

**MOVING AMERICA'S CHILDREN INTO THE SPOTLIGHT:
THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AS AN OPPORTUNITY
FOR DIALOGUE ABOUT AMERICA'S FUTURE**

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How will the President of the United States represent the more than 74 million children in America who, due to their age, have no ability to speak for themselves at the ballot box?

While presidential candidates most likely would answer that the future the voting generation leaves for its children is critically important to America's future, a review of the debates to date shows there has been no serious and substantive conversation about children and child policy. Considering that more than 400,000 of America's children currently live in foster care, another 15 million are left alone after the school day, and 15 million risk dropping out even before they complete high school, this omission is of deep concern. Do the presidential candidates have a plan to address the health, safety, and well-being of America's children?

This report, prepared by the Child and Family Policy Center for Voices for America's Children's civic engagement project, examines the degree to which child policy issues have been a focus of attention within the first 10 presidential primary debates and the extent to which child policy positions currently are incorporated into candidate websites. The report clearly shows that children and the policy issues that affect their well-being have been relegated to the shadows in the presidential primaries to date.

Child Policy Issues and the Initial Republican Presidential Debates

“While children represent 24 percent of the population and 100 percent of the future, children's issues have commanded scarcely 2 percent of the attention in presidential debates to date and less than that in total discussion and debate time.”

One way to determine the degree to which child policy issues are a substantive part of the presidential selection process is through public statements made by the candidates themselves, especially during their many debates.

The Child and Family Policy Center conducted a content analysis of the transcripts from the first 10 Republican Presidential debates (see Appendix 1), starting with the Greenville, South Carolina debate on May 5, 2011 and concluding with the Spartanburg, South Carolina debate on November 12, with other debates in California, Florida (2), Iowa, Michigan, Nevada and New Hampshire (2). In all debates, the format was for moderators to ask questions for candidate response, sometimes with opportunities for candidates to raise issues with one another. In only one debate was time allotted to candidates for opening and closing statements.

This content analysis first identified and then organized and coded the questions directed to the candidates. The content analysis continued on to highlight and record candidate responses to any questions that referenced children or significantly impacted children.

During the 10 debates, there were 545 questions asked of candidates overall (some of which were repetitive from one debate to another and even within a debate). Chart One shows the prevalence of questions asked of candidates, coded by issue area or type.

CHART ONE: QUESTION AREAS: FIRST TEN REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES

<u>Question Codes</u>	Number	Percentage
Jobs/Unemployment/Economy	113	20.7%
National Security/Foreign Policy	95	17.4%
National Debt/Bailouts/Subsidies	83	15.2%
Candidate Electability/Qualifications	58	10.6%
Health Care/Obamacare	46	8.4%
Social/Family Values/Role of Government	44	8.1%
Immigration Policy	41	7.5%
Energy/Housing/Higher Education/Space Exploration	30	5.5%
Social Security/Medicare/Entitlements	23	4.2%
Education (K-12)/Children	12	2.2%
Child Protection/Safety/Early Learning/Children with Disabilities	0	0.0%
Total	545	100.0%

Note: The last two category codes refer to current areas where the federal government plays a significant funding and policy role that is directed specifically to children’s health, safety, and development. Although the federal Elementary and Secondary Act is up for reauthorization (titled “No Child Left Behind” when last reauthorized in 1996), less than 20 minutes in total, across all candidates, from the 958 minutes of debate time of the 10 debates was devoted to education and other child issues, and some of that was simply around whether or not to abolish the Department of Education.

Overall, there were no questions asked about the foster care system, which serves more than 400,000 children in out-of-home care due to abuse or neglect, about child care or Head Start/preschool, nor about health and education programs designed to serve children with disabilities, although the federal government makes over \$50 billion annually in investments in these areas. In fact, the only time foster care was mentioned was by Michelle Bachman regarding her personally having raised 23 foster children, and the only time early childhood was mentioned was by John Huntsman, emphasizing the importance of the early years to lifelong development in a response to a question about abolishing the Department of Education. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a significant share of federal funding of education, was not mentioned at all, nor were other programs for children with disabilities, including home and community-based waivers under Medicaid and child mental health services under SAMSA, although estimates are that approximately 18 percent of children and youth have some mental health condition that deserves treatment.

The content analysis of candidate responses to questions did show some additional mention of children, particularly under immigration policy (around whether or not children born of undocumented immigrants should be U.S. citizens and whether those attending college should be eligible for in-state tuition under what has been known as the DREAM Act) and with respect to health care (in an exchange between Mitt Romney and Rick Perry on their respective states’ numbers of uninsured children and generally among all candidates on Rick Perry’s executive order regarding immunizing children), and to a limited extent under family values (largely focusing upon issues of abortion and gay and lesbian marriage but also touching on issues of

parental versus child rights). Finally, candidates also discussed reducing the national debt in the context of its impact upon children and all future generations. Appendix II provides the specific text from each of the ten debates where children, grandchildren, or kids were specifically mentioned.

The content of the debate questions and responses were in some juxtaposition to the opening and closing remarks of candidates in the one debate that included this opportunity, where candidates did speak about children. Most of the candidates indicated the number of children and grandchildren they had. Herman Cain specifically indicated he had decided to run because of the grandkids; Ron Paul stressed his role as an obstetrician delivering 4,000 babies; Michelle Bachman stressed her role as both parent and foster parent to twenty-three children; and Mitt Romney indicated that the most important thing in his life was to ensure a secure future for his children and grandchildren.

These statements all indicate that candidates recognize the critical importance of framing their campaigns in the context of children and, by extension, their personal responsibility for ensuring their own children grow up healthy, safe, secure, and with an educational foundation that gives them the opportunity for success. Unfortunately, the remaining parts of the debate shed very little light on how they propose to do that for all children in the United States or what they see as the federal role in ensuring an equal opportunity for all children.

Candidate Websites and Child Policy Positions and Accomplishments

A second method to determine the degree to which child policy issues are part of the presidential electoral process is to review candidates' own position statements and ways they present their policy views. Every presidential candidate, including the incumbent president, sponsors a website that presents the candidate to supporters and voters. These websites contain, in each candidate's own way of framing them, policy statements that speak to the candidate's views or positions on different issues.

Again, the Child and Family Policy Center performed a content analysis of these websites for substantive policy statements on issues, examining in particular whether candidates had any statements or positions regarding children and child policy. CFPC reviewed the entire websites of all candidates for their mention of children or of any specific child policy.

Chart Two provides a breakdown of the general issue areas or policy topics that each website addressed. All nine candidates (Obama was included with the eight major Republican candidates) had a policy statement regarding jobs/employment/the economy, and all but one had a policy statement on national security or national defense.

