

# Investing in our children: A plan to expand access to preschool and child care <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

Full report in pdf <sup>[2]</sup>

### Excerpts:

After a hard-fought re-election campaign, President Barack Obama and his team now turn to the work of developing their second-term agenda. Since the election there has been widespread recognition that America's changing demography helped drive the president's victory, and this recognition has helped propel immigration reform to the top of Congress's agenda. But the country has been slower to recognize the critical impact of women voters. The fact is that women voters decided the outcome of this election-despite losing the male vote, President Obama was reelected because he won the support of 55 percent of women voters. The resulting 10 percent gender gap was one of the largest in recent decades. So as the president seeks to forge a lasting legacy, he should seize this opportunity to take action on policies that will positively impact women's lives.

While women now make up half the workforce, women, particularly single women, remain uniquely economically vulnerable. The poverty rate for women is at the highest in two decades, women lost ground in the Great Recession, and basic necessities like child care and housing remain unaffordable for too many. Moreover, although mothers are now the primary breadwinners or co-breadwinners in nearly two-thirds of American households with children, women spend more than twice as much time as men providing primary care to children. And as more and more households are led by lower-income single mothers, the resulting economic instability is having a dire impact on growing numbers of American children.

In light of these challenges, perhaps the most important way in which the president can directly improve the lives of millions of American women and families across the economic spectrum is to make a bold commitment to educate and care for children during the first years of their lives.

This issue brief presents a plan to expand educational opportunities and care for children ages 0-5 years old.

**Region:** United States <sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** federal programs <sup>[4]</sup>

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