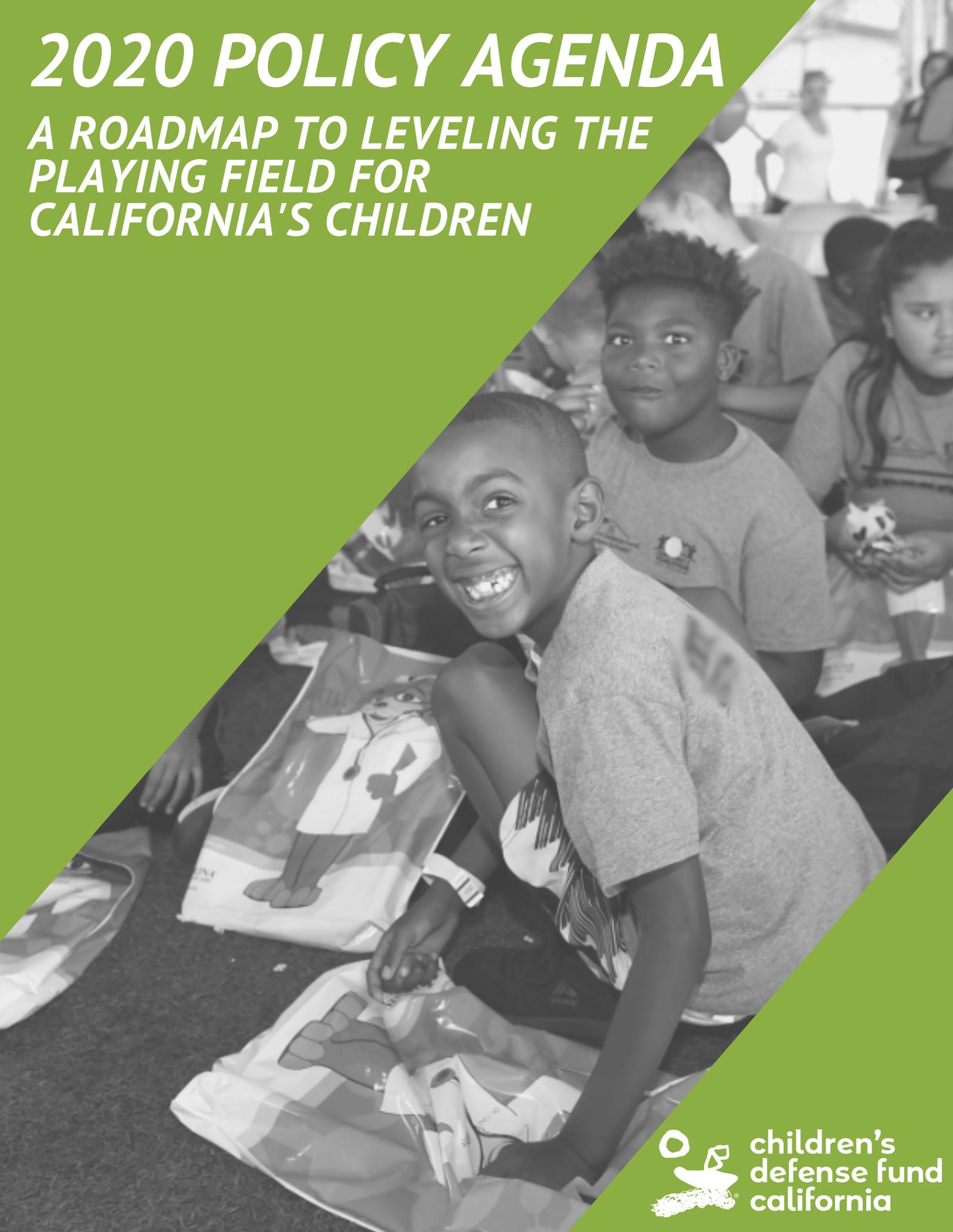


2020 POLICY AGENDA

A ROADMAP TO LEVELING THE
PLAYING FIELD FOR
CALIFORNIA'S CHILDREN



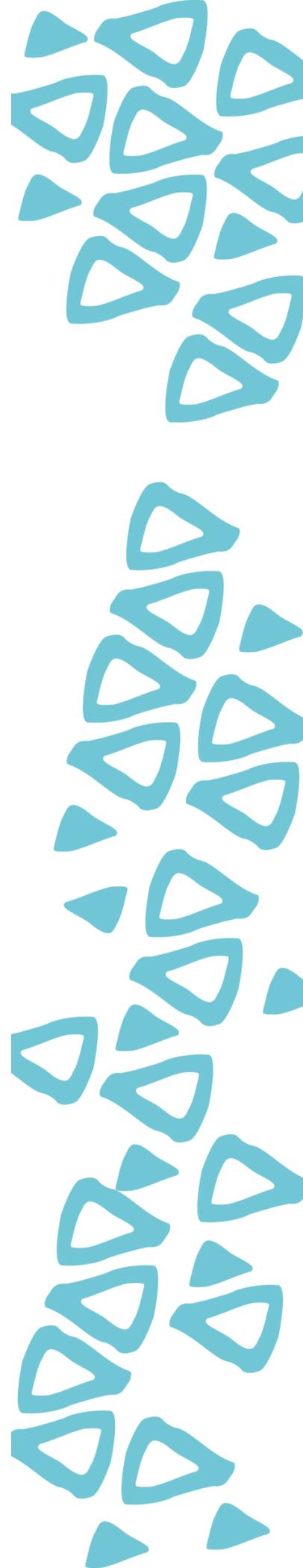
children's
defense fund
california

WHO WE ARE

Children's Defense Fund–California (CDF-CA) is the state office of Children's Defense Fund (CDF), a national child advocacy organization that has worked relentlessly for over 45 years to establish a level playing field for all children.

Founded by Marian Wright Edelman in 1973, CDF champions policies and programs that lift children out of poverty; protect them from abuse and neglect; and ensure their access to health care, quality education and a moral and spiritual foundation. With the support of foundations, corporate grants and individual donations, advocating for children is always a priority for CDF.

Our Leave No Child Behind® mission is to ensure every child a healthy start, a head start, a fair start, a safe start and a moral start in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities.



MEET OUR EXPERTS

LEADERSHIP



SHIMICA GASKINS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



