

# FACT SHEET: CONGRESS IS PLAYING WITH THE LIVES OF OUR BABIES AND CHILDREN



***Congress spending plans risk slashing federal investment in the youngest children by half, threatening the future of our nation.***

Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) represent **nearly a third** of all federal investments in the country's children -- and **half** of all investments in our infants and babies. But these programs are at imminent risk.

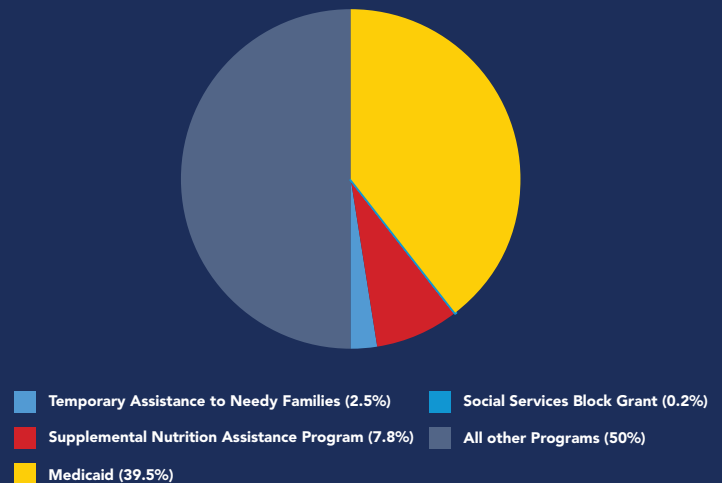
The spending proposal under consideration for the reconciliation process on Capitol Hill requires **more than \$1 trillion in cuts** that can only be achieved by gutting programs that secure the health, nutrition, safety and economic stability of millions of U.S. children. Lawmakers would need to cut as much as **\$880 billion** from Medicaid, which **covers** more than 30 million children, **including** 81% of children in poverty under the age of 6. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)— which **provides** food to 7.3 million families with kids and **4.5 million children** under age 5— could be slashed by up to **\$230 billion**. Increased SNAP benefits **reduced the number of children living in poverty by nearly 6% in 2021, or more than 1 million children.**

The proposal also targets TANF and SSBG, which together fund essential services that keep children fed, healthy, and safe, such as child care, protective services for children and adults, and direct financial assistance for children facing the greatest barriers thriving. TANF directly supports the well-being of **1.43 million children**, while SSBG funds key community-driven services covering **9.2 million children**.

## Some facts:

- **Combined, Medicaid, SNAP, SSBG, and TANF make up over 30% — nearly a third — of all federal dollars going to children.**
- **These programs accounted for \$51 billion in investment in children ages 0 to 3, or 50% of all federal support for our infants and toddlers.**
- **Medicaid/CHIP provides health insurance coverage to 44% of babies and young children.**

## Share of Federal Funding for Babies by Program



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- **Medicaid covers 41% of births in the United States. Medicaid coverage results in higher rates of prenatal and postpartum care, better birth outcomes, and decreased maternal mortality rates.**
- **States rely on federal funding for the services that babies need. For example, 69% of federal grants to states are for Medicaid, and states rely on federal sources for over 90% of spending on early care and education for babies and toddlers. Cuts to Medicaid, SNAP, SSBG, and TANF will shift costs to states, forcing states to redistribute a smaller pot of funds and cut key programs that keep babies safe, fed, and healthy and promote development and learning.**

Large cuts or structural changes to these programs through the budget reconciliation process currently underway will exacerbate child poverty and hunger and strip health care and essential supports from babies and children across the country. These cuts would:

- **Endanger children's access to health care:** Nearly 39% of children — and 42% of children under 6 — receive health insurance coverage through Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program. Research has shown that children are more likely to be covered when their parents receive Medicaid, so **even reductions in adult eligibility** will reduce children's access to health care.
- **Disproportionately affect children's nutrition needs:** More than 35% of households receiving SNAP have children. These cuts could strip children and their caregivers of reliable access to sufficient, nutritious food, potentially **leading** to behavioral problems, mental health struggles, and worse academic and health outcomes.
- **Inflict Life-Long Harm:** Support from Medicaid and SNAP in childhood **leads** to better health in adulthood, improved educational attainment and higher earnings in the long-run.
- **Exacerbate the child care shortage:** Cuts to SSBG and TANF would risk child care access for up to **40,000 children**.

When babies don't get what their growing brains need to thrive, they don't develop as they should. This leads to life-long developmental, educational, social, and health challenges. The damage to babies and toddlers from cuts to Medicaid, SNAP, TANF, and SSBG would be felt for generations, with ripple effects across the country.

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