership in defining the field. For a seminal piece on the subject, see, in particular, Weiss, C. (1995) "Nothing more practical than good theory," in Connell, J. *et.al.* *New approaches to evaluating community initiatives*. Aspen Institute: New York, NY.

<sup>51</sup>See: Coffman, J. (ed.). (2007) "Advocacy and policy change," *Evaluation Exchange* Vol. XIII, No. 1.

<sup>52</sup>Shonkoff, J., & Phillips, D.A. (eds.) (2000). *From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development*. National Research Council, Institute of Medicine.

<sup>53</sup>*Starting points, op. cit.*

<sup>54</sup>This culminated in separate state school readiness reports and an overall report. Rhode Island Kids Count 2005). *Getting ready: Findings from the national school readiness indicators initiative a 17 state partnership*. Providence, RI. A companion initiative, the State Early Childhood Policy Technical Assistance Network (SECPTAN) produced a variety of policy-related reports, based on issues raised by the state teams in developing their indicators reports. See [www.gettingready.org](http://www.gettingready.org) and [www.finebynine.org](http://www.finebynine.org) for the SRII and SECPTAN reports.

<sup>55</sup>See: [www.ffyf.org](http://www.ffyf.org).

<sup>56</sup>The Heinz Endowments undertook a very significant effort in the mid-1990's to expand early childhood services to scale within Allegheny County through the Early Childhood Initiative, a partnership with United Way and businesses that could then be sustained through public funding, based upon a pioneering Early Childhood Business Plan. The Heinz Endowments also supported a report conducted by the Rand Corporation that offered very frank and insightful lessons learned from that effort. See: Gill, B., Dembosky, J. & Caulkins, J. (2002). *A noble bet: Lessons learned from one community's experience*. RAND: Santa Monica, CA.

<sup>57</sup>In many respects, the goals and the approach of the Early Learning Initiative are the same as the Pew Charitable Trusts Children's Initiative framework constructed more than two decades previously, but this time with a level of funding that does have the potential of truly going to scale and producing community-wide impacts.

<sup>58</sup>Knapp-Philo, J. (2000). *The Hilton/Early head start training program*. *Head Start Bulletin* 89. Retrieved at: <http://www.headstartinfo.org/publications>.

<sup>59</sup>The gaps in investment are quite pronounced for young children and their healthy development, in particular. Estimates of the "investment gap" for providing quality, affordable early care and education, have been at least in the \$50-100 billion range, annually, with the actual per child public investments on young children small in comparison with school-aged and college-aged youth. See: Bruner, C. *et.al.* (2005). *Early learning left out: Closing the investment gap for America's youngest children*. Voices for America's Children and Child and Family Policy Center: 2005. The report analyzes federal, state, and school district spending by child age on child education and development in nine states and the District of Columbia and concludes that, for every dollar invested in school-aged children, 52 cents is invested in college-aged youth but only 20 cents on preschool-aged children and 7 cents of infants and toddlers. The report describes the fundamental mismatch between what parents can afford to pay for the care of their children while they work and what it requires to guarantee the availability of safe and developmentally appropriate care.

<sup>60</sup>At the same time, brain research has implications to adolescents as well as young children. Commission on Children at Risk (2003) *Hardwired to connect: The scientific case for authoritative communities*. Institute for American Values.

<sup>61</sup>Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989) *Turning points: Preparing American youth for the 21<sup>st</sup> century*. Carnegie Corporation: New York, NY; and [http://www.carnegie.org/sub/pubs/reports/great\\_transitions/gr\\_chpt4.html](http://www.carnegie.org/sub/pubs/reports/great_transitions/gr_chpt4.html)

<sup>62</sup>See: [www.modelsforchange.net/about](http://www.modelsforchange.net/about).

<sup>63</sup>These included the Altman Foundation, Booth Ferris Foundation, the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Commonwealth Fund, the Ford Foundation, the Charles Hayden Foundation, Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Merck Family Fund, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Pinkerton Foundation, and Surdna Foundation, Inc.,

<sup>64</sup>Watson, B. (2002). *Community change for youth development: Ten lessons from the CCYD initiative*. Public/Private Ventures: Philadelphia.

<sup>65</sup>According to its website, the Afterschool Alliance was established in 2000 by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the U.S. Department of Education, J.C. Penney Company, Inc., the Open Society Institute/The After-School Corporation, the Entertainment Industry Foundation, and the Creative Artists Agency Foundation. [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).

<sup>66</sup>The Eisenhower Foundation has made replication of programs one of its areas of focus. The Full Service Community School Initiative continues to be engaged in that replication in six schools. See: [www](http://www).

eisenhowerfoundation.org/fscs.php.

<sup>67</sup>To appreciate this level of concentration, see: Bruner, C. et.al. (2007). *Village building and school readiness: Closing opportunity gaps in a diverse society*. Chapter Two characterizes America's 65,000 census tracts by their degree of child-raising vulnerability. While 6.7 percent of the population resides in the highest vulnerability tracts, 8.6 percent of the young child population resides there, showing that these highest vulnerability tracts are "rich in young children." While 1.7 percent of the White, non-Hispanic population resides in these census tracts, 20.3 percent of the Black and 25.3 percent of the Hispanic population reside in these districts. Overall, the highest vulnerability tracts are 85% of color, while the tracts with no vulnerability factors are 85% White, non-Hispanic. With the exception of the South, these tracts predominantly are in large metropolitan areas.

<sup>68</sup>This was first popularized in: Putnam, R. (1995). "Bowling alone: America's declining social capital," *Journal of Democracy* Vol. 6 No 1. It was later expanded into a book by the same name. It emanated from Putnam's study of Italy's development after the Second World War: *Making democracy work: Civic traditions in modern Italy*.

<sup>69</sup>On one hand, exemplary programs working with vulnerable families could prove successful with their clients in part because they are able to get them first in line for finite services designed to serve vulnerable families. On the other hand, programs that are able to work only with a few clients may be unable to create synergy and help build community, when a participant is able to move forward but his or her friends, relatives, and neighbors cannot. The first phenomenon has been referred to as "the fallacy of composition." The latter has parallels to the concept of a "tipping point" and to issues of "critical mass."

<sup>70</sup>For a remarkably frank and insightful examination of the initiative and its misunderstandings and ultimate inability to achieve its objectives, see: Brown, P. & Feister, L. (2007). *Hard lessons about philanthropy and community change from the neighborhood*. Chapin Hall Center for Children: Chicago: IL.

<sup>71</sup>The Northwest Area Foundation is in the process of rethinking and restructuring this initiative.

<sup>72</sup>The National Neighborhood Indicators Project is a collaborative effort by the Urban Institute, working with partner organizations in 31 cities, to develop broad-based neighborhood information systems for local policy making and community building, with an emphasis upon providing residents and grassroots organizations with access to public data. For a description, see: Kingsley, T. & Petit, K. (2004). *Neighborhood information systems: We need a broader effort to build local capacity*. Urban Institute: Washington, D.C.

<sup>73</sup>Lakoff, G. (1996). *Moral politics: What conservatives*

*know that liberals don't (later retitled What liberals and conservatives think)*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago, IL.

