



Children's HealthWatch Statement on 2024 Supplemental Poverty Measure Report

September 10, 2025

Each September, the U.S. Census Bureau releases the Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) Report with poverty and income data, revealing the landscape of economic hardships experienced by families with children during the previous calendar year.

Released yesterday, the [2024 report](#) shows one in 10 children lived in poverty in the United States, a similar proportion to the previous year (**13.7% in 2023; 13.4% in 2024**). The SPM also indicates a statistically significant increase of poverty among Black households (**17.9% in 2023; 20.7% in 2024**). After a record-low child poverty rate in [2021 \(5.2%\)](#), today's report reflects our leaders' failure to address the economic realities facing families with children.

Record-low child poverty in 2021 has been attributed to the expanded Child Tax Credit (CTC), which increased eligibility and the amount of the benefit. The expansion also changed the way families received CTC payments: instead of a one-time lump sum paid out at tax time, parents received part of the CTC each month, helping them cover regular household costs like groceries and child-related expenses. These changes made the expanded CTC a near-universal benefit, with over 90% of children qualifying for the program. An enormous breadth of [research has shown](#) the expanded CTC reduced child poverty, food insecurity, and housing instability, improved parental mental health, and [increased the amount](#) of time parents were able to spend with their children.

However, instead of building on these policy successes, the passage of the [Republican tax and spending bill](#) in July 2025 further restricted access to these evidence-based programs. The bill eliminates eligibility for the Child Tax Credit for 2.6 million US citizen children and makes the most significant cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Medicaid since the founding of these programs in the 1960s. It also delivers tax cuts for the [top 1% of earners](#), ushering in [the largest](#) upward transfer of wealth seen in the history of the United States. By targeting lawfully present immigrant families and drastically expanding immigration enforcement, the bill has chilled participation in benefit programs and [sown fear](#) and mistrust, [threatening the health and well-being](#) of communities nationwide.

Together, these actions will reduce the resources needed for effective government programs and eliminate vital supports for the fundamental needs—food and health care—of everyday people in the US. Without bold Congressional action, child poverty

rates will continue to rise in the wake of this bill, threatening children's ability to live the healthy, fulfilling lives we all deserve.

Children's HealthWatch was founded in the wake of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, legislation which drastically reduced access to economic assistance programs. We are no stranger to political climates that are antagonistic to children and families. We will continue to do the work that we have done for more than 25 years: rigorously document the impact of public policies on young children's health, and partner with advocates and policymakers to pass evidence-based policies with the power to reduce poverty and improve health outcomes.

While this work is familiar to us, the urgency of our current political situation is not. It requires new strategies for collaboration and advocacy, and a fiercer commitment to centering the health and well-being of young children and families through research-informed policy change. This means expanding an inclusive Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit, protecting public benefits from disruption, and strengthening our social safety net. We at Children's HealthWatch stand proudly together with our partners and neighbors to push back against cruel benefit cuts and attacks on our communities. Together, we will work harder than ever to achieve health equity for all children and families who call this country home.

About Children's HealthWatch: *Founded in 1998, Children's HealthWatch is a nonpartisan network of pediatricians, public health researchers, and children's health and policy experts committed to improving children's health in America. The network collects real-time data in urban hospitals across the country on infants and toddlers from families facing economic hardship, then analyzes and shares its findings with academics, legislators, and the public.*