CHART TWO: POLICY ISSUES PRESENTED ON 2012 PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE CAMPAIGN WEBSITES										
	# Candidates	Bachmann	Cain	Gingrich	Huntsman	Obama	Paul	Perry	Romney	Santorum
National Security	8	X	X	X	X X	X	X	X	X	
Jobs/ Economy	9	{X} X	X	X	X	X	X X	{X}	{X}	X
Budget Integrity/Taxes	6	{X}	{X}				{X}	X	{X}	{X}
Health Care	7	X	X	X		{X}	{X}	X	X	
Energy/Environment	6	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Education	4		{X}	{X}		{X}	{X}			
Seniors	0									
Children	0									
Family/Social Values	5		{X}	{X}			X	{X}		{X}
Immigration	2		X				{X}			
Other	4		{X}	X		X	X X			
Total per Candidate		6	9	7	4	6	11	5	4	3

{X} means policy statement included mention of children

None of the candidates had policy statements on either children’s issues generally, or on issues affecting seniors, but four candidates did have policy statements on education (Ron Paul’s statement under the heading of “homeschooling”). In some instances, children were mentioned under other policy headings; for instance two candidates spoke to children in their health care policy statements.

Appendix Three provides the actual statements that appear on candidate websites that relate to children. Bachman mentioned her background in foster care and Santorum his involvement in reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Act, but there is otherwise almost no mention of such child policy issues as early childhood education, child welfare, juvenile justice, family economic security, or addressing the needs of children with disabilities, education or health or otherwise. In several instances where children were mentioned, it was in the context of government spending and the debt that could be left for future children to pay.

Background – The Important Role of the Federal Government in Child Policy

It can’t be argued, reasonably, that the reason for overlooking child policy in the presidential selection process is because no overarching federal policy framework exists or that addressing children’s issues is solely the responsibility of the states.

Analyses of the federal budget show that the federal government currently plays a very significant role to this end. The federal budget provides over one-third of all public funding (federal, state, school district, and local) directed to the health, education, safety, and security of children (0-17). Much of this is in partnership with state and local governments, designed to ensure that children receive essential services regardless of the state in which they live.

According to the Urban Institute’s analysis of the federal budget, this amounted to \$374 billion in spending in 2011, with \$80 billion on child health care, \$70 billion on educational services, \$50 billion on federal income tax credits to working families, \$14 billion on early care and

education programs serving low-income children (Head Start and child care), and \$12 billion on serving abused and neglected children in the foster care system.

This \$374 billion constitutes almost 11 percent of the total federal budget, and the programs the federal government funds that serve children are a much larger share of the discretionary, non-defense part of the federal budget, which has been tabbed as a major target for budget cuts.

While the role of the federal government is continually subject to change, specific federal roles and responsibilities in child safety, health, education, and economic security have been established and exist today.

Further, public opinion polls consistently show that voters care deeply about the future of the nation's children and grandchildren and want government to respond more effectively to meeting their health, safety, education, and security needs. This concern extends across age groups, race, political party and gender lines – and is well-described in several recent voter opinion polls in early primary states, as well as in national polls. Voters overwhelmingly believe that ensuring the opportunity for the next generation to succeed is one of the most important roles and responsibilities of government. They are particularly concerned that the next generation will grow up with diminished prospects and they want to vote at least in significant part on how candidates propose to address the needs of children.¹

Conclusion: The Need to Place Child Policy Issues into the Electoral Sunlight

To date, presidential candidates largely have been given a “free pass” on child policy issues in the debates that have been held. Questioning by a range of moderators and political reporters in advance, during or following the presidential primary debates has been virtually non-existent, delegating the issues to the shadows of the presidential primary process.

While discussions of the economy, the federal budget deficit, and foreign policy/national defense are all important – and have been raised repeatedly – many child policy areas where the federal government plays a prominent role have not been touched at all. Candidates have been more likely to raise children as a concern in the few opening and closing statements afforded to them or to challenge other candidates on their records in relation to children than the press has been to ask for positions on these issues.

While candidates may be speaking about these issues in their individual speeches on the campaign trail or in response to questions from voters, there is little information on candidate

¹ One national poll, a telephone survey, was completed during the period of April 13-18, 2011, commissioned by First Focus and conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research, using a national probability sample of 1,023 likely 2012 voters.

(http://www.firstfocus.net/sites/default/files/First%20Focus%20_public%20memo%20draft%204_.pdf)

For Iowa and New Hampshire polls, the Every Child Matters Education Fund commissioned Mason-Dixon Polling and Research to undertake phone surveys: In Iowa, 629 interviews were conducted July 5th to July 7th

(http://www.everychildmatters.org/storage/documents/docs/ia/IA_Poll_Summary_Revised-2.pdf);

in New Hampshire 600 interviews were conducted October 2nd to 6th, 2011

(http://www.everychildmatters.org/storage/documents/polls/nh/NH_Poll_Summary_Revised.pdf).

positions on child policy in the policy information and issue statements they present on their official candidate websites.

While a scan of all candidate statements and media coverage of candidates throughout the country is beyond the scope of this study, there is nothing to indicate that a broader coverage of campaign appearances and candidate statements would show that children's issues are not left mainly in the shadows, either.

There are two obvious remedies to the current relegation of child policy issues to the shadows.

First, there will be additional presidential primary debates before Iowa holds the first presidential caucus on January 4, 2012. Organizers and moderators of those debates could ensure that questions are raised about important child policy issues. Appendix IV provides some questions, with context, that speak to the federal government's current and potential future role.

Second, candidates could address child policy issues themselves through the issue statements and positions they place on their own websites. Candidates could demonstrate the importance of children and child policy issues to their own campaigns and goals for leadership.

In both instances, voters and child advocates can raise these issues directly to candidates, through requests on the candidate websites, and with the press and organizers who will be moderating future debates, through contacts with their offices.

Voters and society would be well-served by political dialogue and debate on the future of America's children and this could serve to engage more voters in the overall electoral process.

About the Children and Family Center: The Child and Family Policy Center was established in 1989 to "link research and policy on issues vital to children and families." Since that time, CFPC has sought to educate policy makers and the public in Iowa on a wide array of child policy issues – child protection and juvenile justice, child poverty, early childhood education, healthy child development, and closing disparities in children's opportunities for success. CFPC is a multi-issue, nonpartisan, policy center that engages in evidenced-based advocacy at the community, state, and national levels.