SAIRA SOTO
DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

EDUCATION EQUITY



ANGELICA SALAZAR
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
EQUITY



BETTY FANG
POLICY ASSOCIATE

ECONOMIC & HEALTH JUSTICE



**JANIS LAMBERT
CONNALLON**
SENIOR POLICY ASSOCIATE



SEVLY SNGUON
POLICY ASSOCIATE

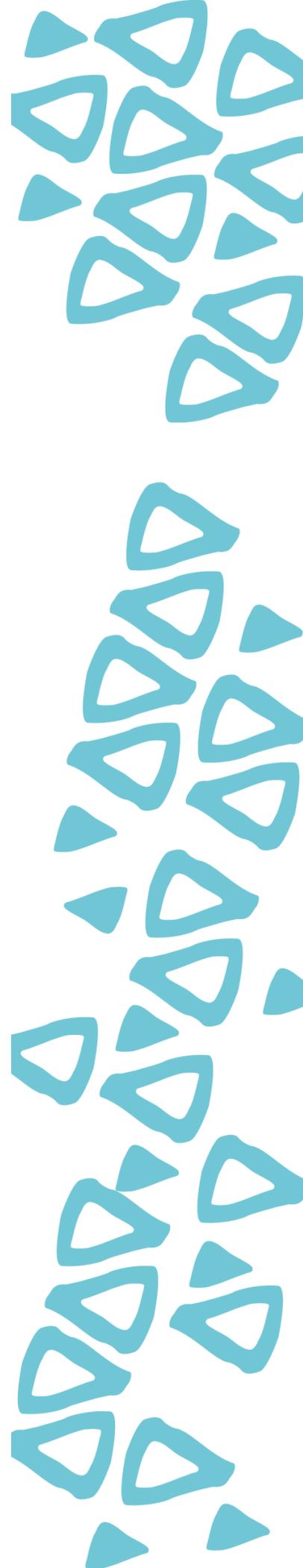
YOUTH JUSTICE



PATRICIA SOUNG
DIRECTOR OF YOUTH
JUSTICE & SENIOR STAFF
ATTORNEY



DOMINIQUE NONG
SENIOR POLICY ASSOCIATE





PURPOSE

Guided by the experiences, voices and leadership of children, youth and families most impacted by racial and economic inequities, Children's Defense Fund-California addresses institutional policies and practices that cause disparities through research and advocacy. We develop, promote and enforce policies and programs that lift children and young people out of poverty, protect them from involvement in the justice system, ensure their access to a quality and equitable education and critical health and mental health care. We pay particular attention to the needs of poor children, children of color and those with disabilities.