<sup>74</sup>For one analysis, see: Covington, S. (1998), "Right thinking, big grants, and long-term strategy: How conservative philanthropies and right wing think tanks transform society," *CovertAction Quarterly*. Winter.

<sup>75</sup>First Focus is housed in America's Promise and is funded through a consortium of foundations, with the Packard Foundation and Atlantic Philanthropies assuming a lead role. First Focus also provides some funding for state-based advocacy, with a primary focus upon developing a bipartisan federal investment budget for children. Its policy focus includes, but extends well beyond, early childhood, with a strong emphasis on child health, family economic security, and reducing school dropout.

<sup>76</sup>While foundations have increased investments in public education and advocacy, these often continue to have restrictions on either grassroots or direct lobbying, even though lobbying may be seen as important to achieve foundation goals. The Pre-K Now grants are notable for allowing lobbying. For a discussion of this issue, see: Grantmakers for Children, Youth, and Families (2008).

"Setting the policy table: The role of children, youth and family grantmakers in public policy." *Insight*. Spring.

<sup>77</sup>Initially, the EITC essentially helped to negate the federal social security and medicare taxes collected from low-wage workers, but its expansions have meant working low-income families actually receive much more than that.

<sup>78</sup>Holt, C. (2006) *The earned income tax credit at age 30: What we know*. Brookings Institution Research Brief: Washington, D.C.

<sup>79</sup>The *Beyond rhetoric* chart went only to 1989 and did not include the poverty rate for the 18-64 population.

<sup>80</sup>Public opinion polls and self-sufficiency analysis show that it severely under-represents the level of income needed by families to get by without government supports (e.g. food stamps, child care assistance, medical help). The Northwest Area Foundation has done polling nationally and within its eight-state region on public attitudes toward poverty, with the public consistently indicating that a family of four needs an income in the \$35,000 to \$45,000 range to get by without need for additional supports. See: [www.nwaf.org](http://www.nwaf.org). A large number of states and communities have engaged in self-sufficiency analyses by looking at what it takes a set of different family types to meet their basic needs without government supports. Depending upon child care needs and work-related expenses, such studies generally show that families with children require wages at least in the \$12 to \$20 per hour range and that family income at 150% to 225% of poverty is needed. International comparisons show that comparative child poverty in the United States is higher than other industrialized countries (when poverty is defined at one-

half the median income level), largely because of relatively low levels of government transfer payments that in many nations substantially reduce the poverty rate.

<sup>81</sup>Spurred in part by efforts in Great Britain and European countries to dramatically reduce poverty, poverty reduction efforts have taken on new visibility and force in the United States, led in part by foundations and becoming part of some state and community initiatives setting goals for reducing or eliminating poverty over the next decade. Eos Foundation has been active in bringing the Great Britain approach to the United States. Spotlight on Poverty and Half in Ten are two efforts to raise poverty reduction or elimination as a major policy issue.

<sup>82</sup>*Supercapitalism, op. cit.*

<sup>83</sup>See: Kawachi, I. & Kennedy, P. (1997). "Socioeconomic determinants of health: Health and social cohesion: Why care about inequality? *BMJ* 314: 1037.

<sup>84</sup>Child and Family Policy Center analysis from United States Census Bureau 1990 Census and 2007 American Community Survey.

<sup>85</sup>Issues of diversity also must be addressed in developing early childhood services. See: Diversity Working Group (2008) *Building early learning systems in a multi-ethnic society: BUILD's policy brief series*. BUILD Initiative. This introduction to the policy brief series describes five gaps that must be addressed: (1) a readiness gap, (2) a participation gap, (3) a cultural awareness and recognition gap, (4) workforce diversity, (4) a stakeholder planning and participation gap.

<sup>86</sup>Polling data shows the majority of White, non-Hispanic voters believe that discrimination has occurred in the past, but would like to view it as in the past, while African Americans and other minorities believe it is still present and needs to be addressed today. As one illustration from a Gallup Poll question, while 73 percent of Americans state that African Americans are treated as well as Whites in their communities, only 39 percent of African Americans do, with 39 percent of African Americans "very dissatisfied" with their treatment. Retrieved at: <http://www.libraryindex.com/pages/2943/Public-Opinion.html>.

<sup>87</sup>Some of the emphasis in these initiatives is simply fostering dialogue across racial or ethnic groups. The Frameworks Institute has done considerable work, with support from a number of foundations (JEHT Foundation, W. K. Kellogg Foundation, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, The California Endowment, the Ford Foundation, and the Annie E. Casey Foundation), on how to present racial issues in ways that can promote positive action. Their analysis points to the challenges of even entering into a dialogue on race, given the perceptions within the dominant White culture that America needs to put such issues behind it. See: Davey, L. & Bales, S. (2008). *Frameworks message brief: Framing race*.

FrameWorks Institute: Washington, D.C. Retrieved at: [http://www.frameworksinstitute.org/assets/files/PDF\\_race/message\\_brief\\_race.pdf](http://www.frameworksinstitute.org/assets/files/PDF_race/message_brief_race.pdf).

<sup>88</sup>*Children and the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress, op. cit.* p. 3.

<sup>89</sup>*Kids Share 2008, op. cit.*

<sup>90</sup>*ibid.*

In 2005, 10.1% of African American men between the ages of 18 and 29 were in prison, compared with 3.65 of Hispanic men and 1.5% of White men. While 14% of the overall population, African American young men represented over 40% of the prison population. Henry J. Kaiser Foundation (2006). *Race, Ethnicity, and Health Care Fact Sheet*. Retrieved at: [http://222.kff.org/minority\\_health/upload/7541.pdf](http://222.kff.org/minority_health/upload/7541.pdf). Between 1990 and 2006, the number of incarcerated individuals in the United States (in state or federal prison or in jail) grew from 1,148,702 in 1990 to 2,258,983 and the number of sentenced African Americans prisoners (those with sentences of one year or more) grew from 334,300 in 1990 to 534,200 in 2006. African Americans represented 38 percent of all prisoners with sentences of one year or more. Although the ratio has declined in recent years, African American men were 6.2 times more likely to incarcerated than White men in 2006 (7.8 times in 2000). Source: Sabol, W., Couture, H. & Harrison, P. (2007). *Prisoners in 2006*. Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin: U.S. Department of Justice: Washington, D.C. and Mumola, A. & Beck, A. (1997). *Prisoners in 1996*. Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin: U.S. Department of Justice: Washington, D.C.

<sup>92</sup>Bruner, C. (2004). *Where have all the young men gone?* Child and Family Policy Center: Des Moines, IA.

<sup>93</sup>Office of Policy Planning and Research (1965). *The Negro family: The case for national action*. United States Department of Labor: Washington, D.C. The report presented the following findings in bold-faced: (1) the family structure in lower class Negro families is highly unstable, and in many urban centers is approaching complete breakdown; (2) nearly a quarter of urban Negro marriages are dissolved; (3) nearly one-quarter of Negro births are now illegitimate; (4) one-fourth of Negro families are headed by females; and the breakdown of the Negro family has led to a startling increase in welfare dependency.