About Voices for America's Children: Voices is the nation's largest network of nonpartisan, multi-issue child advocacy organizations. With 62 members nationwide, Voices speaks up for kids, and mobilizes and advocates for public policies to improve the lives of all children at the community, state and federal levels. The Voices nationwide network is working to ensure that children are an Election Day priority in 2012

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Appendix 1
Republican Presidential Debates/Forums
Subject to Transcript Content Analysis

1. May 5, 2011 – 83 minutes

Location: Peace Center in Greenville, SC

Sponsor: Fox News and South Carolina Republican Party

Participants: Johnson, Paul, Cain, Pawlenty, Santorum

2. June 13, 2011 – 100 minutes

Location: Saint Anselm College in Manchester, NH

Sponsor: CNN, WMUR-TV and New Hampshire Union Leader

Participants: Bachmann, Cain, Gingrich, Paul, Pawlenty, Romney, Santorum

3. August 11, 2011 – 80 minutes

Location: Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa

Sponsor: Fox News, The Washington Examiner and the Republican Party of Iowa

Participants: Bachmann, Romney, Pawlenty, Paul, Cain, Huntsman, Santorum, Gingrich

4. September 7, 2011 – 108 minutes

Location: Reagan Library in Simi Valley, CA

Sponsor: Reagan Library, NBC News and Politico

Participants: Perry, Paul, Huntsman, Romney, Santorum, Gingrich, Bachmann, Cain

5. September 12, 2011 – 100 minutes

Location: Florida State Fair Grounds in Tampa, FL

Sponsor: CNN and the Tea Party Express

Participants: Perry, Bachmann, Romney, Paul, Gingrich, Cain, Santorum, Huntsman

6. September 22, 2011 – 120 minutes

Location: The Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, FL

Sponsor: Fox News, Google and Florida Republican Party

Participants: Perry, Bachmann, Romney, Paul, Gingrich, Cain, Santorum, Huntsman, Johnson

7. October 11, 2011 – 120 minutes

Location: Dartmouth College in Hanover, NH

Sponsor: Bloomberg, The Washington Post and WBIN-TV

Participants: Bachmann, Cain, Gingrich, Huntsman, Paul, Perry, Romney, Santorum

8. October 18, 2011 – 100 minutes

Location: Sands Expo Convention Center in Las Vegas, NV

Sponsor: CNN and the Western Republican Leadership Conference

Participants: Bachmann, Cain, Gingrich, Paul, Perry, Romney, Santorum

9. November 9, 2011 – 91 minutes

Location: Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan

Sponsor: CNBC, the Michigan Republican Party and Oakland University

Participants: Bachmann, Cain, Gingrich, Huntsman, Paul, Perry, Romney, Santorum

10. November 12, 2011 – 80 minutes

Location: Wofford College in Spartanburg, South Carolina

Sponsor: CBS News, The National Journal and the South Carolina Republican Party

Participants: Bachmann, Cain, Gingrich, Huntsman, Paul, Perry, Romney, Santorum

Appendix 2
References to Children and Child Policy
First Ten Republican Presidential Primary Debates
May–November, 2011

Transcripts were available for the first 10 Republican Presidential Primary Debates. The content analysis first involved identifying questions and coding those questions according to their topic area. In some instances, a question was posed to a candidate and then a follow-up was asked to get a more direct answer or get an answer from another candidate, which were not treated as separate questions. The content analysis next reviewed the entire transcripts for any mentions made by candidates of children or child policy issues in their responses – regardless of the question raised – or in their opening or closing remarks. A set of children’s issues – child health (as opposed to health coverage), child welfare and juvenile justice, early childhood education, responses to the needs of children with disabilities, and addressing child poverty – were not raised as questions in any of the campaigns and, as the text below shows, had only very occasional mention in candidate statements and responses.

May 5, 2011 – Greenville, South Carolina (83 minutes)

- Boehner in intro video: It is immoral to rob our **children** and **grandchildren's** future.
- **Question: (To Santorum) Have you changed your opinion of why women work?**
- Santorum (in response to question above): But we should be affirming women's choice as to whether they decide to stay at home and give up careers, as many do willingly, including my wife, Karen, because they believe a calling for them to be – to be **a wife and a mother**. Others who feel, because of many cases, because of financial stress, not, but that they have to go out and work. And I understand that. I respect that..... the foundational unit of this country is the **family**, and that we need to have a society that is encouraging and supporting of that basic **family structure**, and that means for -- to also affirm women who stay at home.
- Johnson: So I advocate legalizing marijuana, control it, regulate it, tax it. It'll never be legal for **kids** to smoke pot or buy pot. It'll never be legal to smoke pot or do harm to others.

June 13, 2011 – Manchester, New Hampshire (100 minutes)

- Santorum: I served 12 years representing Pennsylvania in the United States Senate, but I also have substantial executive experience making the tough decisions and balancing budgets and cutting spending. Karen and I are the parents of seven **children**.
- Bachmann: I'm a wife of 33 years. I've had five **children**, and we are the proud foster parents of 23 great **children**.
- Romney: and it's an honor to be back at Saint Anselm. Hopefully I'll get it right this year. And appreciate the chance to be with you and to welcome my wife. And I have five sons, as you know, five daughters-in-law, 16 **grandkids**. The most important thing in my life is

- Paul: I am Congressman Ron Paul. I've been elected to the Congress 12 times from Texas. Before I went into the Congress, I delivered **babies** for a living and delivered 4,000 **babies**. Now I would like to be known and defend the title that I am the champion of liberty and I defend the Constitution. Thank you.
- Cain: I am a problem-solver with over 40 years of business and executive experience, father of two, grandfather of three, and I'm here tonight because it's not about us. It's about those **grandkids**.
- Romney: The right way for America to create jobs is to – is to keep government in its place and to allow the private sector and the – and the energy and passion of the American people create a brighter future for our **kids** and for ourselves.
- Romney: We cannot – we cannot afford to do those things without jeopardizing the future for our **kids**. It is simply immoral, in my view, for us to continue to rack up larger and larger debts and pass them on to our **kids**, knowing full well that we'll all be dead and gone before it's paid off. It makes no sense at all.
- Paul: And I would think that if we don't want to cut any of the medical benefits for **children** or the elderly, because we have drawn so many in and got them so dependent on the government, if you want to work a transition, you have to cut a lot of money.
- Cain: And you know that commercial where they have demagogued the whole thing with medi-scare and having grandma tossed off the bridge? If we don't fix this problem, it's going to be our **grandkids** in that wheelchair that they were going to be throwing off the bridge. We have got to fix the problem.
- Romney: At some point, people around the world say, "I'm not going to keep loaning money to America to pay these massive deficits pay for them because America can't pay them back and the dollar is not worth anything anymore." In that circumstance, we saddled our future – the future of our **kids** in a way that is just unacceptable.
- Bachmann: I carried that legislation when I was a senator in Minnesota, and I believe that for **children**, the best possible way to raise **children** is to have a mother and father in their life. Now, I didn't come from a perfect background. My parents were divorced. And I was raised by a single mother. There's a lot of single families and families with troubled situations. That's why my husband and I have broken hearts for at-risk **kids** and it's why we took 23 foster **children** into our home.
- Bachmann: I am 100 percent pro-life. I've given birth to five babies, and I've taken 23 foster **children** into my home. I believe in the dignity of life from conception until natural death. I believe in the sanctity of human life.

• Question: (To Paul) A 5-year-old **child** of an illegal immigrant walks into an emergency room. Does the **child** get care?

