



## **The Number of Children in Poverty Rising Significantly: What Can We Do?**

A combination of COVID-19 stimulus relief funds issued to families, and expansions of programs such as the Child Income Tax Credit, unemployment insurance, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program led to a decline in child poverty of 25% in 2020 and close to 50% in 2021, as measured by the Supplemental Poverty Measure. However, these programs were only temporary, and [new data from the Census Bureau](#) estimates 5 million more children are expected to slide into poverty, effectively reversing the progress made in 2020 and 2021. Child Trends has worked on pulling out this data and identifying next steps.

The effectiveness of the COVID-19 relief programs shows the power that dedicated poverty relief policies can have in also reducing rates of child poverty. Child Trends has made several policy recommendations, using the success of COVID-19 relief as a baseline to decrease rates of child poverty. These recommendations simplify the way families access benefits. One example would be providing multiple points of access to benefits or expanding eligibility requirements.

To reach underserved populations such as American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN), Black, and Hispanic families, Child Trends recommends continuing the exceptions made during the COVID-19 pandemic. These exceptions allowed independent contractors and gig workers access to unemployment benefits. Another pandemic exception expanded the Child Income Tax Credit to include families regardless of their legal status. To better support working families, it is vital to advocate for comprehensive funding of childcare and access to paid medical leave. This also includes the continuation of COVID-19 Pandemic Relief, which provided financial support to childcare and increased the affordability of quality childcare.



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The success of COVID-19 relief showed that the number of children lifted out of poverty is affected by how much financial leniency is allowed for communities. As such, Child Trends recommend that benefit amounts be determined by using current inflation rates, adjusted for the cost of living. Families can have the best chance of getting out of poverty with support from programs that are reflective of their financial burdens and offer supports to address them.

To read the full article, please click [here](#)

A Summary provided by SPI MSW Intern Mara ChristianScher of “5 Million More Children Experienced Poverty in 2022 Than in 2021, Following Expiration of COVID-era Economic Relief”