

Bringing New York Children's Voices to the Polls: 2020 Voter Issue Guide

As an early epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic, New York was hit devastatingly hard in the Spring of 2020. Amidst unprecedented loss of life, unemployment, food insecurity, loss of health insurance and economic distress, New Yorkers need strong leadership and solid programs to support our vulnerable children, youth and families during these trying times.

As New Yorkers cast their ballots this Fall, protecting the programs and policies that impact our children, youth and families is critical. **We urge New Yorkers to #VoteBecause and ensure that the needs of the youngest New Yorkers and their families are centered on Election Day – and every day.**

POVERTY. Even before COVID-19 had begun wreaking havoc across our State, **over 711,000 New York children lived in poverty in 2019**¹, with New York's 15th Congressional District holding the nation's highest overall child poverty rate. New York's children of color are disproportionately poor, with 27.7% of all Black children² and 24.8% of all Latinx children³ living in poverty in 2019, in contrast to 12.2% of white children⁴ in our State.

Over 1,000,000 New York children are being affected by parental job loss due to COVID-19

180,000	Children of undocumented workers
350,000	Children living in/near poverty pre-pandemic
325,000	Children newly in/near poverty due to parental job loss
225,000	Children living in households maintaining income above 200% Federal Poverty Level despite job loss

Source: United Hospital Fund

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates Detailed Tables. Table B17020: *Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months by Age*.

² U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates Detailed Tables. Table B17020B: *Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months by Age (Black or African American Alone)*.

³ U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates Detailed Tables. Table B17020I: *Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months by Age (Hispanic or Latino)*.

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates Detailed Tables. Table B17020H: *Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months by Age (White Alone, Not Hispanic or Latino)*.

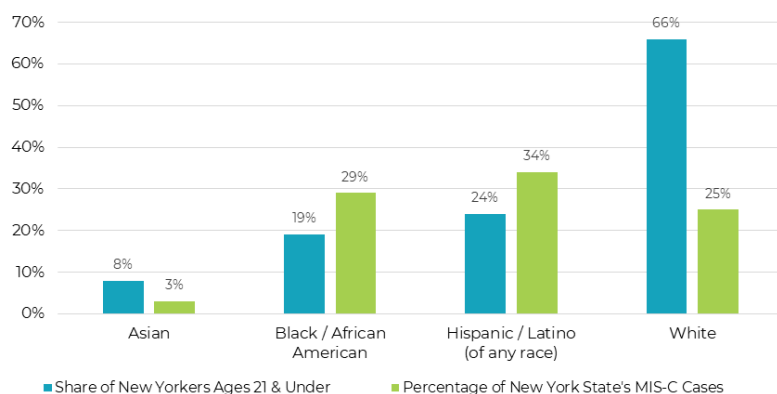


The United Hospital Fund estimates that **325,000 New York children have been pushed into or near poverty by the pandemic.**⁵ New York must prioritize halving its child poverty by 2030. Our State should act immediately to expand the Empire State Child Tax Credit and to reform State child care assistance so that all eligible families can receive child care subsidies.

HEALTH. As COVID-19 continues to disproportionately impact Black and Latinx New Yorkers, all of our State's children and families deserve access to healthcare that is comprehensive, affordable and equitable. This need is especially critical given that **New York's Black and Latinx children and youth are being disparately affected by COVID-linked multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C).**



Percentage of New York State's MIS-C Cases* and Share of Population by Select Race / Ethnicity



*Cases as of 10/10/2020

Sources: New York State Department of Health & United States Census Bureau

Medicaid and vital public health programs provide the foundation for New York's children's health system, covering over 2 million children. We must enable Medicaid to more fully meet the health and social service needs of New York's children and families. Our State must also restore funds and prevent further cuts to Medicaid and such services as health homes, lead poisoning prevention, behavioral health, early intervention, school health and community-based programs.

Amidst current threats to the viability of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), protecting New York's Medicaid program and public health system is more urgent than ever. **If the ACA is overturned, the uninsurance rate for New York children will increase by over one-third**, with an estimated 28,000 additional uninsured children in our State by 2022. The uninsurance rate for young adults ages 19 to 26 will double.⁶

⁵ "COVID-19 Ripple Effect – The Impact of COVID-19 on Children in New York State. Part 2: Children Newly In or Near Poverty due to COVID-19 and Additional Long-Term Effects," United Hospital Fund, September 2020, https://uhfnyc.org/media/filer_public/3b/e3/3be3ae10-7b6b-468b-ad45-10d8ff5ab87a/covid_ripple_effect_part_2_final.pdf.

⁶ "Overturning the ACA Would Increase Uninsurance among People of All Ages, Races and Ethnicities," Urban Institute, October 20, 2020, <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/overturning-aca-would-increase-uninsurance-among-people-all-ages-races-and-ethnicities>.

CHILD WELFARE. According to the United Hospital Fund, an estimated **4,200 New York children have lost a parent or caregiver due to the pandemic, with Black and Latinx children experiencing this devastating loss at twice the rate of Asian and white children.**⁷ Our State must ensure a strong system of resources and supports for these children and their extended families.



We must also protect preventive services, which have proven effective in decreasing the number of New York children removed from their homes and reducing the share of children in foster care by half. Threatened cuts to these state funds could have staggering effects on our children's safety and well-being at a time of extreme vulnerability. As almost two-thirds of children living in foster care are Black or Latinx, cutting child welfare preventive services would further disproportionately harm children of color.

YOUTH JUSTICE. Our commitment to youth justice has led to the passage and implementation of New York's [Raise the Age](#) legislation. Despite its reforms, **New York's Black and Latinx youth remain disproportionately impacted by all stages of the youth justice system.** We must protect state investments in community-based supports and programs for families and youth who are at risk for, or who have contact with, the justice system.



Investments in key services that address child and family behavioral health needs and youth development supports are essential. These services include:

- Resources dedicated to vulnerable youth and those currently court-involved, like the Supervision and Treatment Services for Juveniles Program
- Preventive services, including diversion programs
- Funds for local Raise the Age implementation

EDUCATION JUSTICE. Our vision for education justice centers public school systems that are safe, restorative and healing environments where *all* students have opportunities to learn and grow. **Education justice means that schools value and respect the dignities of all students, their caregivers and their communities.**



⁷ "COVID-19 Ripple Effect – The Impact of COVID-19 on Children in New York State. Part 1: Death of Parent or Caregiver," United Hospital Fund, September 2020, https://uhfnyc.org/media/filer_public/22/4b/224bf5ba-6ab2-42f6-8744-929135f2f42b/covid_ripple_effect_part_1_final.pdf.

In order for this vision to become a reality, key investments must be made in all New York schools. These investments include:

- Providing equitable access to supportive resources for *all* students
- Adopting culturally responsive curricula
- Promoting restorative practices
- Divesting from policing in schools and policies that disproportionately push out Black and Latinx children through exclusionary discipline
- Investing in schools and their communities



ELECTION DAY IS TUESDAY, NOV. 3RD

Vote in-person by Nov. 1st or on Nov. 3rd

OR

Return your absentee ballot as soon as possible!

Learn more: <https://www.elections.ny.gov/>

The Children's Defense Fund-New York (CDF-NY) Leave No Child Behind® is the New York office of the Children's Defense Fund. CDF-NY serves as an independent voice for New York's children and our mission is to ensure every New York child *a Healthy Start, a Head Start, a Fair Start, a Safe Start and a Moral Start* in life and a successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities. CDF-NY grew out of the Civil Rights Movement and is led by women of color.

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And don't forget to sign our [Petition to Protect New York's Children and Youth!](#)