- Paul (in response to question above): Well, first off, we shouldn't have the mandates. We bankrupted the hospitals and the schools in Texas and other states. We shouldn't give them easy citizenship.
- Follow-up: But should they get care? Should taxpayers have to pay for that care?

- Paul: (in response to the follow-up): No, they should not be forced to, but we wouldn't -- we shouldn't be penalizing the Catholic Church, because they're trying to fulfill a role. And some of the anti-immigrants want to come down hard on the Catholic Church, and that is wrong.

- Question to Mr. Cain: If there are two illegal immigrants, two adults who came into this country illegally, and they have a **child**, should that **child** be considered a citizen of the United States?

- Cain: It's about the **children and the grandchildren**. We're not that far apart on all of the big issues.

August 11, 2011 – Ames, Iowa (80 minutes)

- Romney: And let — and let me tell you — where do I find it in the constitution? Are you familiar with the Massachusetts constitution? I am. And the Massachusetts constitution allows states, for instance, to say that our **kids** have to go to school. It has that power. The question is, is that a good idea or bad idea? And I understand different people come to different conclusions.
- Bachmann: And I've been so grateful that we've been able to build a home together. We have five wonderful **children** and 23 foster **children**.
- Romney: You might wonder why is that? Why wouldn't you just let each state make their own decision? And the reason is because people move from state to state of course in a society like ours, they have **children**. As to go to different states, if one state recognizes a marriage and the other does not, what's the right of that **child**? What kind of divorce proceeding potential would there be in a state that didn't recognize a marriage in the first place? I believe we should have a federal amendment in the constitution that defines marriage as a relationship between a man and woman, because I believe the ideal place to raise a **child** is in a home with a mom and a dad.
- Huntsman: I'm running on my record. I'm proud to run on my record. Some people run from their record, I'm running on my record. I believe in traditional marriage first and foremost. I've been married 28 years. I have seven terrific **kids** to show for it.
- Santorum: You know, the Supreme Court of the United States on a recent case said that a man who committed rape could not be killed, could not be subject to the death penalty, yet the **child** conceived as a result of that rape could be. That to me sounds like a country that doesn't have its morals correct. That **child** did nothing wrong. That **child** is...That **child** is an innocent victim. To be victimized twice would be a horrible thing. It is an innocent human life. It is genetically human from the moment of conception. And it is a human life.

- Question: Governor Huntsman, this week, the Obama administration announced that they would grant waivers to some failing public school systems that couldn't meet the standard of the **No Child Left Behind** program. If you were president, would you return to full enforcement of this Bush-era law?

- Huntsman (in response): **No Child Left Behind** hasn't worked for this country. It ought to be done away with. We need to take education to the local level, where parents and

- [Follow-up to Mr. Cain.](#)
- Cain: No. I believe in education starting at the local. No **Child Left Behind** had some faults. I don't believe in unfunded mandates. I believe that the federal government should be out of the business of trying to micromanage the education of our **children**.
- Santorum: Thank you very much. I want to thank the people of Iowa. My family and I, Karen and the **kids**, came here three weeks ago.

September 7, 2011 – Simi Valley, California (108 minutes)

- Bachmann: I'm a mom. I've raised five biological **kids** and 23 foster **kids** in my home. One thing I know is that **kids** need jobs. And ObamaCare is clearly leading to job-killing regulations, not job-creating regulations.
- Huntsman: Absolutely not. You know, at some point, we're going to get around to talking about individual and personal responsibility. And I'm raising seven **kids**. I've got a couple of them here. The most important thing we can do in this health care debate – right, Rick – is talk about individual responsibility, personal responsibility.
- Perry: It is a Ponzi scheme to tell our **kids** that are 25 or 30 years old today, you're paying into a program that's going to be there. Anybody that's for the status quo with Social Security today is involved with a monstrous lie to our **kids**, and it's not right.
- Bachmann: Well, what I'm very concerned about is the issue of parental rights. I think when it comes to dealing with **children**, it's the parents who need to make that decision. It is wrong for government, whether it's state or federal government, to impose on parents what they must do to inoculate their **children**. This is very serious, and I think that it's very important, again, that parents have the right.
- Santorum; If you really cared, you could make the case, instead of forcing me, as a parent – and I have seven **children**, too, the wide receivers here have – have – on the ends here have – have – have seven **children** each – but I am offended that – that the government would tell me – and by an executive order, without even going through the process of letting the people have any kind of input.
- Romney: You know, I believe in parental rights and parental responsibility for our **kids**. My guess is that Governor Perry would like to do it a different way second time through. We've each get – we've each taken a mulligan or two. And – and my guess is that that's something you'd probably do a little differently the second time. He just said he'd rather do it through legislation second time through. And I recognize he wanted very badly to provide better health care to his **kids** and to prevent the spread of cancer. I agree with – with those who said he went about it in the wrong way, but I think his heart was in the right place.
- Paul: Cut that \$20 billion out, bring in – take \$10 off the debt, and put \$10 into FEMA or whoever else needs it, **child health care** or whatever. But I'll tell you what, if we did that

- Gingrich: If every parent in America had a choice of the school their **child** went to, if that school had to report its scores, if there was a real opportunity, you'd have a dramatic improvement. I visited schools where, three years earlier, there were fights, there were dropouts, there was no hope. They were taken over by a charter school in downtown Philadelphia, and all of a sudden the **kids** didn't fight anymore, because they were disciplined. They were all asked every day, what college are you going to? Not are you going to go to college, what college are you going. And so I would – I am very much in favor of school choice. My personal preference would be to have a Pell Grant for K-12 so that every parent could pick, with their **child**, any school they wanted to send them to, public or private, and enable them to have the choice.
- Romney: And I said, what do you mean, the magnet? And they said, when employers are willing to hire people who are here illegally, that's a magnet, and it draws them in. And we went in and talked about sanctuary cities, giving tuition breaks to the **kids** of illegal aliens, employers that, employers that knowingly hire people who are here illegally. Those things also have to be stopped.
- Gingrich: We should insist that first-generation immigrants who come here learn American history in order to become citizens. We should also insist that American **children** learn American history. And then find a way to deal with folks who are already here, some of whom, frankly, have been here 25 years, are married with **kids**, live in our local neighborhood, go to our church. It's got to be done in a much more humane way than thinking that to automatically deport millions of people.

• Question to Congressman Bachman: What do you do then with 11 million people, as the Speaker says, many of whom have U.S.-born **children** here? What do you do?