<sup>94</sup>Wilson, W. (1987). *The truly disadvantaged: The inner city, the underclass, and public policy*. University of Chicago Press; Chicago, IL. Wilson describes the decline of "marriageable males" (young employed men who can contribute economically to raising a family) in Chicago's predominantly African American inner-city census tracts from 1970 to 1980 as a key factor that must be addressed to truly address both racial and class issues in the United States.

<sup>95</sup>Most of the policy proposals currently being put forward by scholars and by states with poverty reduction goals

are based upon a “work pathways” to economic self-sufficiency that are based upon a “personal responsibility” and “extending opportunity” policy frame. At the same time, the individual strategies do not speak to the geographic concentration of disadvantage within neighborhoods nor to the institutional racism and other vestiges of discrimination that need to be addressed, e.g. the “social justice” approach to poverty reduction through community building. See: Bruner, C. (2008). *The role of policy advocacy in poverty reduction: Blending individual and community strategies*. Northwest Area Foundation: St. Paul, MN. The report offers a Table showing several poverty reduction packages being presented by scholars and states, all in the “personal responsibility” frame.

<sup>96</sup>See note 51.

<sup>97</sup>Venture philanthropy even has a Wikipedia definition: Venture philanthropy takes concepts and techniques from venture capital finance and high technology business management and applies them to achieving philanthropic goals. Venture philanthropy is characterized by:

- Willingness to experiment and try new approaches.
- Focus on measurable results: donors and grantees assess progress based on mutually determined benchmarks.
- Readiness to shift funds between organizations and goals based on tracking those measurable results.
- Giving financial, intellectual, and human capital.
- Funding on a multi-year basis - typically a minimum of 3 years, on average 5-7 years.
- Focus on capacity building, instead of programs or general operating expenses.
- High involvement by donors with their grantees. For example, some donors will take positions on the boards of the non-profits they fund.

Retrieved September 6, 2008, at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Venture\\_philanthropy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Venture_philanthropy)

<sup>98</sup>The Annie E. Casey Foundation’s Strategic Consulting Group, patterned after business consulting models such as McKinsey and Company and focused upon opportunities to transform whole child-serving systems, is simply the most intensive and comprehensive of these efforts. The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation’s family preservation service initiative in the 1980s and 1990s eventually influenced over twenty states to establish family preservation programs, leveraged nearly \$100 million in public investments. This work also proved to be a major contributing factor to the establishment of the federal Family Preservation and Support Programs Act.

<sup>99</sup>In 1984, the author was in a cab to the airport with Bob Greenstein of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and Doug Nelson, President of the Annie E Casey Foundation. Greenstein asked Nelson how he convinced

his Board to invest in efforts to change public systems. Nelson responded by saying he told his Board that they could be very confident that they had helped thousands of children lead better lives by continuing to invest their resources in very high quality foster care programs. The alternative, investing in efforts to change large public systems, would be subject to setbacks due to shifts in political leadership and difficulties in measuring whether the assistance provided actually leveraged meaningful change. The only argument for investing in public policy change, Nelson indicated, was that one could put together the endowments of the Ford Foundation and the Casey Foundations, and they collectively could finance the New York Public School system for five months. There simply is not enough funding in philanthropy to dramatically alter outcomes for disadvantaged children on any basis of scale. Since that time, the Casey and Ford Foundation endowments have grown and currently could fund the New York Public School system for seven months. Author’s conversations and research.

<sup>100</sup>Foundations supported Family Impact Seminars for senior Congressional during from 1986 to 1998 on emerging family policy issues, conducting over forty such seminars. The W.K. Kellogg Foundation and Annie E. Casey Foundation continue to support a state-level version, operated by the Policy Institute for Family Impact Seminars, whose website contains the reports from the national Family Impact Seminars. Retrieved at: [http://familyimpactseminars.org/index.asp?p-2&page=pub\\_federal](http://familyimpactseminars.org/index.asp?p-2&page=pub_federal). The Commonwealth Fund currently is supporting Georgetown University to convene senior Congressional staff with health care responsibilities on child health and developmental services. The Carnegie Corporation continues to support the Aspen Institute in conducting “off-the-record” retreats for members of Congress, initiated in 1983 by former U.S. Senator Dick Clark. In recent years, the Congressional Education Program has involved discussions of reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act. “The Aspen Institute Congressional program: A nonpartisan success story,” (2007). *Carnegie Results*, Summer. Quarterly Newsletter of the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

<sup>101</sup>*Children and the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress, op. cit.* The report examines federal lobbying records for 2006, which show that \$2.5 billion is expended in lobbying efforts to influence Congress, with child policy and advocacy organizations spending less than \$1 million of that amount, with similar disparities in a lobbying presence also apparent within states. In his chapter, “Democracy Overwhelmed,” Robert Reich notes a tripling in registered lobbyists in less than a decade (from 10,728 in 1997 to 32,890 in 2005), with more than a doubling of lobbying expenditures in real dollars over that period. *Supercapitalism, op. cit.*, p. 134.

<sup>102</sup>Voices for America's Children is an association that comprising a sixty-member, forty-seven state network of multi-issue child advocacy organizations. Voices and its members have identified the need to engage in federal as well as state policy advocacy and have assessed the current capacity and needs for members to be credible and sustained advocates. Voices' members have estimated that, for a member in a smaller state to have a sustained presence on federal issues requires additional work in building relationships with those members and their staff, developing expertise on the federal policy process, and conducting additional research and analysis on how federal policies impact state and Congressional district constituents. While some of the coalition-building and grassroots and grassroots mobilization activities involved in state-level advocacy can support federal-level advocacy, members estimate that it would require \$150,000 annually in additional funding for a typical member to maintain a credible, ongoing presence of federal policy issues and begin to be recognized as a voice on those issues. Very few state-based child advocacy organizations have resources that approach this level for federal advocacy; most at best have received funding for discrete, time-limited advocacy efforts around specific federal legislation. Member Leadership Council document (2008). *Boilerplate for effective advocacy*. Voices for America's Children: Washington, D.C.

<sup>103</sup>In 2007, the BUILD Initiative sponsored a national evaluation symposium on systems building, involving researchers, funders, and policy practitioners. The result was a summary of the proceedings, a systems framework for evaluating systems change efforts, and a case study on the challenges and opportunities of evaluating early learning systems. See: BUILD Initiative (2008). *National evaluation symposium proceedings*. Coffman, J. (2008). *A systems change evaluation framework*. BUILD Initiative. Bruner, C. (forthcoming) "The case of top beginnings and the missing child outcomes," *American Evaluation Exchange*.

<sup>104</sup>For a detailed discussion, see: Bruner, C., Greenberg, M., Guy, C., Little, M., Schorr, L., & Weiss, H. (2002). *Funding what works: Exploring the role of research on effective programs and practices in government decision-making*. National Center for Service Integration Clearinghouse and Center for Schools in Communities: Des Moines, IA. Evaluating programs and strategies that seek to strengthen and support families have a particular set of challenges and methodological concerns. See: Bruner, C. (2004) "Rethinking the evaluation of family strengthening strategies: Beyond traditional program evaluation models," in *The Evaluation Exchange* Vol. 10, No. 2. That article poses three issues that must be considered in evaluating family strengthening strategies: (1) relationships and practices, not program structure

or curriculum, are key to success; (2) impacting "rotten outcomes" requires a systemic, not simply programmatic, approach; and (3) effective family strengthening programs and strategies create social capital, which is not measurable through a subject-treatment-impact approach.