OUR WORK

CDF-CA recognizes the intersectionality of children and, thus, works to address all their needs through a multi-prong approach.

REFORM JUSTICE SYSTEMS FOR YOUTH

Over reliance on punitive responses to youth behavior through the juvenile and criminal justice systems has harmed communities and cost too much, while failing to improve public safety or youth well-being. Research shows that youth behavior and crimes should be understood in the context of their development, poverty, trauma and other circumstances. They are also best addressed by providing youth with holistic development support and services in their own communities.

Reduce criminalization of poor children and children of color

- Reduce youth contact with probation and law enforcement
- Reduce the size and scope of the Los Angeles County Probation Department, including further closing outdated and underpopulated facilities, and ultimately move responsibility over system-involved youth into a youth development system
- Divert as many youth as possible into community-based alternatives to arrest, court, detention and incarceration

Ensure fair and developmentally appropriate treatment of justice-involved youth

- Monitor and advocate for child-centered and healing-oriented standards and practices for the supervision of youth in their communities or in custody in secure facilities
- Ensure information sharing about youth promotes confidentiality and other legal protections as well as service delivery and engagement



In California, 81.6 percent of the 46,423 juveniles arrested in 2018 were referred to county juvenile probation departments compared to the 16 percent who were provided counseling and released.

Source: CA Department of Justice



Racial disparities have increased at each step of justice system processing, even as the actual numbers of youth in the system decline.

Source: CA Department of Justice



Research shows that youth behavior and crimes should be understood in the context of their development, poverty, trauma and other circumstances.

Strengthen and divert resources into community-based responses with a focus on youth development and healing

- Reinvest spending from punishment systems into effective youth and community development, including education, jobs, health services and other support that strengthen youth, families and communities
- Develop and expand effective community-based youth development to advance healthy, supportive learning and community environments that promote positive outcomes for youth of color

Strengthen effective governance and oversight of juvenile justice issues with meaningful community leadership

- Increase representation and leadership of system-impacted youth, community members and community-based organizations on state and local juvenile justice governing bodies
- Promote data collection and evaluation to drive youth policy and practice
- Mobilize and engage community leadership in policy advocacy and implementation

Change narratives about youth crime, justice systems and public safety

- Advance narratives about the humanity and worthiness of youth involved in the juvenile justice system
- Expose the structural racism that exists in the juvenile justice system
- Promote the need to invest in youth and community development instead of punishment systems as part of a public health and safety strategy

PROVIDE CHILDREN WITH QUALITY HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH CARE

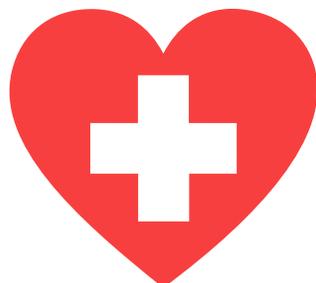
All children need access in their communities to the full range of developmental and pediatric-appropriate health services to survive and thrive. We must take action to protect, expand and improve access to health and mental health services for children by making it easier to get and keep coverage. Additionally, we need to ensure that coverage translates into timely access to care.

Secure access to affordable, comprehensive health coverage and quality care for children of color and children living in poverty

- Streamline Medi-Cal enrollment opportunities by implementing systems and processes like the Women Infant Child (WIC) Enrollment Express Lane
- Support new efforts to enroll young adults in Medi-Cal regardless of immigration status
- Respond to community concerns about lack of quality health care and ability to successfully file appeals and grievances in Medi-Cal
- Identify and repeal racist, classist and ineffective health policies like withholding CalWORKS payments for unsatisfactory immunization status

Improve access to mental health for children of color and children living in poverty

- Develop new opportunities—beyond screening—for delivering trauma-informed mental health care
- Support the building of healthy communities by offering a full range of services to children and families in schools and community settings to address students' health and mental health needs
- Integrate services and programs to improve access for children and youth, including children with incarcerated parents



More than 500,000 California children with identified mental health needs go without care each year.

Source: Western Center on Law and Poverty



Unmet health and mental health needs can result in children falling behind developmentally and having trouble catching up physically, socially and academically.