- Bachmann: The Hispanic-American community wants us to stop giving taxpayer-subsidized benefits to illegal aliens and benefits, and they want us to stop giving taxpayer-subsidized benefits to their **children** as well.
- Follow-up to Governor Huntsman: The fence is built, the border is under control. What do you do with 11.5 million people who are here without documents and with U.S.-born **children**?
- Huntsman: I would just have to say that I agree with so much of what has been said here today. President Reagan, when he made his decision back in 1987, he saw this as a human issue. And I hope that all of us, as we deal with this immigration issue, will always see it as an issue that resolves around real human beings. Yes, they came here in an illegal fashion. And yes, they should be punished in some form or fashion. I have two daughters that came to this country, one from China, one from India, legally. I see this issue through their eyes.
- Romney: We can be the best place in the world to be in the middle class again, with jobs plentiful for our **kids** and for each one of us that are looking for those jobs today. I know how to do that. And that's why I'm in this race.
- Perry: But in the state of Texas, if you come into our state and you kill one of our **children**, you kill a police officer, you're involved with another crime and you kill one of

- Question to Congressman Paul: A long time ago, a fellow Texan of yours, a young student teacher in Cotulla, Texas, was horrified to see young **kids** coming into the classroom hungry, some of them with distended bellies because of hunger. He made a vow that if he ever had anything to do about it, the government would provide meals, hot meals at best, in schools. The young student teacher, of course, was – later went on to be President Lyndon Johnson. Do you think that is any more – providing nutrition at schools for **children** – a role of the federal government?

- PAUL (in response to question above): Well, I'm sure, when he did that, he did it with local government, and there's no rules against that. That'd be fine. So that doesn't imply that you want to endorse the entire welfare state. You imply (ph) I'd endorse all welfare (ph). Any time I challenge it, you're going to challenge the whole welfare system. No. It isn't authorized in the Constitution for us to run a welfare state. And it doesn't work. All it's filled up with is mandates. And the mandates are what we're objecting to. I want to repeal all the mandates. But, yes, if there are poor people in Texas, we have a responsibility – I'd like to see it voluntary as possible – but under our Constitution, our states have that right – if they feel the obligation, they have a perfect right to.

September 12, 2011 – Tampa, Florida (100 minutes)

- Perry: But the idea that we have not had the courage to stand up and look Americans in the face, young mid-career professionals or **kids** that are my **children's** age and look them in the eye and said, listen, this is a broken system. It has been called a ponzi scheme by many people long before me. But no one's had the courage to stand up and say, here is how we're going to reform it.
- Perry: I think those types of thoughtful conversations with America, rather than trying to scare seniors like you're doing and other people, it's time to have a legitimate conversation in this country about how to fix that program where it's not bankrupt and our **children** actually know that there's going to be a retirement program there for them.

- Question: My question for you is, what is your plan to balance the budget and get this spending under control so that my **children's** share of the debt is erased without compromising my retired mother's already tenuous financial future?

- Bachmann: I'm a mom. And I'm a mom of three **children**. And to have innocent little 12-year-old girls be forced to have a government injection through an executive order is just flat out wrong. That should never be done. It's a violation of a liberty interest.
- Santorum: I believe your policy is wrong. Why – ladies and gentlemen, why do we inoculate people with vaccines in public schools? Because we're afraid of those diseases being communicable between people at school. And therefore, to protect the rest of the people at school, we have vaccinations to protect those **children**.
- Santorum: Karen and I have seven **children**, so we'd add a bedroom or – and some beds to the White House.

- Romney: Got a lot of people without work, and a lot of people wonder whether the future is going to be brighter for their **kids**.
- Romney: So the financing of Social Security, we've all talked about at great length. In the last campaign four years around, John McCain said it was bankrupt. I put in my book a series of proposals on how to get it on sound financial footing so that our **kids** can count on it not just our current seniors.

September 22, 2011 – Orlando, Florida (120 minutes)

- Santorum: The bottom-line problem with education is that the education system doesn't serve the customer of the education system. And who's the customer? The parents, because it's the parents' responsibility to educate the **children**. It's been that responsibility — from the moment they were born, they began the education of their **children**. And at some point, we have — the government has convinced parents that at some point it's no longer their responsibility. And in fact, they force them, in many respects, to turn their **children** over to the public education system and wrest control from them and block them out of participation of that. That has to change or education will not improve in this country.
- Gingrich: And the truth is, I believe we'd be far better off if most states adopted a program of the equivalent of Pell Grants for K-through-12, so that parents could choose where their **child** went to school, whether it was public, or private, or home-schooling, and parents could be involved. Florida has a virtual school program that is worth the entire country studying as an example.
- Paul: If you care about your **children**, you'll get the federal government out of the business of educating our **kids**.
- Huntsman: We actually worked on early **childhood** literacy. If you can lock in the pillars of cognitive development around reading and math before age six, you are giving those **kids** the best gift possible as they then proceed through education.
- Bachmann: And here's the other thing I would do. I would not allow taxpayer-funded benefits for illegal aliens or for their **children**.

- Question to Governor Romney: In Massachusetts, you vetoed legislation to provide interstate tuition rates to the **children** of illegals. Governor Perry of course signed the Texas Dream Act to do exactly that. But what about Governor Perry's argument that it's better to get these **kids** an education and to get them jobs than to consign them just to being a burden on the state?

- Romney (in response to the question above): It's an argument I just can't follow. I've got to be honest with you, I don't see how it is that a state like Texas — to go to the University of Texas, if you're an illegal alien, you get an in-state tuition discount. You know how much that is? That's \$22,000 a year. Four years of college, almost \$100,000 discount if you are an illegal alien go to the University of Texas. If you are a United States citizen from any one of the other 49 states, you have to pay \$100,000 more. That doesn't make sense to me. And that kind of magnet —...That kind of magnet draws people into this country to get that education, to get the \$100,000 break. It makes no sense.

- Follow-up to Governor Perry: Now, last year, more than 16,000 **children** of illegals, young people in Texas, took advantage of your in-state tuition rate. Speak to that issue. And just, generally, how do you feel being criticized by a number of these other candidates on the stage for being too soft on immigration, sir?
- Perry: But if you say that we should not educate **children** who have come into our state for no other reason than they've been brought there by no fault of their own, I don't think you have a heart. We need to be educating these **children**, because they will become a drag on our society.

- Question to Congresswoman Bachmann: In 2006, you said that public schools are, quote, "teaching **children** that there is separation of church and state," and said, quote, "I am here to tell you that's a myth."

- Perry: It gets back to the federal government has no business telling the states how to educate our **children**.
- Santorum: America is a great country because we are a country that believes in God-given rights to every single man, woman and **child** in America...
- Romney: And I want everybody to have the kind of opportunities that we on this stage have had. I want people in America to recognize that the future will be brighter for their **kids** than it was for them.
- Romney: We looked at what drives good education in our state, what we found is the best thing for education is great teachers, hire the very best and brightest to be teachers, pay them properly, make sure that you have school choice, test your **kids** to see if they are meeting the standards that need to be met, and make sure that you put the parents in charge.
- Cain: All of the programs at the federal level where there's strings attached, cut all the strings. We have got to encourage parents to take advantage of choices, but provide those choices and we must find ways to empower the students. This is how we are going to improve education, but primarily get the federal government out of trying to educate our **kids** at the local level.