<sup>105</sup>This includes business leaders, who have been influential on early childhood issues through the Committee for Economic Development for over two decades and more recently have been enlisted in the Invest in Kids Working Group of the Partnership for America's Economic Success. It also includes the law enforcement community, as organized to be spokespersons for early childhood by Fight Crime Invest in Kids. For an enumeration of different champions and constituencies that have been part of efforts to move an early learning agenda, see: Bruner, C. (2004) *Beyond the usual suspects: Developing new allies to invest in school readiness*. State Early Childhood Policy Technical Assistance Network: Des Moines, IA. Retrieved at: [http://www.finebynine.org/uploaded/file/usual\\_suspects.pdf](http://www.finebynine.org/uploaded/file/usual_suspects.pdf).

<sup>106</sup>For a short bibliography, see: "Rethinking the evaluation of family support strategies, *op. cit.*

<sup>107</sup>In general, most public funding for vulnerable children, youth and families not only is treatment- rather than prevention-oriented but also is for professional (and sometimes paraprofessional or case management) services that involve a professional-client relationship that does not provide the opportunity for reciprocity and growth by exerting leadership. While such professional-client activities may be needed to address some issues, they are not sufficient to help children, youth, and families grow unless the ecology supports that growth. At the same time, mutual assistance or self-help activities do afford the opportunity for reciprocity and growth. See: Trevino, Y. & Trevino, R. (2004) *Mutual assistance: Galvanizing the spirit of reciprocity in communities*. What Works Policy Brief of Foundation Consortium for Children and Families: Sacramento, CA. The Doris Duke Foundation's Strengthening Families Through Early Care and Education has drawn upon the risk and protective factors literature in taking this approach. An overall model, and a number of program examples, for incorporating these attributes into practice is found in *Village building and school readiness, op. cit.* Chapter three offers a DNA model describing the interactions needed between family and program and describes a number of exemplary programs, across health, early care and education, education, and family support.

<sup>108</sup>See: School Readiness Race, Culture, and Language Working Group (2006). *Getting ready for quality: The critical importance of developing and supporting a skilled, ethnically and linguistically diverse early childhood workforce*. California Tomorrow: San Francisco, CA.

<sup>109</sup>For an annotated bibliography on various analyses of the "cost of bad outcomes" and social programs that have

demonstrated high returns on investment, see: Bruner, C. (2002). *A stitch in time: Calculating the costs of school unreadiness*. The Finance Project: Washington, D.C.

<sup>110</sup>Edelman, P. & Radin, B. (1991). *Serving children and families effectively: How the past can help chart the future*. Education and Human Services Consortium on Collaboration: Institute for Educational Leadership: Washington: D.C. This paper deserves reading, as it also sought look at the road ahead through some analysis of what had gone before and, by 1990, was in the rearview mirror. Edelman and Radin argue for a new synthesis of government and community response and a refrain from seeking “magic bullets” to address complex challenges confronting children, youth, and families that are both economic and social. They also argue that insufficient resources devoted to solutions to concentrated areas of disadvantage can only produce dissipated results and the next generation of efforts must be more intentional in assessing the scope of investments needed to produce meaningful change.





Part Two:

## **Advocacy and Federal Policy**

# Introduction

Part Two builds upon the themes in Part One, but with a specific focus upon child advocacy.

The first essay speaks to the opportunity for a new approach to investing in children, one involving significant changes to the way publicly-funded services to children currently operate. At a basic level, it calls for moving beyond *either* promoting government services to address human needs *or* supporting family responsibility and community initiative – but linking the two. Many exemplary child and family initiatives, often fostered by foundations, have done just that, but these have not moved from “exemplary” to “routine” practice within public systems. The first part of the essay, in the form of an op ed, provides a frame that suggests the timeliness of such an approach. The second part of the essay describes the change implications, or “devil in the details,” for achieving such changes across public systems serving children.

These concepts are not new. In fact, they have many similarities to the call for more integrated, community services in the 1989 Memo from foundation leaders discussed in Part One, but they place the greater emphasis on “community” than they do on “integrated.” As one involved in this work for the last three decades, I feel there is a readiness and opportunity to tackle these issues at a policy level that has not really existed previously.

The second essay describes the current status of

federal child policy advocacy, starting by setting current investments in child policy advocacy in context. While there are foundations which have taken leadership in supporting child policy advocacy, the investments to date simply do not add up to what children deserve or what child policy advocacy could do, given the resources to do it.

The first two essays in this volume are merely academic, if the conclusion from third essay is not heeded. To paraphrase Nobel Laureate economist James Heckman’s conclusion regarding the research literature on cost-effective programs, “Invest in young children,” my ultimate conclusion from the three essays is, “Invest in child policy advocacy.”

-- Charles Bruner

# Supporting Public Investments in Children: Beyond “Either/Or Thinking”

In 1991 at a National Academy of Sciences workshop, Doug Nelson, President of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, provided a critique of the current system of services and supports offered to children and families that reflected much of the leading reform thinking of that era:

Over the past decade, critical reflection on the state of human services has given rise to a growing consensus on both what’s wrong with the way services are provided to at-risk families and children and the essential elements of a system of practice that presumably would work much better. It has, for example, become common among reform-minded analysts to use the descriptions “fragmented,” “reactive,” “categorical,” “inaccessible,” “arbitrary,” and “unrelated to actual needs” as a means of explaining the failure of existing helping systems to have their hoped-for impacts on outcomes for at-risk children and their parents. At the same time, confidence has grown dramatically in the ability of “preventive,” “flexible,” “family-centered,” “collaborative,” “intensive,” and “individualized” services to make a real difference in the lives and prospects of those who benefit from them.<sup>1</sup>

As the first Part of this volume shows, there has been much work over the last two decades to develop reforms to the way services are delivered that move in this direction, often characterized as placing children and families

“at the center,” not as the “recipient” of services but as a “participant in their growth and development.” This articulation has spurred research, foundation initiative development, and significant practice reform.

At the same time, it hardly offers a policy frame for political mobilization and advocacy. For one, it starts with the inadequacies of current systems, while current communications research suggests that policy makers do not rush to fix “broken systems,” particularly if they are unsure their solutions will work. For another, it does not speak to some of the frames in people’s minds regarding vulnerable children and families – personal responsibility and community solutions among them. While moving from “recipient” to “participant” may represent a significant reform, there is a further step that extends from children and families as “participants in their own growth” to “contributors to the growth of others” that builds upon the values of personal responsibility and mutual assistance in the dynamics of growth.

The following is an effort, in the form of an Op Ed, to provide a new frame for developing child policy. It draws upon President Obama’s own statements and initial actions in the area of child and family policy. Following the Op Ed is a longer, “devil in the details,” discussion of the implications of this approach to child and family services to incorporate responsibility, reciprocity, resiliency, and community-building into their activities.

