

Talking Points
Step Up for Kids Day
Every Child Matters

1. We love our kids...and most are doing just fine.
2. But millions are not. According to a UNICEF report the U.S. ranks 20th among 21 rich democracies in child well-being.
3. 3 million are abused or neglected. 14 million are alone after school. 8 million have no health insurance. 13 million live in poverty. It doesn't have to be this way.
4. Abundant research proves that we know how to reduce these problems, that we know a lot about healthy human growth and development, and that smart new investments in kids have a huge return on investment.
5. Yet, as a percentage of the federal budget spending for children is down sharply and the long term trend remains downward.
6. If we fail to make new investments in kids, our global competitiveness is threatened, we'll have trouble caring for an aging population, and we will have failed in our moral obligation to the generations behind us. We can do better than this.
7. Our government has a responsibility to provide leadership in providing for the homeland security of our children—but many live in insecurity.
8. Yet in this election year we are hearing very little from the candidates about their plans for addressing the needs of children.
9. That's why in every state today people are stepping up for children by asking that Senators McCain and Obama directly address the needs of children in the remainder of the campaign. We are asking that they answer such questions as these:

8.6 million children have no health insurance in the U.S ***How do you propose to ensure that children grow up healthy and have access to comprehensive health care?***

More than 3 million children nationwide were reported abused and neglected in 2006; ***What are your plans to keep all children safe from violence in their homes, schools, and communities?***

Millions of children are left alone every day after school. ***What is your position on how to keep children safe and supervised in the late afternoon and early evening hours?***

Millions of children lack access to early learning opportunities. ***What is your position on early learning and care, including preparing children for kindergarten?***

13.6 million of America's children live in poverty. ***What would you do to help families with children become economically self-sufficient and able to provide for their family's needs?***

Millions of children have a parent in prison. ***How would you address the needs of these children?***

(note to states: if you'd like to include your state stats, each state has on its website, under its resources section, a flier with a list of state-specific stats. Please feel free to incorporate them like this, for example: "8.6 million children have no health insurance in the U.S., 146,000 of them live in Mississippi...")

10. We also are calling on the press who are covering the campaign to ask these questions of the candidates, including at the official candidate debates in September and October.
11. Voter polls tell us that the public wants new investments in their children and grandchildren.
12. They need to challenge the candidates—via letters/e-mail/questioning at public forums/with notes in the checks they send--to present their plans for helping children and families. We
13. We need to register and vote and encourage candidates to support child and family friendly budgets.
14. All of our children matter—every one. We want the candidates to acknowledge them.