- Question: (VIDEO CLIP) WALLACE: Governor, what about provisions that Ian talks about? For instance, the one that allows **kids** to stay on their parents' policies until they were 26, or not limiting coverage for preexisting conditions. President Obama says the only way that insurance companies can afford to provide those kinds of reforms is with the individual mandate where they get a lot of new customers.

October 11, 2011 – Hanover, New Hampshire (120 minutes)

- Romney: And the problem was that we had a lot of **kids** without insurance, a lot of adults without insurance, but it added up to about 8 percent of our population.
- Romney: You know, the – the great thing about running for president is that you get the chance also to talk about your experience as governor, and I'm proud of the fact that we took on a major problem in my state. And the problem was that we had a lot of **kids** without insurance, a lot of adults without insurance, but it added up to about 8 percent of our population. And we said: You know what? We want to find a way to get those

- Bachmann: Well, I do understand that. I'm a mother of 28 **kids** – 23 foster **kids**, five biological **kids**.
- Bachmann: We have broken hearts for at-risk **kids**, Charlie. That's why we took 23 foster **children** into our home.
- Romney: But there's another crisis, and that's that people wonder whether their future will be brighter for the **kids** than it's been for them. It's always been what it means to be American, to have a greater degree of confidence in the future than even what we've enjoyed ourselves.
- Santorum: That has fathers take responsibility for their **children**. You can't have limited government, you can't have a **wealthy** society, if the family breaks down that basic unit of society. And that needs to be included in this economic discussion.

October 18, 2011 – Las Vegas, Nevada (100 minutes)

- Santorum: He also doesn't have anything that takes care of the families. I mean, you have – you have a situation where, under Herman's plan, a single person pays as much in taxes as a – as a man and a woman raising three **children**. Ever since we've had the income tax in America, we've always taken advantage of the fact that we want to encourage people to – to have **children** and not have to pay more already to raise **children**, but also pay that additional taxes – we gave some breaks for families. He doesn't do that in this bill.

- Question: Governor Perry, in the last debate, Governor Romney pointed out that Texas has one of the highest rates of uninsured **children** in the country, over one million **kids**. You did not get an opportunity to respond to that. What do you say? How do you explain that?

- Perry (in response to question above): Well, we've got one of the finest health care systems in the world in Texas. As a matter of fact, the Houston, Texas, Medical Center, there's more doctors and nurses that go to work there every morning than any other place in America. But the idea that you can't have access to health care, some of the finest health care in the world – but we have a 1,200-mile border with Mexico, and the fact is we have a huge number of illegals that are coming into this country. Gingrich: And they want to have a chance that their country is going to work to give their **children** and their **grandchildren** a better future.

- Question: Governor Perry, the 14th Amendment allows anybody. A **child** of illegal immigrants who is born here is automatically an American citizen.

- Bachmann: When you talk about housing, when you talk about foreclosures, you're talking about women who are at the end of their rope because they're losing their nest for their **children** and for their family.

November 9, 2011 – Rochester, Michigan (91 minutes)

- Romney: So, yes, my budget takes into consideration health care for the elderly, health care on Medicaid, as well as **child health care**. At the same time, we deal with the bailouts, the banks and all the benefits that they get from the financial system.
- Romney: We see what's happening in Italy, what's happening in Greece. That's where we're headed if we don't change our course. And there are enough good Democrats and good Republicans willing to put aside partisanship and do what's right for the country, in my view, if they're led by someone who cares more about the country, cares more about the future of America, cares about our **kids** and our **grandkids**, and is willing to step forward and lead.
- Perry: We have to let our **kids** have the opportunity to get an education — through long-distance learning, for instance.

November 12, 2011 – Spartanburg, South Carolina (80 minutes)

- Bachmann: For every man, woman and **child** in the United States, that means each one of us just took on another \$650 in debt just for the month of October. That's the velocity that we're growing this debt. So what would I cut? I think, really, what I would wanna do is be able to go back and take a look at Lyndon Baines Johnson's The Great Society. The Great Society has not worked, and it's put us into the modern welfare state. If you look at China, they don't have food stamps. If you look at China, they're in a very different situ-- they save for their own retirement security. They don't have pay FDC. They don't have the modern welfare state. And China's growing. And so what I would do is look at the programs that LBJ gave us with The Great Society, and they'd be gone.

Appendix 3
**Presidential Candidate Websites, Issue Statement Areas, and Specific References
to Children and Child Policy**

Each candidate's website was reviewed and all policy statements and other information on the site reviewed for any mentions made of children or child policies. The URL for each website is provided, along with a list of the issue areas that are included on the candidate's website. Mentions of children or child policy, where they exist, under any of the issue areas are presented here. Where candidates have a statement on education, the most salient comments are excerpted – reviewers may want to go to the full text in these areas. For this analysis, statements solely about abortion, prayer in schools, the sanctity of marriage, or general family values that did not reference children are not included in the enumeration. All website reviews were completed in the period from November 17-21. Candidates are listed alphabetically.

Michele Bachmann

<http://www.michelebachmann.com/>

Issues:

[American Jobs, Right Now](#)

- “Recent reports indicated that the United States has now slipped to 5th in the competitiveness rankings, and 47th in **education**.... The future of the American economy lies with the innovation of this and **future generations**.” (K-12 education)

[Job Creation and Growth](#)

[No Debt Ceiling Increase](#)

- “As never before, we are sentencing our **children** and **grandchildren** to a future of indentured servitude to foreign lenders.” (economic security)

[A Healthier America](#)

[A More Secure Nation](#)

[Affordable Energy](#)

More “child” mentions:

Meet Michele Bachmann

- Michele and Marcus have five **children**, Lucas, Harrison, Elisa, Caroline, and Sophia. In addition, the Bachmann family has opened their home to 23 foster **children**, which has inspired Michele to become one of Congress' leading advocates for **foster and adopted children**, earning her bipartisan praise for her efforts.

Herman Cain

<http://hermancain.com/home>

Issues:

National Security

Economy

Energy

Regulations

- “No one is arguing for lead-based paint in toys for **kids** or unsafe food. We just want reasonable regulations that cut down on bureaucracy and help businesses succeed. And ultimately, the free market, aided in part by the watchful eyes of investors and consumers, will regulate itself.”(child safety)

Health Care

Entitlements & Spending

- For the generations or workers who have paid into Social Security and Medicare, the federal government’s inevitable failure to pay them as they retire is undeniably stealing. These are generations who have worked and sacrificed to leave this country a better place for their **children and grand children** as they retire. The current behavior of an out of control federal government does little to ease their minds. (economic security)
- The massive debt caused by liberal policies will be passed onto our **children and grandchildren** if we do not stop it. They will be stuck with the tab for the government takeover of health care, industry bailouts and failed stimulus packages. They will be the ones approached with outstretched palms by the Chinese to pay back the billions upon billions we owe them. Each generation of Americans should seek to leave behind a better and more prosperous nation for the next, not saddle them with debt from reckless spending. (economic security)

Immigration and Faith & Family

- America’s moral foundation does not need to be rewritten. It needs to be respected and taught to our **children and grandchildren**. As former President Ronald Reagan reminded us many years ago:

“Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn’t pass it on to our **children** in the blood stream. It must be fought for and protected and handed on for them to do the same. Or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our **children and grandchildren** what is used to be like in the United States when men were free.” (??)