### **Beyond “Either/Or” Thinking: Opportunities for a New Era of Public Services for Children and Families**

*As President, I will expand early childhood education, recruit new teachers and pay them better, but the truth is government can't do it all. As parents, we need to turn off the television, read to our kids, give them that thirst to learn. I approve this message because it's not just about their future ... it's about ours.*

-Barack Obama Presidential campaign ad

This is my all-time favorite campaign advertisement, and not just because it is the first time a Presidential candidate has talked about early childhood. It is because this short message goes beyond “either-or” thinking – *either* it's government's role *or* it's the family and community's role to protect and nurture children.

In the past, this “either-or” thinking too often has permeated policy debates over child policy. *Either* it's professional child care *or* it's personal choice and valuing grandmother caring for the kids. *Either* it's bad parenting that makes our children fail *or* it's the absence of parental choice that leaves children in bad schools. *Either* it's removing troubled children into foster care *or* it's leaving struggling families alone in their efforts to meet basic parenting responsibilities (let alone instill reasoned

hope and that thirst to learn in their children).

In his campaign, President-Elect Obama began to articulate a new vision for child policy that combines these two. He not only advocated for investing in early childhood; he also spoke of the importance of spirituality in people's lives and the potential that faith-based initiatives can hold for helping people to help themselves. He advocated for fatherhood initiatives that place much higher parental expectations on dads to assume both nurturing and providing roles. He spoke of universal access to higher education for youth coupled with community service expectations from them.

In his own messaging, he stressed the importance of government investing in children and families, but always in ways that recognize, value, and support families and their communities as primary to children's lives.

In fact, there is a strong research base that shows such an approach is essential for public programs to be successful in helping children grow and develop. Both adult and child learning and growth occur through participatory actions – taking on challenges and learning and growing from them in an environment that encourages and recognizes effort and success. This usually includes strong elements of reciprocity – where children and their parents not only achieve personal

goals but also give back to others and the community in the process.

Children, for instance, do not “learn” self-esteem – they acquire it through experiences of exerting effort, seeing consequences, and taking responsibility. When public programs are developed for children, the African proverb, “it takes a village to raise a child” should not be translated into “it takes a multidisciplinary team of professionals to raise a child.” While professional services are needed, they cannot replace or substitute for parental responsibility or community ties and connections.

Polls show that what has often separated liberals and conservatives in funding programs for children has been this very issue. Where conservatives have opposed government investments, it is not because they don’t love children but rather because they view government as undermining the role of families and communities in parenting. They may oppose specific government programs either as stifling personal initiative and responsibility (handouts) or intruding on family and community ties and connections (disrespecting spirituality and family values).

Too often, child advocates and those in the service community have proposed narrow agendas that speak solely to expanding public and professional services. Too

many government programs designed to serve children and families fail to adequately recognize personal initiative and responsibility, foster reciprocity, value families, and work with and strengthen voluntary community institutions.

Going beyond an *either* government *or* family and community approach to child policy requires changing policy and practice. It requires broadening the way many publicly-funded programs and institutions are financed and held accountable. And it requires doing so with an increased commitment to ensuring fundamental American values of equality, fairness, anti-discrimination, and empathy are incorporated into program and practice.

This election was about change, and this includes how we choose to invest in children and families. The challenge now before child advocates is to press for the types of changes that bring government, community, and family investments in children together to support their and our future. This will require a *thirst to learn* among all of us in developing such policies and practice. We need more investments in children, but we need better investments as well. We have a unique opportunity to be leaders in doing so, and an increasingly ready public looking for this change.

### **The “Devil in the Details”: Service Reform Strategies That Incorporate Responsibility, Resiliency, Reciprocity, and Community-Building**

Getting the policy frame and direction right is important, but producing changes within public systems consistent with that frame and direction represents the “devil in the detail” work that requires concerted attention and strong understanding by child advocates.

There are exemplary publicly funded service strategies within all children’s goal areas (health, school readiness, school success, safety, and family economic success)<sup>3</sup> that provide needed professional services while working to strengthen resiliency and reciprocity within families and their communities. Many have a strong evidence base for fostering family and community responsibility for children’s healthy development and improving child outcomes.

These service strategies deserve to be described and become part of a communications and advocacy agenda for investing in children. Many remain as exemplary rather than mainstream in their operation – and in some instances have to compete with current public system values that are not asset-based and do not promote child and family involvement. Most public policies and investments generally do not consider the elements that contribute to the success of these exemplary service strategies as essential elements that need to be preserved and

promoted, but rather as fortuitous by-products.

If a broader conception of investing in children and families that supports responsibility, resiliency, reciprocity, and community-building is to be developed, some of the questions that need to be raised about all service strategies designed to improve child outcomes are:

- Do they instill parental responsibility and capacity to meet children’s needs?
- Do they foster reciprocity and build new leadership that creates additional social capital within the community?
- Do they engage individuals, families, and community members with the most at stake in achieving success, in the actual planning, design, implementation, and delivery of services?
- Do they bring people together and practice inclusion in ways that support empathy, recognize diversity, and commit to equality of treatment?
- Are the relational and community-connecting aspects of their work supported as an essential part of their success, with financing and accountability structures developed accordingly?

These questions need to be raised as policies are designed and public investments made. Too often, public investments in children, youth, and families focus narrowly on discrete services, usually provided by a professional within a structure that treats children and families as service recipients rather than supporting them

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as participants in their own growth, let alone as contributors to their community's growth and vitality.

The following is a brief description of service strategy approaches within different children, youth, and family goal areas that are taking this broader focus.

### **Health**

Medical research is clear that strategies to improve child health need to address both medical and social determinants of health. This involves both expanding the emphasis within clinical practice on identifying and ensuring responses to social determinants of health and increasing community and public health approaches that create a healthy ecology for children's growth and development.

Research on maternal and child health shows that social, fiscal, and psychological supports to pregnant women are as essential as medical care to healthy birth outcomes. Nurse midwives and doulas produce better birth outcomes for women with medically normal pregnancies than do obstetricians – because they spend more time with pregnant women and respond to social as well as medical questions and concerns. Promotoras have been effective, particularly in Hispanic communities, in enlisting women in health services and related supports that improve pregnancy and infant and toddler health outcomes.

A growing array of exemplary well-child pediatric practices specifically incorporate developmental surveillance and connections with community support systems as part of well-child care. Particularly in low-income neighborhoods, exemplary community health centers have become sources for healthy child development through creating space and opportunity for mutual assistance and community-building activities as well as providing medical services. Public health services that have engaged community residents in planning around children's healthy development have produced community plans and activities that include a variety of wellness activities and broader community support for healthy lifestyles.

### **School Readiness**

While enriched preschool programs can contribute to a significant but modest narrowing of the gap in kindergarten readiness experienced by poor children, English language learners, and children of color, eliminating this readiness gap requires actions that also strengthen parenting and ensure consistency of home environments. A variety of family resource programs and centers have shown the ability to improve family connections, foster resiliency, create additional enriched environments for young children, and strengthen support for young children and their families. Research indicates that home visiting programs are most effective when they are linked to other activities where families can

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connect with one another and young children participate in intentional learning environments with other children.