TRANSFORM SCHOOLS FOR STUDENTS

California must fully and equitably fund all public schools. It is critical to leverage and grow funding streams such as the Local Control Funding Formula in order to strengthen how schools prepare students for college and career, with a special focus on expanding support and pathways for students who remain underserved. State and local education agencies must make significant shifts to ensure that children, particularly those in high-need student subgroups—Black students, English Learners, justice system-involved youth, students with disabilities and foster youth—are served holistically.

Change institutional culture in districts and schools by shifting policies and practices related to school climate; student, parent and community engagement; and equitable spending on high-need students

- Investigate statewide barriers to the elimination of harsh and exclusionary school climate and over-policing
- Grow resources and institutional practices that foster meaningful community engagement and build the capacity of schools, districts and stakeholders to practice budget equity, transparency and accountability
- Advocate for additional funding for school districts to take transformative steps to meet the academic and social-emotional needs of California's diverse and intersectional student population



California must transform schools into safe, caring, high-quality and fully-funded institutions.

Expand access to college- and career-readiness opportunities in K-12 education, with a specific focus on high-need student subgroups

- Collect and analyze education indicators and review Local Control Accountability Plans to call for effective student need assessments, and appropriate and equitable spending

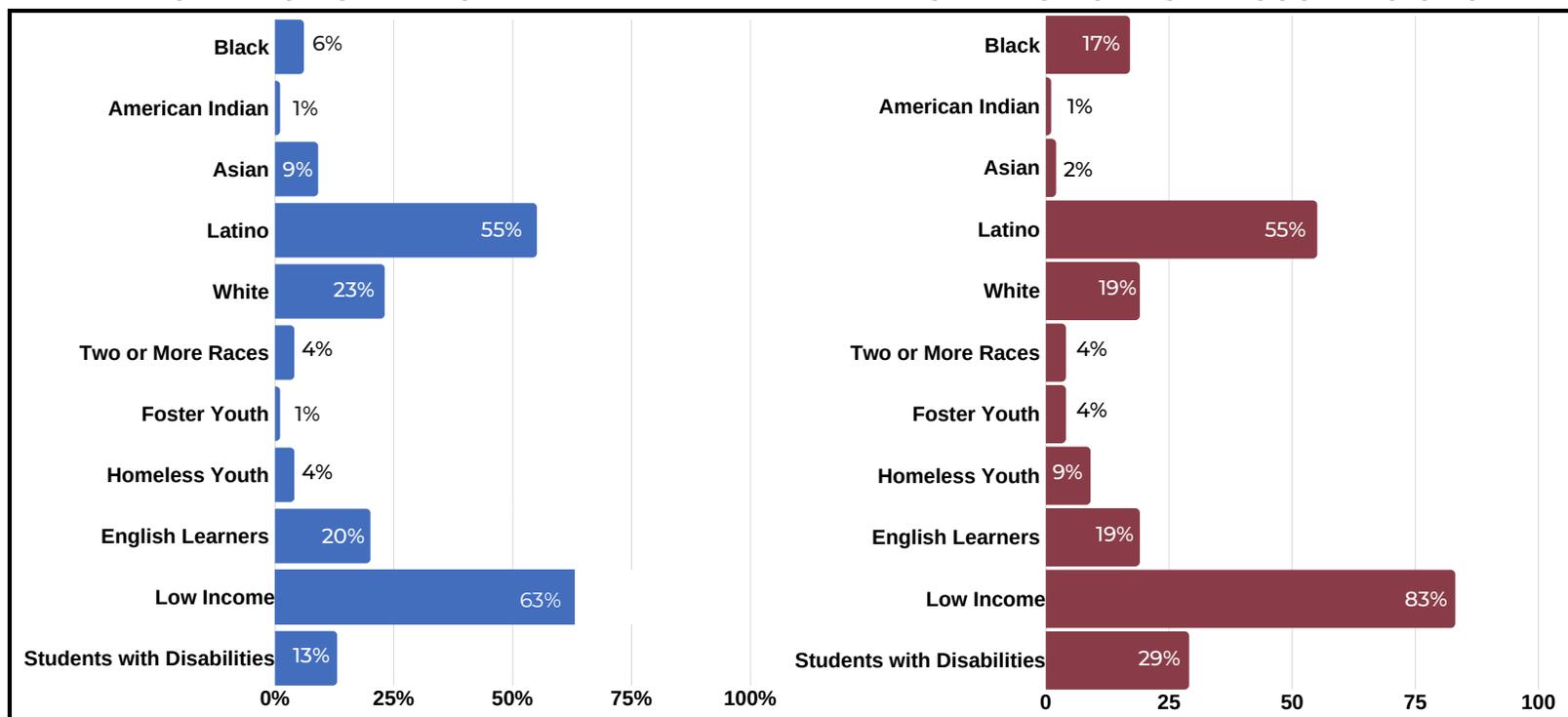
Provide technical assistance and support for capacity and coalition building to stakeholders in Los Angeles County working on school climate, community engagement and equitable budgeting

