

**TO: Children’s Leadership Council**  
**FROM: Hart Research Associates**  
**DATE: October 13, 2014**  
**RE: Findings from National Survey on Children’s Programs**

*From September 25 to 29, 2014, Hart Research Associates conducted a national telephone survey on behalf of CLC to explore the public’s view of children’s programs as a budget priority. We interviewed a representative sample of 808 American adults (including 700 registered voters) on landlines and cell phones. The survey’s margin of error is ±3.5 percentage points for results among the full sample and ±3.8 percentage points for results among registered voters (tolerances are higher for subgroups of the sample).*

- **Americans of all stripes show strong support for increasing federal funding for programs that address children’s needs in areas such as early childhood education, healthcare, nutrition, and children’s well-being. This is a much higher priority for the nation than reducing taxes.** An overwhelming 79% of Americans favor Congress increasing funding for programs and services to meet children’s needs. This includes three in five adults (61%) who *strongly* favor expanded spending. Only 16% object to increasing funding for programs focused on such areas as early childhood education, health, and nutrition.

	<u>Favor</u> %	<u>Oppose</u> %		<u>Favor</u> %	<u>Oppose</u> %
<b>All adults</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>16</b>	Income under \$30K	85	11%
Men	72	21	Income \$30K to \$75K	78	18
Women	86	12	Income over \$75K	78	16
Age 18 to 39	86	9	High school grad/less	84	13
Age 40 to 59	79	16	Some college	79	16
Age 60/over	69	27	College graduates	74	21
Northeast	77	16	Democrats	93	6
South	81	14	Independents	82	12
Midwest	80	19	Republicans	59	33
West	77	18	Liberals	93	5
Whites	74	21	Moderates	84	12
African Americans	94	6	Conservatives	65	29
Hispanics	85	8			

The breadth of support for children’s programs is particularly striking. Strong majorities in every region of the country, all age groups, and all income and education levels voice support. This sentiment crosses traditional ideological lines, with liberals (93%), moderates (84%), and conservatives (65%) all favoring greater spending. Similarly, a solid majority of Republicans (59%) join with overwhelming majorities of independents (82%) and Democrats (93%) in calling on Congress to make children’s programs and services a higher budget priority. While partisan differences often divide Americans today, investing in children is a point of relative consensus.

The strength of Americans’ commitment to investing in children is further illustrated when we ask respondents to choose between competing budget priorities. By a very strong 18-point margin, they say that investing more in children’s health, education and well-being (54%) should be a higher priority today than reducing taxes (36%). Significantly, this is again true for all income and education levels. Democrats (76% to 19%) and independents (54% to 33%) give clear priority to children’s investments over lower taxes, while Republicans say reducing taxes is the higher priority (57% to 29%).

### Budget Priority: Children’s Investments or Reducing Taxes?

	Children's investments %	Reducing taxes %		Children's investments %	Reducing taxes %
All adults	54	36	Income under \$30K	57	30
			Income \$30K to \$75K	54	37
Northeast	49	38	Income over \$75K	55	37
South	54	37			
Midwest	58	33	High school grad/less	52	39
West	56	35	Some college	55	34
			College graduates	58	33

- Congressional candidates who support expanded investments in children can expect to be rewarded by voters.** When we ask voters to consider a hypothetical candidate who supports increasing funding for programs and services to address children's needs in areas such as early childhood education, healthcare, nutrition, and children's well-being, they respond very favorably. By a five-to-one margin, registered voters say they would be more likely (52%) rather than less likely (10%) to support such a candidate.

Supporting a children’s agenda benefits a candidate in every region of the country. A pro-children candidate is also likely to gain support in key “swing” voting constituencies, such as:

- Independents (51% more likely, 10% less likely)
- Moderates (61% more likely, 6% less likely)
- Moderate/conservative Democrats (74% more likely, 3% less likely).

Likelihood of Supporting Candidate Who Favors Children’s Programs					
	More likely %	Less likely %		More likely %	Less likely %
All voters	52	10	Democrats	73	3
			Independents	51	10
Northeast	52	8	Republicans	29	18
South	53	11			
Midwest	50	10	Liberals	67	4
West	53	8	Moderates	61	6
			Conservatives	36	17

- **Americans want the government to make an affirmative effort to support children and families, and reject the idea that government can best help children by “getting out of the way.”** Does government have a role to play in helping children to thrive, or should government get out of the way so that families can care for their children? Americans deliver a clear verdict on this question: children would be better off, they say, if government did more for children (61%), while only a third say children would be better off if government got out of the way (33%).

Which of these two statements do you agree with more?

**Statement A:** America's children would be better off if the government got out of the way and let parents and families take care of their children.

**Statement B:** America's children would be better off if the government did more to support parents by making education, child care, nutrition, and children's healthcare more affordable.

	%
<b>Statement A/Better if government got out of the way</b>	<b>33</b>
Much more.....	21
Somewhat more .....	12
<b>Statement B/Better if government did more</b>	<b>61</b>
Somewhat more .....	23
Much more.....	38
Not sure .....	6

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- **The public rejects the argument that the fiscal challenge posed by the retirement of the Baby Boom generation means we must reduce public spending on children. Instead, they believe investing in children is critical for providing retirement security to the coming wave of retirees.** The government faces significant costs in the decades ahead, as baby boomers retire and collect Medicare and Social Security benefits. Some argue that this necessitates cutbacks in public sector spending today. However, the public takes a very different view, at least in regard to public spending on children's programs.

By a three-to-one margin, Americans feel that the best way to provide a secure retirement for today's workers is to invest in children, to ensure the nation has productive workers in the future to sustain the economy (63% agree). Only one in five adults (21%) takes the opposing view that we cannot afford spending on children's programs because of the rising cost of retirement programs. Significantly, both younger adults age 18 to 39 (68% to 17%) and older adults age 60 and over (53% to 27%) agree on the need to invest in children today.

Which of these two statements do you agree with more?

**Statement A:** The retirement of the baby boomers means we cannot afford to spend more on programs for children and families now, because we need to save tax dollars to meet the rising costs of Medicare and Social Security in the years ahead.

**Statement B:** The retirement of the baby boomers means we need to invest more in children today, because the best way to provide today's workers with a secure retirement is to ensure that we have productive workers contributing to the economy in the future.

	<u>%</u>
<b>Statement A/We Cannot Afford To Spend More</b>	<b>21</b>
Somewhat more.....	8
Much more .....	13
<b>Statement B/We Need To Invest More</b>	<b>63</b>
Much more .....	30
Somewhat more.....	33
Not sure.....	16

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- **Women consistently express a particularly strong commitment to children's programs and investments.** Throughout the survey we find a significant gender gap, with women expressing especially strong support for public investment in children's programs. While 72% of men favor expanding federal funding, this figure rises to 86% among women. A pro-children candidate also receives strong support from women voters. And while men see both investing in children (46%) and reducing taxes (42%) as important budget priorities, women put children first by a two-to-one ratio (62% to 29%).

	<u>Men</u> %	<u>Women</u> %
Favor increased funding for children's programs	72	86
More likely to support pro-children candidate ( <i>registered voters</i> )	46	57
Children are better off if government does more	53	67
Investing in children is the best way to ensure boomers' retirement	61	65
Children are a higher priority than reducing taxes	46	62

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