The Doris Duke Foundation’s Strengthening Families through Early Care and Education has identified a number of exemplary early care and education programs that extend their reach through community building activities that engage families. The Connecticut Parent Leadership Training Institute and other parent leadership programs show the value of building new leaders within neighborhoods who can be social connectors and role models for other parents. Educare Centers and the Harlem Children’s Zone represent examples of comprehensive, neighborhood-based approaches to achieve school readiness and success, which are predicated upon being cornerstones for community building within their communities. Resources that include networking and learning opportunities for family, friend, and neighbor care have demonstrated the ability to strengthen the developmental support provided by relatives and others involved in young children’s lives through their ties to the child’s parents.

### **School Success**

In his landmark 1961 book, *School Power*, James Comer indicated that one of the greatest challenges to achieving success in inner-city schools was to “reduce the distance between the culture of the school and the culture of the community.” Since then, there have been an array of exemplary efforts to build Communities

in Schools, Comer Schools, and Co-Zi Schools, now represented in a broad-based Community Schools Coalition. The approach has the dual emphasis upon creating rigorous academic standards and establishing strong linkages to community resources and parental involvement. A variety of school-linked services, from nurses to social workers to after-school programs, all have expanded the capacity of schools to respond to child and family needs that extend beyond academic instruction but are essential for academic instruction to be successful.

Similarly, youth development programs that create opportunities for youth to contribute to their communities and take on leadership roles produce benefits to the youth, to their peers, and to the community as a whole; and they also foster educational achievement and success. The Search Institute’s work on forty assets, the risk and protective factor analysis of Catalano and Hawkins, and the resiliency literature all point to the need for participatory approaches to education that value youth and give them roles in their community.

For both school readiness and school success, children who have special needs require additional services but also require involvement in activities with other children (inclusion and normalization), whether the special needs are physical, developmental, mental/behavioral, or environmental (e.g. parental depression or abuse or neglect, incarcerated parent, unsafe neighborhood). If children are marginalized



The structure of child protection and child welfare services generally fails to make continuity of connections of children with supporting family, friend, and community members a fundamental part of the work

and excluded from positive connections with peers and mentors, they do not succeed. The impacts of such marginalization include depression, anger, morbidity, and academic failure – regardless of the type of special need. Children with special needs often do require additional specialized and professional services, but they also need to be integrated into normal student activities in structures where their peers respond positively and appropriately to them. Self-help and mutual assistance groups of parents of children with special needs of all types have been effective in providing support to one another and ensuring their own and other children get what they need to succeed, both in terms of professional services and access to and inclusion in normative child activities.

### **Safety and Security**

Keeping children safe in their homes and communities is among the highest of all society’s responsibilities. Keeping children safe requires early identification of and response to conditions that place children at risk, including parental actions or inactions (child abuse and neglect). The child protective service system plays this role in most states, but at best usually focuses only on immediate safety issues and often seriously disrupts the child’s own ties with those in the community who can provide nurturing and support.

There are reform efforts to improve child protective practice – family team meetings, community partnerships for protecting children,

support groups for parents involved in child protection (e.g. parents anonymous), family-to-family foster care programs, reunification-oriented residential programs, wrap-around services for youth in placement with an explicit focus upon establishing or sustaining community ties, youth opportunity initiatives for children aging out of the foster care system, and post-adoption service reforms for adopted children who have special needs– but most operate as exemplary efforts and are far from routine practice. They have demonstrated promising results, in large measure because they are explicit in recognizing, to paraphrase John Vandenberg, that “a child without friends and mentors won’t succeed.” Again, however, the child protection system too often fails to sustain connections between children and supporting family, friend, and community members.

In juvenile justice, there are comparable exemplary program efforts, including restorative justice movements, that emphasize reciprocity and peer engagement as vehicles for addressing youthful offenders. Again, restorative justice efforts are based upon strengthening youth assets and drawing upon those assets to contribute to, rather than endanger, the community.

### **Family Economic Security**

As a result of many factors, there is a much renewed interest in reducing child poverty in the United States. One impact of welfare reform

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is that it has shifted the discussion of poverty away from welfare payments and regulations as society's response to families in poverty to looking at ways to support working, low-income families. Currently, the dominant frame for reducing poverty focuses upon working families who already are exerting significant personal responsibility but are still struggling to get by. This includes various efforts to "make work pay" (minimum wage increases and tax policies like the EITC) and providing needed work supports (child care assistance and health care coverage chief among them). It also includes efforts to create additional pathways to higher-wage employment (education and training programs and entrepreneurship opportunities) and avenues for families to invest in themselves and their future (individual development accounts, home ownership programs, and other savings incentives, as well as anti-predatory practice policies and efforts to address medical debt).

These approaches, however, are limited to a "personal parental responsibility" framework that does not address the fact that a significant part of child poverty relates to the structure of communities and often the segregation of children into disinvested neighborhoods. Institutional racism plays a role in disadvantage and disinvestment that goes well beyond what individual supports can resolve.

Even among progressives advocating for poverty reduction, there has been less emphasis upon supporting community building and

social justice approaches to poverty reduction, including investments in community-building in distressed communities and support for anti-discriminatory practices. Edgar Cahn and others have developed effective strategies for co-production (time banking) within disinvested communities, but these require development of an infrastructure within communities for which there often are few resources to create. There have been some efforts to create additional efforts within economic development activities that focus explicit attention upon disinvested neighborhoods, most particularly in entrepreneurship and micro-enterprise activities.

Still, disinvested neighborhoods often receive hand-down technologies from more affluent areas that do not put them on a par in fostering growth and development. There often are few opportunities for authentic participation of the low-income families in designing policies and practices that can enable them to move into the middle class, although there are exemplary efforts, often with strong emphases upon mutual assistance, that show promise in changing community capacity and expectations in achieving self-sufficiency. Unfortunately, most public and foundation efforts to rebuild neighborhoods have not showed great signs of success, perhaps because of too lofty and miscommunicated expectations and too little on-the-ground support for leadership and social capital development.

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well as individual, human capital development to succeed if child poverty (and child health, safety, school readiness and success) are to be achieved within disinvested neighborhoods as a whole.

While individual families may be able to achieve success through individually-focused efforts, such families likely will be able to do so only through leaving the disinvested neighborhood behind (and therefore somewhat poorer), unless new opportunities are occurring throughout the neighborhood. Community building as well as individual service and opportunity approaches ultimately will be needed to dramatically reduce child poverty and create overall societal expectations for self-sufficiency and contribution to society.

## Conclusion

We do not have all the answers on how to make public investments that can achieve society's collective goals for child health, safety, school readiness and success, and economic well-being.

We do, however, know enough to act. We know that there are major gaps in our investments in some basic areas and we know that there are changes we need to make in the manner in which we make investments. It not only is about more federal investments in children, it is also about better federal investments in children.

The 2008 election was about change, and it behooves all of us in the child policy and advocacy community to think about how we may

need to change our advocacy not just to secure more federal investments, but to get better results from them for children.

One aspect of this change is looking at how to make sure that public services help to build social capital, strengthen child and family initiative and contribution, and promote empathy, fairness, and equality in working with children and families.