- Implementation and monitoring of past local school climate reforms
- Collecting and analyzing local data to measure impact of reforms, and cultivate local policy solutions and innovations

DISPROPORTIONALITY IN CA SCHOOLS 2018-19

PERCENTAGE OF ENROLLMENT

PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SUSPENSIONS



Source: CA Department of Education

END CHILD POVERTY

Nearly 1 in 5 California children—approximately 1.6 million—live in poverty. Poverty has a devastating impact on every aspect of a child's life, affecting health, social, emotional and cognitive development, behavioral and educational outcomes. Poverty also disproportionately burdens children of color, who are three times more likely to be poor than their White peers. In 2019, the state budget invested \$4.8 billion in recommendations to address the crisis. Additional support of achievable policy changes can dramatically reduce overall child poverty while working to break the cycles of intergenerational poverty.

Eliminate deep child poverty by increasing CalWORKs basic needs benefits

- Raise CalWORKs grant levels above 50 percent of the federal poverty line (equivalent to \$25,750 for a family of four) for all families
- Provide a targeted child tax credit that will put more cash back into families pockets to support the basic necessities of daily life

Eliminate "The Payback Problem"—families enrolled in public benefits only get \$50 of child support from non-custodial parents; the remaining is used to "pay back" the public benefit program

- Pass through 100% of child support payments to children
- Stop charging interest on public assistance payback debt and invest the resources into children
- Eliminate all outstanding public assistance payback debt so resources can go to children

Strengthen the California Earned Income Tax Credit (CalEITC) and the Young Child Tax Credit (YCTC)—proven tools to reduce child poverty

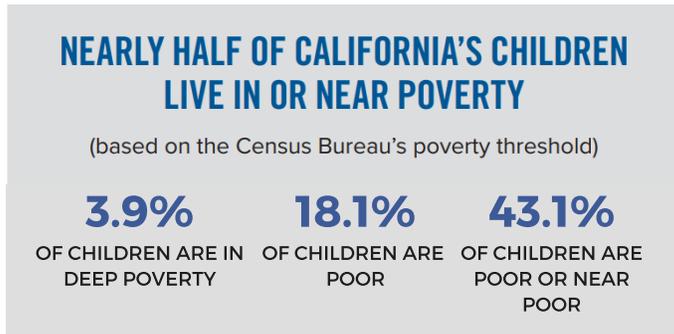
- Increase the size of the CalEITC credit for working poor families
- Ensure that the CalEITC and YCTC reaches working Californians who are currently excluded, such as young adults, immigrant families and seniors
- Fund outreach and free tax preparation assistance to maximize CalEITC participation



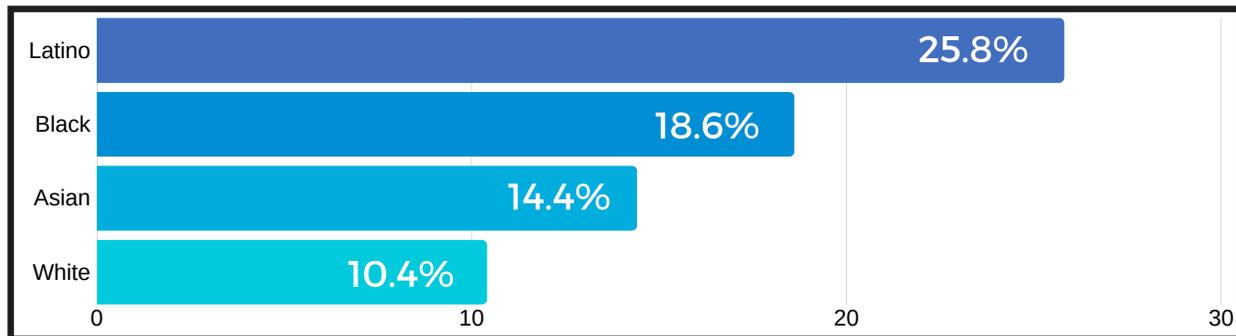
Poverty has a devastating impact on child health and well-being, and undermines academic and future economic success.