Education

- Education is the key to unlocking a prosperous future. At the heart of education should always be the **students**. (K-12 education)
- **Children** are best served when the teachers, parents and principals are making the day-to-day decisions, coupled with the leadership of local municipalities, school boards and states. What might work for a third grader in Oklahoma might not work for a third grader in Hawaii. (K-12 education)
- Another way we can put **kids** first is to offer school choice as a real option for educational competition. This means expanding school vouchers and charter schools. Such measures have proven time and time again to best serve the **students**, many of whom do not have the economic means of attending better schools. In a post-Katrina

New Orleans, these programs were immensely popular with both the parents and the **students**, giving opportunities to **children** who might otherwise have been stuck in poor-performing, if not failing, schools. (K-12 education)

- Unbundling education means putting **kids** first. It means rewarding those teachers who enrich the lives of their **students**, and it means holding those accountable who do not. It means putting **students** before union interests, and it means keeping their development paramount. Unbundling education means localizing education- making those on the ground responsible for the teaching and learning that happens in our local communities. Unbundling education means offering parents choices for their **children** to create a truly competitive educational system. (K-12 education)

More child mentions:

Meet Herman tab

- Herman’s parents had two dreams. First, they wanted to own their own house. Secondly, they wanted both of their **children** to graduate from college. (K-12 education)
- Despite the many professional commitments of his life, Herman continues to enjoy most the time spent with family and friends. As his **children** got married and had their own **children**, he knew that he had an extraordinary obligation to do what he could to make this a safe and prosperous nation for them. The paramount joys in his life are his wife, Gloria, his **children and his grandchildren**.

Newt Gingrich

<http://www.newt.org/>

Issues:

[Jobs and the Economy](#)

[Tell the Truth about National Security](#)

[An American Energy Plan](#)

[Healthcare](#)

[A 21st Century Learning System](#)

- Empower parents to pick the right school for their **child**. Parents had the right to choose the school that is best for their **child**, and should never be trapped in a failing school against their will. (K-12 education)
- Institute a Pell Grant-style system for Kindergarten through 12th Grade. Per-pupil school district funding should go into each **child’s** backpack, and follow them to the school their parents wish to attend. Parents who home school their **children** should receive a tax credit or be allowed to keep the Pell Grant. (K-12 education)
- Protect the rights of home-schooled **children** by ensuring they have the same access to taxpayer funded, extra-curricular educational opportunities as any public school student. (k-12 education)

[Protecting Life and Religious Liberty](#)

- Protect the rights of home-schooled **children** by ensuring they have the same access to taxpayer funded, extra-curricular educational opportunities as any public school student. (k-12 education)

[Executive Orders On the first Day](#)

Jon Huntsman

<http://jon2012.com/>

Issues:

[Jobs & the Economy](#)

[National Security](#)

[Foreign Policy](#)

[Energy Security](#)

Barack Obama

www.barackobama.com/?source=primary-nav

Issues:

[Education](#)

- President Obama has worked to raise K-12 standards, invest in teachers, and turn around low-performing schools so that **children** are prepared for college and careers. (K-12 education)
- To support community efforts to improve schools, President Obama is offering states relief from **No Child Left Behind** mandates so that they have the flexibility to use local solutions to help improve schools. (K-12 education)

[Energy and the Environment](#)

[Equal Rights](#)

[Health Care](#)

- Fact: 4.9 million **children** with pre-existing conditions are now able to get health insurance. Before the Affordable Care Act, insurance companies could deny coverage to **kids** with medical conditions. (health)

[Jobs and the Economy](#)

[National Security](#)

Ron Paul

<http://www.ronpaul2012.com/>

Issues:

Abortion

Health Care

- Give a payroll deduction to any worker who is the primary caregiver for a spouse, parent, or **child** with a terminal illness. (health)

Economy

National Defense

End the Fed

Lower Taxes

- Struggling **college students** and those working to support their families would be greatly benefited and receive an immediate pay raise by eliminating taxes on tips. (economic security)

Second Amendment

Right to Work

Homeschooling

- Ron Paul believes no nation can remain free when the state has greater influence over the knowledge and values transmitted to **children** than the family does. (K-12 education)
- Help parents better educate their **children** by providing parents with a \$5,000 per **child** tax credit for tutors, books, computers, and other K-12 related educational need. (K-12 education)
- Congressman Paul wants parents to have the freedom to choose the best educational options for their **children**, and his commitment to ensuring homeschooling remains a practical alternative for American families is unmatched by any other Presidential candidate. (K-12 education)

Immigration

- End Birthright Citizenship – As long as illegal immigrants know their **children** born here will be granted U.S. citizenship, we'll never be able to control our immigration problem. (??)

Energy

Rick Perry

<http://www.rickperry.org/>

Issues:

Jobs

- Under [his Cut, Balance and Grow plan](#), there was this statement:
 - Every **child** born today is immediately saddled with a federal debt burden of more than \$46,000. (economic security)

Fiscal Responsibility

Security

Healthcare

Social Issues

- The Prenatal Protection Act, which recognizes the personhood of an unborn **child**. (health)

Mitt Romney

<http://mittromney.com/>

Issues:

Jobs

- In his plan:
 - Another four years or another decade of high unemployment will stamp an entire generation. It will also stamp the **children** who are now growing up. (economic security)
 - Between them, they have five sons and sixteen **grandchildren**, who are the center of their lives.
 - As one recent study has pointed out, almost every aspect of our daily life, “including how Americans heat their homes and light their rooms, what food they buy and how they cook it, the toys that occupy their **children** and the volume of their television commercials, are controlled by government’s ballooning compendium of dos and don’ts.” (economic security or safety, because it was under “regulations”)
 - America cannot defend its freedom, protect its environment, educate its **children**, or produce new alternative forms of energy without economic growth, (k-12 or safety)

Fiscal Responsibility

- Found on Fiscal Responsibility front page is a quote from Romney: “I cannot fathom the argument that it’s fine to spend more than we earn year after year. Passing on ever-increasing debt to our **children** is not just bad policy, it is morally wrong.” From his book, No Apology (economic security)

Health Care

Foreign Policy

Other children mentions:

- When generations of immigrants looked up and saw the Statue of Liberty for the first time, they surely had many questions and doubts about the life before them, but one thing they knew without a doubt is that they were coming to a place where anything was possible—that in America, their **children** would have a better life. (all areas) This is found on the Issues front page.