As the Op Ed suggests, we need to develop a policy frame on how to articulate such a change, but we then also need to develop effective strategies to incorporate that change into policies that ensure accountability in its implementation.

# Investing in Federal Advocacy for Children: Assessing Need and Opportunity

## **Introduction: The Need for Advocacy**

Over a decade ago, in 1996, a *Time* cover story stated the challenges faced in addressing children's needs at the federal level:

In the end, the most pressing question for children's advocates is ... setting a common agenda. It is a daunting task, not just because children's issues are so numerous and fragmented, but because no one is certain what solutions, if any, will work.

While much more is known today about effective programs and strategies, the challenge of setting and enacting a children's agenda remains. At the National Summit on America's Children convened by the U.S. House of Representatives on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2008, Speaker Nancy Pelosi presented her own assessment on the status of federal child policy:

For too long, America's children have come in last in the competition for government investments. For too long, we have allowed outdated ways of thinking to determine our policies regarding our children. And for too long, there has not been enough political will to make children our number one priority in our work in Congress.

How do we, as a nation, go about developing this political will to adequately invest in our nation's children?

Clearly, this involves public education (communications), constituency mobilization (political organization and coalition-building), and policy promotion (lobbying). All this fits under the broad category of advocacy.

To do this first involves assessing the strengths and limitations of the current child policy and advocacy community and assessing what changes are needed to strengthen its ability to be effective in building this political will.

## **Explanations for the Absence of Effective Advocacy**

As described by *Time*, one common explanation for absence of political will to invest in children has been the fragmented nature of federal child policy advocacy – resulting in a cacophony rather than chorus speaking on behalf of children. Inside the beltway, there are scores of advocacy, policy, and research organizations that focus upon child and family policy. The Children's Defense Fund, Voices for America's Children, First Focus, Every Child Matters, and Fight Crime: Invest in Kids all represent multi-issue child advocacy organizations seeking to influence federal policy. The Women's Law Center, the Center for Law and Social Policy, Zero to Three, Pre-K Now, the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the First Five Years Fund, and other groups have a more narrow focus upon young children and their early care and education needs. The Human Needs Coalition, Families U.S.A.,

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the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, and other groups have agendas that include children’s issues as well as other fiscal policy and human service concerns.

The “fragmentation of advocacy” explanation may be a convenient one, as it seems to simply call upon these organizations to better coordinate their efforts. In fact, however, these organizations do speak with a more common voice than is generally recognized. Many combined their policy and advocacy efforts to collectively press for reauthorization of the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), developing a common message and policy frame. The recently-established Children’s Leadership Council includes these and other groups and has constructed a federal child investment agenda that presses for over \$50 billion in new investments in children across health, early childhood, youth development, child welfare and safety, and family economic security.

The lack of a more powerful presence by these groups on children’s issues is more basic than that related to fragmentation or competition. It is that their collective voice often is not loud enough to be heard over other, better-financed, advocacy and lobbying interests. In particular, there is not a commensurate state-based advocacy presence for federal child policy advocacy to take that message to the state and Congressional district level.

### The Current Status of Investments in Federal Child Policy Advocacy

The Center for Responsive Politics offers a searchable data base on all reported expenditures on lobbying at the federal level. In 2008, the Center reports that thousands of organizations spent \$3.24 billion, employing over 15,000 lobbyists to directly influence federal policy. The top ten individual organizations are shown below:

<b>Top Ten List</b>	
<b>Total 2008 Lobbying Expenditure</b>	
US Chamber of Commerce	\$91,615,000
Exxon Mobil	\$29,000,000
AARP	\$27,900,000
PG&E Corp	\$27,250,000
Northrop Grumman	\$20,743,252
American Medical Assn	\$20,555,000
Pharmaceutical Rsrch & Mfrs of America	\$20,220,000
American Hospital Assn	\$19,652,914
General Electric	\$19,418,000
Verizon Communications	\$18,190,000

None of the child-related policy and advocacy organizations listed in the first paragraph of this section show up in the top 1,000 list of individual organizations. Collectively, the lobbying expenditures for 2008 for these organizations total less than \$1 million.

This does not mean that these policy and

advocacy organizations have no influence in Congress and the federal administration, but it does suggest that they do not have the same presence among members of Congress that many other special interests do.

Collectively, the overall budgets of the nonprofit organizations listed above are somewhat more substantial. According to their 2006 990 forms (available through Guidestar), the five best-recognized multi-issue child advocacy organizations – Children’s Defense Fund, Voices for America’s Children, Every Child Matters Education Fund, Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, and First Focus (a division of America’s Promise) – had overall expenditures of \$33.3 million. Some of the larger and best recognized broader national research and policy groups -- Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Center for Law and Social Policy, Center for the Study of Social Policy, Families U.S.A., and the Women’s Law Center – had overall expenditures of \$41.1 million. Much of these investments, however, involve research and evaluation or broad public education and dissemination, rather than direct policy-focused advocacy. The amount expended by the national research and policy groups listed above can be put in further context. Their expenditures are roughly equivalent to the \$39.3 million in expenditures of the Heritage Foundation, the largest of the so-called conservative think tanks seeking to influence federal policy.

### **The Particular Case for State-Based Federal Child Policy Advocacy**

At the federal level, national child policy and advocacy organizations have limited overall budgets to influence federal policy, but the corresponding member organizations within states are substantially less resourced to engage in federal policy advocacy.

Voices for America’s Children is a member organization with sixty multi-issue child advocacy organizations that operate in forty-six of the fifty states. Most of these organizations were established by a founder entrepreneur who built a child advocacy organization to seek to influence state child policies, often around issues of child care, child welfare, and child health care coverage. These organizations came together as a network to support one another through Voices for America’s Children.

Currently, these member organizations are responsible for securing almost all of their funding individually, with over two thirds of their funding coming from state, regional, and national foundations, often around specific projects. The Annie E. Casey Foundation’s Kids Count Initiative is the single largest contributor to these organizations, providing over thirty Voices’ members with \$75,000 annually to develop and distribute a state Kids Count data book. This funding has been sustained for over a decade and has provided a

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core (though focused) base of support, enabling grantees to develop more evidenced-based advocacy capacity and credibility in their states.

A typical Voices member organization has a \$600,000 annual budget and six or seven staff. Although structures vary, this staff generally includes an Executive Director, one or two research and data development staff, a communications staff, a fund development and fiscal management and grant reporting staff, a meetings and event organizing staff, an administrative support person and office coordinator, and a policy advocacy staff. The advocacy staff and the Executive Director represent the organization in state lobbying activities during the legislative session and work throughout the year with the executive and legislative branches, including any electoral activities engaged in by the organization. Voices' members have been organized and funded to focus primarily upon state child policy, where the majority of decisions are made and implemented regarding child welfare, child care and preschool, family support, child health care, and family economic support.

While the federal government plays a major role in providing financing for many children's programs, states establish eligibility criteria, organize and regulate services, and determine overall investments. As one of the hundreds of registered lobbyists at the state capitol (where lobbying expenditures across the fifty states are likely to be equivalent to the \$3.2 billion spent

at the federal level), Voices members have to be strategic in selecting issues to promote. While they may be quite influential within specific child policy arena's, their influence in overall budget allocation decisions that ultimately affect state investments in children must contend with many other more highly financed interests seeking tax reductions and spending on non-child issues. Typically in states, there are a handful of lobbyists registered whose major focus is upon child and family policy, among the hundreds of lobbyists representing business, labor, and education (K-12 and higher education, which is primarily funded at the state level) interests.

