

# Broken promises: How the Bush administration is failing America's poorest children <sup>[1]</sup>

**Author:** Children's Defense Fund

**Source:** Children's Defense Fund <sup>[2]</sup>

**Format:** Report

**Publication Date:** 7 Jul 2003

## AVAILABILITY

Available in print for order (see SOURCE) and online for download.

- Full report in pdf <sup>[3]</sup>

- Executive summary in pdf <sup>[4]</sup>

Excerpts from executive summary:

The Head Start program, begun 38 years ago, takes a comprehensive approach to helping the nation's poorest children and families. The program has provided high quality early education, health care, nutrition, and social services to more than 20 million children as well as supports to their families. President Bush's proposal for Head Start would allow the federal government to abandon its promise to truly give children a head start. The program would be handed over to the states, without federal standards for quality, without the requirements of comprehensive services, and without the funds needed to ensure that our most vulnerable children enter school ready to learn.

States have not demonstrated a commitment to comprehensive standards and do not have the track record of providing the health, social, and emotional supports to children and families. Evidence suggests that state prekindergarten programs fall far short of the standards and requirements established and maintained by Head Start. An extensive study of state-funded prekindergarten programs found that the programs show significant variability in scope and quality. The analysis also found that state-funded programs tend to be quite weak in the provision of comprehensive services. In addition, there is currently no evidence that state-funded preschool programs are more successful than Head Start in closing children's achievement gap. Many states have child care and prekindergarten programs that lack the quality assurances of Head Start's federal performance standards:

This year's budget makes empty promises to young children. It barely increases funding for Head Start to cover higher costs, cuts child care assistance for at least 200,000 children over five years while increasing work requirements for poor mothers, and strips basic health protections for millions of children - all this during the worst fiscal crisis for states in more than 50 years.

The Administration's proposal does not strengthen Head Start but instead puts its success in jeopardy. If enacted, the Bush proposal will allow the federal government to abandon its commitment to helping our poorest children get ready for school and will leave states without the resources necessary to ensure that children are ready to learn.

Our nation has high expectations for young children and wants to see Head Start improved and expanded to help children reach their full potential. It is critical that we maintain both the federal standards for quality as well as the federal funding commitment to Head Start children and families. If we truly want to improve the program, Congress should fully fund Head Start so that all eligible children are reached, and expand Early Head Start to help our poorest infants and toddlers. Congress should also ensure that Head Start teachers are the very best, by requiring that they have Bachelor's degrees in early childhood and by providing compensation to ensure that these teachers remain in Head Start classrooms.

**Related link:** Press release <sup>[5]</sup>

**Region:** United States <sup>[6]</sup>

**Tags:** poverty <sup>[7]</sup>

staff <sup>[8]</sup>

pre-school <sup>[9]</sup>

**Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022):** <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/03/08/broken-promises-how-bush-administration-failing-americas>

**Links**

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/03/08/broken-promises-how-bush-administration-failing-americas> <sup>[2]</sup>

<http://www.childrensdefense.org/> <sup>[3]</sup> [http://www.childrensdefense.org/pdf/broken\\_promises.pdf](http://www.childrensdefense.org/pdf/broken_promises.pdf) <sup>[4]</sup>

[http://www.childrensdefense.org/pdf/broken\\_promises\\_summary.pdf](http://www.childrensdefense.org/pdf/broken_promises_summary.pdf) <sup>[5]</sup> <http://www.childrensdefense.org/release030707.php> <sup>[6]</sup>

<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7865> <sup>[7]</sup> <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/poverty> <sup>[8]</sup> <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/staff>

<sup>[9]</sup> <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/pre-school>