Rick Santorum

<http://www.ricksantorum.com/index.php>

Issues:

Champion of Faith & Families

- During his time in elected office, Rick Santorum fought for the preservation of the traditional American family and for the protection of the **most vulnerable in our society**. (safety, health))

- Rick Santorum not only believes but cherishes the ideal of a culture of life. As a member of the United States Senate, Rick fought for the passage of the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA), and the “Combating Autism Act” to fight this devastating disease that is affecting more and more of our nation’s **children**. (health)
- But of all his jobs, Rick is most proud of his time spent as a husband to his wife Karen and a father to their seven **children** – including serving as the Little League coach for their two youngest sons.

Defender of the Taxpayer

- Along with South Carolina Senator Jim DeMint, Rick was one of only a handful of legislators who stuck their head out of the foxhole and fought to save the Social Security system for **future generations** by offering creative reforms focused on empowering the individual. (economic security)
- Rick believes that by having our government choose winners and losers, both Administrations are setting America on a course to crony western European capitalism that will lead to a weaker future for our **children**. (economic security)

Believer in American Exceptionalism

Appendix 4
Securing America's Future:
The Seven Question Campaign:
What Legacy Will Lawmakers Leave?

Note: These questions have been submitted by Every Child Counts Iowa to Presidential candidates in both parties and were designed to be nonpartisan in their nature.

1. WHAT SHOULD GOVERNMENT DO TO ENSURE THAT CHILDREN ARE HEALTHY?

For the first time in America's history, children face the prospect of growing up less healthy and living shorter lives than their parents. Improving children's health involves addressing their medical health needs and ensuring they have health coverage; but the major factors affecting children's healthy development are social and environmental. The federal government currently plays a very significant role in providing health coverage for children, with over one-third of the nation's children receiving that coverage through Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). The federal government also plays a very significant role in promoting prevention and early identification services to meet children's health needs and establishing standards for child health care that are based on child, and not adult, needs as developing human beings.

As President, what will you do to ensure all children's healthy development, including providing access to preventive and developmental health services and responding to mental and oral health, as well as physical health needs?

2. WHAT SHOULD GOVERNMENT DO TO ENSURE THAT CHILDREN ARE SAFE?

Children cannot protect themselves, and government has a responsibility to ensure the safety of the next generation when their families and communities cannot. Physical, mental, or sexual abuse of children is not tolerated in American society, yet there are over two million confirmed cases of child abuse and neglect each year. Many other children grow up in unsafe and even toxic neighborhoods and in conditions that jeopardize their well-being. Further, as children grow into adolescence, they are vulnerable to taking on risky behaviors that can lead to injury, violence, drug involvement and abuse, and other forms of delinquency and criminal involvement.

As President, what will you do to ensure that all children are safe in their homes and communities and to support their well-being in growing into productive adults?

3. WHAT SHOULD GOVERNMENT DO TO ENSURE THAT CHILDREN ARE IN NURTURING FAMILIES?

Parents are their children's most important teachers, nurses, nutritionists, safety officers, and mentors. Strong communities are needed to support families in these roles. Government cannot and should not serve as a substitute for a child's family and community. At the same

time, too many families struggle to provide the nurturing and stable home environments children need. Through poverty, family stress, immaturity, violence, depression, addiction, or mental illness, too many children are vulnerable to a host of poor child outcomes and an ability to become contributing adults and parents. Increased mobility and family stress have contributed to what some have called the “breakdown of the family” in America. While adolescent birth rates have declined, single parenting rates have continued to increase, with single parenting often putting children at financial, social, and emotional risk. The media, glorification of violence, and presence of negative role models have contributed to risky and negative youth behavior. Government cannot solve these issues, but leaders within government can set a vision and direction for government in strengthening and supporting families and family values.

As President, what leadership role will you take to strengthen families and family life in America?

4. WHAT SHOULD GOVERNMENT DO TO ENSURE THAT CHILDREN’S BASIC NEEDS ARE MET?

Children are the age group in society most likely to live in poverty. Nearly one in five American children live in poor households, and over one-third live in households with incomes below 200% of poverty, where families struggle to meet basic needs. Research has shown that even temporary entry into poverty and deprivation can have long-term consequences on children and their likelihood of success. In international comparisons measuring comparative poverty, America has rates of child poverty over twice those of most other industrialized countries, largely due to the absence of income transfer policies to take low-income families above the poverty threshold. While many children who grow up in poverty do succeed, they and their families face additional barriers to that success that often are difficult to overcome.

As President, what will you do to reduce child poverty and ensure families have sufficient resources to care for their children and invest in their success?

5. WHAT SHOULD GOVERNMENT DO TO ENSURE THAT CHILDREN START SCHOOL PREPARED FOR SUCCESS?

The first five years of life are critical ones for the formation of a child’s overall identity and resiliency and the acquisition of the skills and behaviors needed for success in school and life. Half of all subsequent school failure currently can be predicted by the time children start kindergarten. In the early years, toxic stress, adverse early childhood experiences, and untreated developmental delays and emotional concern are particularly damaging and can have lifelong consequences. There is a mismatch between what many families can afford to pay for child care while they work and what is needed to provide safe and developmentally appropriate care.

As President, what will you do to improve the school readiness of all children and set a life course trajectory for success in school and life?

6. WHAT SHOULD GOVERNMENT DO TO ENSURE THAT CHILDREN SUCCEED IN SCHOOL AND ARE PREPARED TO LEAD?

America's children require high skills to compete and lead in an increasingly competitive world economy. On international comparisons of student achievement in reading, mathematics, and science, student performance in America now lags that of many of our major trading partners and competitors. A high school diploma certifying that a child has attended school for twelve years is not sufficient to be successful in the 21st century American economy; yet too many students fail even on this account. While states and communities assume the lion's share of the cost of financing K-12 education in the United States, the federal government plays a critical role in addressing the needs of disadvantaged students and those with disabilities and special needs. Moreover, the federal government can and does use the power of its purse strings to set standards and goals for state educational systems and to help finance higher education and make it financially available to students who otherwise could not afford to attend.

As President, what will you do to restore the achievement of America students to leadership in the world?

7. WHAT SHOULD GOVERNMENT DO TO ENSURE THAT CHILDREN HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL?

America is becoming a much more diverse nation, and children are leading the way. In 2010, 45% of all young children (0-5) were Hispanic/Latino or of color, compared with 18% of the over sixty-five population. By 2025, there will be no "majority" ethnic population group among children. African American, Asian and Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino, and children who are defined as being part of multiple racial and ethnic groups are all growing in numbers and proportions of the overall child population. This creates challenges, as well as opportunities, for the education and workforce systems in America, in responding to new students and workers with different language, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. Currently, there are major disparities in the health, living conditions, and educational experiences and opportunities these children experience.

As President, what will you do to respond to the growing diversity in America's child population and assuring equal opportunity and closing current gaps in child outcomes by race, ethnicity, language, and culture?