Ensure children’s basic and developmental needs are met to increase their chances of reaching successful, productive adulthood

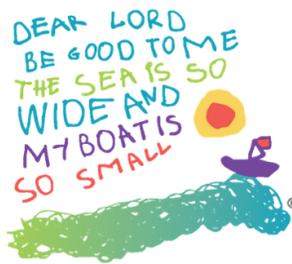
- Strengthen food and nutrition programs to end child hunger
- Fund transportation for poor children to get to school, extracurricular activities and jobs
- Invest in affordable housing for extremely low-income families
- Expand the number of quality child care slots for low-income children



CHILD POVERTY RATES BY RACE/ETHNICITY



Source: Public Policy Institute of California, 2017



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Q1

JANUARY

- Preservation of federal safety net health programs

MARCH

- Creation and launch of a new Youth Diversion and Development office in Los Angeles County

MAY

- Passage of Senate Bill 982 (Ending Childhood Deep Poverty)
- Resolution of a Uniform Complaint Procedure against the Long Beach Unified School District

JUNE

- Funding for California Violence Intervention and Prevention Program
- Elimination of "voluntary probation" in Los Angeles County

Q2

Q3

SEPTEMBER

- Passage of Senate Bill 1391 (Age-Appropriate Treatment for 14- and 15-year olds)
- Passage of Senate Bill 439 (Minimum Age for Juvenile Court Prosecution)
- Passage of Senate Bill 1004 (Mental Health Services)
- Creation of the Youth Reinvestment Fund

Q4

OCTOBER

- Passage of Assembly Bill 1974 Public School Fair Debt Collection Act

NOVEMBER

- Creation of a strong coalition to reinstate Healthy Start

ROAD MAP TO VICTORY

Children's Defense Fund–California envisions a state where Black and Brown youth have access to quality and equitable health and education systems, are no longer incarcerated, and feel safe and supported in their families and communities.



Q1

JANUARY

- Revised Minimum Standards for Juvenile Facilities

FEBRUARY

- Banned the use of chemical spray in Los Angeles County juvenile facilities

APRIL

- Redesign of Los Angeles County's spending plan for juvenile justice

JUNE

- Long Beach coalition and power building
- Increased number of child care slots by 3,086
- Funding to support Health Enrollment Navigators
- Creation of a Department of Youth and Community Restoration

Q2

OCTOBER

- Passage of Senate Bill 265 (Commitment to Child Hunger Prevention)
- Creation of a Probation Oversight Commission in Los Angeles County

DECEMBER

- Release of new Prop 64-funded Youth Substance Use Disorder Prevention Program application.

Q3

AUGUST

- Creation of a work group to explore transferring youth out of Los Angeles County Probation Department

SEPTEMBER

- Passage of Senate Bill 419 (Limiting Suspensions for Disruption/Defiance)

Q4

INDEX 2018

JANUARY

- Preservation of federal safety net health programs (Medicaid and CHIP) and 10-year funding for CHIP

MARCH

- Creation and launch of a new Youth Diversion and Development office In Los Angeles County: This office will coordinate partnerships between police and service providers to divert youth before prosecution.

MAY

- Passage of SB 982 (Ending Childhood Deep Poverty): This bill creates a path to end childhood deep poverty by increasing CalWORKs basic needs grants above 50% of the federal poverty level.
- Execution of a Uniform Complaint Procedure against Long Beach Unified School District: After mispending state funds intended for high-need students, a settlement was reached with LBUSD promising \$7 million in academic and social-emotional support for 30 of the district's highest-need schools.

JUNE

- Secured the continued inclusion of \$9 million in the state budget for the CA Violence Intervention and Prevention Program (CalVIP)
- Elimination of "voluntary probation" in Los Angeles County: Informal or voluntary probation involved children between the ages 10 and 17 who are flagged by their middle schools or high schools as "at risk." The flagged youth were then referred to a professional probation officer for case management and services even though they had broken no law.

