



# children's defense fund

Leave No Child Behind®

## Statement from Rev. Dr. Starsky Wilson, President & CEO of the Children's Defense Fund U.S. Census Bureau Poverty Data Release

**September 15, 2021** - “New data released by the U.S. Census Bureau yesterday confirm two critical facts. First, far too many children, especially Black and brown children, are growing up in poverty. Second, policies that put economic power in the hands of families are the most effective way to ensure that our children thrive. According to the latest Official Poverty Measure (OPM) data, more than 11.6 million children—nearly 1 in 6—lived in poverty in 2020. This is the first increase in child poverty after five consecutive years of declines. Black and brown children were twice as likely to live in poverty than their white peers.

“At the same time, Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) data proves that critical expansions to anti-poverty programs made as part of temporary, COVID-relief measures were effective in reducing economic hardship for children and youth last year. This strengthens the case that policies like the expanded Child Tax Credit must be made permanent to preserve child well-being as families continue to suffer the compounding impacts of the COVID crisis within an unjust economy.

“This data set is also a reminder to us that our numbers don't tell the full story. Our poverty metrics are outdated and require disaggregation to see this generation clearly. A family barely hovering above of the government's definition of poverty is still struggling, their children are still suffering. Universal figures without more thorough racial and ethnic breakdowns hide the worsening disparities caused by policies and practices on structural and institutional racism, stripping life and joy from Black and brown children. Until we improve data collection in these ways and listen to the children and youth living these realities, we will not see the full picture of poverty in this country.”