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## Children Believe in the Power of Voting and Their Ability to Make a Difference

### ***Survey from Children's Defense Fund/YouGov shows most children plan to vote when they grow up, but few have been taken to the polls***

**Washington, DC**—Children are optimistic about the future, believe in their power to make a difference and think voting matters, according to the Children's Defense Fund's Parent and Child Trends survey conducted earlier this year by YouGov. The survey of 2,250 families (2,250 children ages 6-17 and one of their parents), sought to learn how children and parents perceive children's ability to shape the future of the country and whether voting makes a difference.

Highlights from the data include the following.

#### **Children can make a difference.**

- 88 percent of children say children their age can make a difference in the community and in the world, while 91 percent of parents say children their child's age can make a difference locally and 89 percent say they can make a difference in the world.
- Non-white and lower-income children and parents are more likely to believe in the power of children to make a difference.
  - Black and Hispanic children are more likely than White children to agree a lot that "children my age can make a difference in the world" (57 vs. 61 vs. 48 percent, respectively).
  - At the same time, White parents (41 percent) are less likely than parents of other ethnicities (50 percent for Black and 51 percent for Hispanic parents) to strongly agree that children their child's age can make a difference in the world.
- Parents in households with less than \$70,000 in annual income (47 percent) are more likely to believe strongly that their children can make a difference in the world compared to parents in households with incomes of \$100,000 or more (38 percent).
- The most common response children gave to an open ended question about the most important thing they'd like adults to know about young people was that they are "smart, have a point of view, and can make a difference." (24 percent of children gave a response of this nature.)

#### **Children are optimistic about America's future.**

- 81 percent of children and 66 percent of parents report feeling hopeful about the future of the country.
- Younger children (ages 6-11 at 87 percent), are more likely than older children (ages 12-17 at 74 percent), to feel hopeful about the country's future.

- Children in low income households with less than \$25,000 in income (31 percent) are less likely than children in 100k+ households (41 percent) to agree a lot that they feel hopeful about the future of the country.
- White children (83 percent) are more likely than Black children (75 percent) to feel hopeful about the country.

**Children and parents believe there are ways to fix the problems that concern them.**

- 62 percent of parents and 54 percent of children say there are ways to fix the things they worry about.
- Children believe their worries can be fixed by working together and getting involved (19 percent), talking and listening to each other (11 percent), being kind and peaceful (11 percent), improving government and its leadership (8 percent), and making gun laws stronger (8 percent).

**Children and parents believe voting is a powerful mechanism for affecting change.**

- Only 7 percent of children and 13 percent of parents believe one person’s vote doesn’t matter.
- Only 9 percent of children and 20 percent of parents believe voting doesn’t change anything.
- 84 percent of children said they planned to vote when they are older. Only 5 percent say they do not plan to vote.

**But children have limited exposure to voting.**

- Only 32 percent of children say they have ever accompanied an adult to the polls; 59 percent say no and 9 percent can’t remember.
- 17 percent of children say they have a parent or guardian who doesn’t vote.
- 11 percent of Black children, 16 percent of Hispanic children, and 18 percent of White children say they have a parent who doesn’t vote.
- Children in lower-income families (annual household income of less than \$70,000) are more likely to say they have a parent who doesn’t vote (22 percent compared to only 9 percent of children in families with \$100,000 or more in income).

It is clear that our children believe in a brighter future for America. It is up to adults to prove them right by participating in this election and voting with the needs of America’s children in mind. Parents should talk to their children about the importance of voting and take their children with them to the polls on Election Day to see democracy in action.

Election Day is November 6, 2018. For more information on the issues affecting children at stake in this election, check out CDF’s 2018 Voter Guide [here](#).

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The Children’s Defense Fund (CDF) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit child advocacy organization that has worked relentlessly for more than 40 years to ensure a level playing field for all children.

The Children’s Defense Fund 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.

CDF provides a strong, effective and independent voice for all the children of America who cannot vote, lobby or speak for themselves. We pay particular attention to the needs of poor children, children of color and those with disabilities. CDF educates the nation about the needs of children and encourages preventive investments before they get sick, drop out of school, get into trouble or suffer family breakdown.