Naturally, given limited resources, state-based child advocacy organizations traditionally have concentrated their energies on state child policy advocacy. Particularly as federal funding for children's programs became jeopardized by major federal tax cuts and resulting Presidential budgets calling for substantial program cutbacks in areas affecting state policy, state-based child advocacy organizations have recognized the need for a greater emphasis upon federal policy advocacy. In 2004, Voices for America's Children began to place an emphasis in supporting its members in federal policy advocacy.

### **Experiences and Lessons Learned from SCHIP Reauthorization**

In 2006, the reauthorization of SCHIP became

a locus for federal child policy advocacy, both among national organizations and among state-based members. Major national groups – the Center for Children and Families at Georgetown University, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Families U.S.A., Voices for America’s Children, and First Focus – took a lead in a much larger coalition in developing a common agenda for SCHIP reauthorization in 2007.

When a Democratic Congress was elected in 2006, the opportunity shifted from simply preserving SCHIP to promoting a significant expansion of coverage.

Significantly, these national organizations also secured funding to support state-based child policy and advocacy organizations in targeted states to press for SCHIP reauthorization. Approximately twenty state-based organizations, the majority Voices’ members, eventually were provided grants to develop public education and advocacy campaigns for SCHIP reauthorization, through approximately \$1 million in targeted and time-specific funding. Organizations were selected in significant measure because of the key positions their members of Congress held on SCHIP reauthorization, with a particular strategy for securing sufficient Republican support in the Senate to get to the sixty votes necessary to secure closure and move forward with legislation.

While the national groups leading the effort provided much of the research and

communications work and the ongoing daily presence in Washington, D.C. tracking and seeking to influence developments, the state-based advocacy organizations developed coalitions and communications strategies within their states to press for reauthorization. State-based organizations provided state-specific information to members of Congress on the impacts of SCHIP reauthorization and mobilized state leaders and constituents in advocating for reauthorization. They developed media and communications campaigns within their states that spoke to the importance of SCHIP reauthorization for their state’s children.

State-based advocacy organizations developed or strengthened their relationships with members of Congress and their staff throughout this process and also provided intelligence to national groups on where members stood and how they might best be influenced in their decisions. At some points, they identified particular policy concerns that helped inform overall national policy and strategy development.

The national strategy initially was based upon securing sixty senators to support SCHIP reauthorization, with attendant support provided to state-based advocacy organizations that focused on key Republican Senators (in particular Senators Grassley, Hatch, Snowe, Collins, and Specter). This strategy succeeded, as the initial Senate-passed version of SCHIP in 2007 obtained the support of these five Senators and twelve more of their Republican colleagues,



for sixty-eight votes overall.

When President Bush stated the Administration's opposition to the SCHIP reauthorization bill passed by the Senate, however, the federal advocacy strategy shifted to seeking to secure the 290 votes necessary in the House for a veto override. Many of the potential swing Republican members of the House had not been previously targeted for advocacy nor were they in states where child advocacy organizations had been funded to mobilize public will around SCHIP reauthorization. While Voices for America's Children was able to enlist many of its non-SCHIP funded members in a last-minute advocacy campaign on House members, that effort ultimately fell short. The pro bono assistance these members provided was valuable, but it did not substitute for a longer-term effort of advocacy that involved concerted public education and relationship building on the issue with members and their staff.

The federal SCHIP reauthorization advocacy efforts showed both the promise of a concerted effort involving national and state-based advocacy, but also the need for sustained state-based federal policy advocacy that builds relationships with members of Congress that goes beyond a specific issue or specific group of key members of Congress on a specific policy issue.

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### **The Missing Piece in More Effective Federal Child Advocacy Policy**

One of the lessons that can be gained from SCHIP reauthorization is the key role that state-based child advocacy can play in securing Congressional support. Members of Congress respond to their constituencies and to leaders within their states. National child research and policy organizations can provide the needed national research and analysis on federal child policy, develop messaging campaigns, and identify key members of Congress to enlist as champions and to lobby for general support.

State-based organizations are needed to build the constituency base and coalitions to speak directly to members and their staff, construct specific advocacy strategies that reflect the political cultures and realities of Congressional districts and the state, and identify areas where federal policies need to better respond to specific state needs.

Currently, however, there is almost no funding that goes to Voices members and other state-based child advocacy organizations for federal policy work. SCHIP funding was provided on a time-limited and issue-targeted basis. While Voices members and other state-based child advocacy organizations may respond to calls from national organizations to support specific federal issues as they arise, they do so on a generally ad hoc and pro bono

The missing piece in securing needed investments in children and America's future is sustained child policy advocacy and the investments needed in organizations dedicated to that cause.

basis, which is no substitute for developing an ongoing presence on federal issues, with attendant building of relationships with members and their staff. Voices members do ongoing policy advocacy and relationship development at their state capitols, but they do not have equivalent federal staffing to do so at the federal level. In fact, there currently is virtually no dedicated federal policy staff within state-based child advocacy organizations. Even the state-based advocacy staffing is limited in its ability to respond to the multiple state issues affecting children at the state level.

If children are to be better represented in federal policy work, it will require more than asking existing child policy organizations at the federal and state levels to work better together. It will require new and sustained resources for this purpose. This, in turn, either will require either angel investors or philanthropy to make such investments. Fortunately, investors have dedicated, passionate organizations with credibility in their states in evidenced-based advocacy in which to invest.

A \$10 million annual investment in state-based child advocacy to build and sustain federal policy advocacy capacity is miniscule in relation to overall foundation investments in children and youth, but it could reap huge dividends. An average \$200,000 investment per state would fund at least one senior federal policy staff person to nurture and sustain relationships with members of Congress and their staff, provide substantial

state- and district-specific analysis of federal child programs as they affect constituents, and maintain a communications and advocacy strategy involving regular contacts, Hill visits, and district-level meetings with members. It would enable much stronger communication between state and national groups pressing for needed changes to federal child policies.

That \$10 million is one-eighth the amount the National Chambers of Commerce spends on direct federal lobbying, alone. It represents less than one-half of one percent of the \$24.5 billion in philanthropic funding to health, education, and human services.

Children are worth this much.

Ultimately, the missing piece in securing needed investments in children and America's future is sustained child policy advocacy and the investments needed in organizations dedicated to that cause.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Nelson, D (1991). The role of training and technical assistance in the promotion of more effective services for children. In: Schorr, L, Both, D, & Copple, C (eds). *Effective services for young children: Report of a workshop*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, p. 80.

<sup>2</sup>Originally published in the *Des Moines Register*, December 2, 2008, and reprinted by permission.

<sup>3</sup>These are five of the six policy goal areas established by Voices for America's Children and are very similar to the goal areas developed by the Children's Leadership Council. The first of Voices for America's Children policy goal areas is equity and diversity, which cross-cuts all other goal areas.



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