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How to Cut Child Poverty by 60 Percent Right Now

Washington, D.C. — The Children's Defense Fund released a groundbreaking report today: *Ending Child Poverty Now* (www.EndingChildPovertyNow.org). For the first time this report details how to substantially reduce child poverty in America. By investing just an additional 2 percent of the federal budget to expand existing programs and policies that increase employment, make work pay, and ensure children's basic needs are met, 60 percent of poor children could escape poverty immediately and 97 percent of all poor children would see an improvement in their families' economic circumstances. Seventy-two percent of poor Black children who suffer the highest poverty rates in America would no longer be poor. Poor children under 3 and single-parent households would see their poverty reduced 64 percent.

The CDF report lays out real numbers; the costs to implement improvements to existing programs and tradeoffs to pay for them without raising the federal deficit. It shows how relatively modest changes to policies we know work can be combined to significantly reduce child poverty, improving the lives and futures of millions of children.

"It is a national moral disgrace that there are 14.7 million poor children and 6.5 million extremely poor children in the United States of America – the world's largest economy. It is also unnecessary, costly and the greatest threat to our future national, economic and military security," Marian Wright Edelman [wrote in the Foreword](#) to the new report. She said, "Before we lose another generation, the time to act with *urgency* is now." Edelman is president of the Children's Defense Fund and former counsel to Martin Luther King Jr.'s final campaign, the Poor People's Campaign.

CDF targeted changes in nine existing programs and policies that could be pursued right now and contracted with the non-partisan, independent Urban Institute to analyze the cost and impact of the improvements. The [Urban Institute's technical report](#) estimated a cost of \$77.2 billion per year for the combined policy improvements. The CDF found multiple tradeoffs the country could make to pay for this significant reduction in child poverty, including:

- Closing tax loopholes that let U.S. corporations avoid \$90 billion in federal income taxes each year by shifting profits to subsidiaries in tax havens; or
- Eliminating tax breaks for the wealthy by taxing capital gains and dividends at the same rate as wages, saving more than \$84 billion a year; or
- Scrapping the F-35 fighter jet program which is several years behind schedule and 68 percent over budget and still not producing fully functioning planes. For the \$1.5 trillion projected costs of this program, the nation could reduce child poverty by 60 percent for 19 years, potentially breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty.

[Read or download the full report here.](#) For more information, contact Patti Hassler, Vice President of Communications and Outreach, Children's Defense Fund.

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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.