SEPTEMBER

- Passage of SB 1391 (Age-Appropriate Treatment for 14- and 15-year olds): This bill prohibits the prosecution of 14- and 15-year olds in the adult criminal justice system.
- Passage of SB 439 (Minimum Age for Juvenile Court Prosecution): This bill excludes children 11 and younger from prosecution except in cases of murder and forcible rape.
- Passage of SB 1004 (Mental Health Services): This bill improves trauma-informed care under the Mental Health Services Act.
- Creation of the Youth Reinvestment Fund: This fund allocates \$30 million to youth diversion around the state

OCTOBER

- Passage of AB 1974 Public School Fair Debt Collection Act: This bill prevents school districts from taking adverse action against a student in an attempt to collect a debt owed by the parents, and prohibits school districts from using a debt collector for the purposes of seeking repayment of a debt owed by a student's parent.

NOVEMBER

- Creation of a strong coalition to reinstate funding for Healthy Start: Healthy Start would help families by coordinating Medi-Cal enrollment, health care, mental health and other family support programs in schools and communities.

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JANUARY

- Revised Minimum Standards for Juvenile Facilities: This effort was co-led by CDF-CA from Nov. 2016 to Sep. 2018, standards became effective in January 2019.

FEBRUARY

- Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors approved a motion to ban the use of chemical spray in county juvenile facilities by the end of 2019.

APRIL

- Redesign of Los Angeles County's spending plan for state Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act funds which totals approximately \$40-\$50 million each year, for the first time in about 18 years.

JUNE

- Long Beach coalition and power building: Facilitated the creation of a coalition of parents, students and community organizations in Long Beach to support meaningful engagement in the school and district's budget processes.
- Increased number of child care slots by 3,086: State budget included a \$50 million allocation for the additional slots.
- Funding to support Health Enrollment Navigators: State budget included \$60 million to support community outreach and enrollment efforts to ensure adequate access to healthcare.
- Governor renames the Division of Juvenile Justice to Department of Youth and Community Restoration and removes it from under the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, making it a separate department under the California Health and Human Services Agency

AUGUST

- LA Board of Supervisors voted to create a Youth Justice Work Group to explore how to remove youth from under the oversight of the LA County Probation Department into another agency with the goal of creating a rehabilitative, health-focused and care-first system.

SEPTEMBER

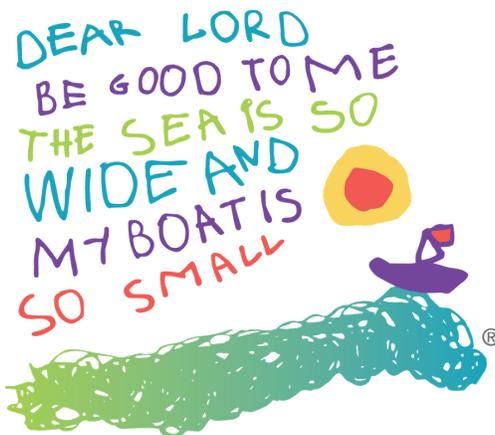
- Passage of SB 419 (Limiting Suspensions for Disruption/Defiance): This bill ends the racially disproportionate practice of suspending students in grades K-8 for behavior deemed "disruptive" and "defiant." CDF-CA advocated to increase state funding by \$15 million for district development of multi-tiered systems of support in order to replace racially unjust and harmful school climate practices with positive and healing approaches.

OCTOBER

- Creation of a Probation Oversight Commission in Los Angeles County: This commission has subpoena power, unobstructed access to facilities, an independent complaints process, power to review budget and policy and community engagement at every level.
- Passage of SB 265 (Commitment to Child Hunger Prevention): This bill is an amendment to SB 250 the original Child Hunger Prevention and Fair Treatment Act of 2017, which CDF-CA cosponsored. SB 265 ends the practice of lunch shaming students whose parents have outstanding school lunch debt.

DECEMBER

- Successfully advocated for the CA Department of Health Care Services to prioritize in its funding stream administration equitable distribution of funds to communities most impacted by the War on Drugs and investment in community-rooted, culturally relevant and healing-centered youth development approaches to prevention. The new program is funded by tax revenue in the Youth Education, Prevention, Early Intervention and Treatment Account created by Prop 64—the Control, Regulate and Tax Adult Use of Marijuana Act (2016).



children's
defense fund
california

634 S. Spring Street, Suite 500C

cdfca@childrensdefense.org

(213) 355-8787

@cdfca

www.cdfca.org

