



Helping Rural Communities Grow Stronger

U.S. Programs – 2021 Priorities

THE CHALLENGE...AND THE OPPORTUNITY

Across the U.S., the experiences shaping children’s lives are starkly different. Many children have the support they need to learn and develop, as well as an abundance of healthy food on their tables. For far too many other children, however, their families and communities struggle to provide them with the childhoods they deserve. As a result, large segments of our next generation are not prepared to succeed in life.

This is too often the reality for children living in rural America’s poverty-stricken pockets. While poverty affects millions in the U.S., its strongest grip on children’s lives is most often in rural communities. In 41 of the 47 U.S. states with rural designated areas, the rate of rural child poverty is higher than in urban areas. Poverty is also more acute in rural areas. In 2019, before the pandemic struck, 13.3% of all people in rural areas lived below the poverty line compared to 10% of people in urban areas. Due to skyrocketing unemployment, the pandemic has worsened poverty across the U.S. With fewer resources, rural areas will be slower to recover.

From Appalachia in the east, to the Deep South, to California’s distressed Central Valley and beyond, children growing up in rural, under-resourced communities are more likely to experience childhood-ender events. They face higher infant mortality rates, lack essential educational resources and proper access to health care, miss out on nutritious meals, experience higher teen-pregnancy rates and are caught in the crippling opioid crisis, among many other adverse childhood experiences.

Investment in children’s early years creates lasting change throughout their lives, in their families, their communities and our nation.

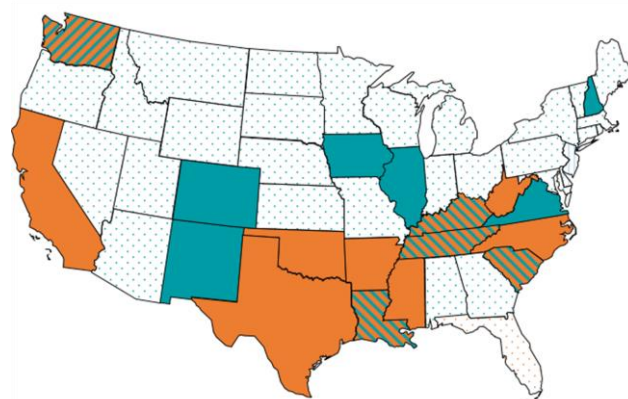
Quality early learning and development programs for at-risk children not only drive progress in their education, health and well-being, but also strengthen our workforce and grow our economy. The rate of return for investments in quality early learning and development programs for at-risk children is 7-10% annually through better outcomes in education, health, sociability, economic productivity and reduced crime.

OUR MISSION AND VISION

Since 1932, Save the Children has helped rural communities across the U.S. invest in the greatest resource they have to create a better future: their children. We are committed to addressing children’s unmet needs – going where others cannot, filling critical gaps in services and delivering scalable solutions to the challenges children and families face. Our programs work to ensure that children in America’s rural communities have a healthy, strong foundation that will enable them to thrive as learners and in life.

WHERE WE WORK

In the United States, Save the Children concentrates our work in some of the **most rural and under-resourced areas** where economic barriers are intensified by limited resources, geographic isolation and ever-growing disparities. We are the national leader in protecting children after emergencies and natural disasters, among the first to respond and the last to leave as we implement long-term recovery programs. In addition to providing direct services, Save the Children Action Network (SCAN) leads national and state-specific advocacy efforts to engage and empower community members to advocate for effective early learning and child nutrition programs and policies.



PROGRAMS	STATE ADVOCACY	PROGRAMS & ADVOCACY
1. Arkansas	1. Colorado	1. Kentucky
2. California	2. Illinois	2. Louisiana
3. Mississippi	3. Iowa	3. South Carolina
4. North Carolina	4. Virginia	4. Tennessee
5. Oklahoma	5. New Hampshire	5. Washington
6. Texas	6. New Mexico	
7. West Virginia		



Save the Children®

OUR PRIORITIES

Save the Children is a national early education leader with deep experience in helping rural communities build success among their children. We accomplish this by:



ADVANCING RURAL EDUCATION

We deliver child-level results through a continuum of high-quality educational programs. **Early Steps to School Success** works with parents to build social and emotional, language, literacy and numeracy skills in children ages 0-5 through home visits, book exchanges and parent support groups. For elementary school-aged children, our **in-school, afterschool and summer literacy and math programs** strengthen foundational skills to accelerate academic achievement.



COMBATTING RURAL CHILD HUNGER

Studies have shown that hunger can negatively affect children's academic performance and behavior in school, preventing them from developing to their full potential. Launched during the pandemic, our new food security initiative is ensuring rural children have access to the food they need to keep their bellies full and their minds actively learning. We do this through meal distributions, advocacy efforts aimed at strengthening child nutrition programs and innovation projects that design and test new solutions to address rural child hunger.



PROMOTING COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Our collective impact work brings together diverse stakeholders – including local churches and businesses, health professionals and other community members – to share data, align resources and shape joint strategies for driving real and lasting change for rural children and families. We are currently doing this work in Perry County and Whitley County in Kentucky; Cocke County in Tennessee; and the Yakima Valley in Washington, and we are expanding to communities in Mississippi and South Carolina.



RESPONDING TO EMERGENCIES

Children cannot learn if they are not safe. Save the Children is currently prioritizing the needs of children at the U.S. southern border. We are providing cash and critical supplies to a network of more than 35 shelters and social service agencies, and we are advocating for children's rights, humane treatment and care. We have also mobilized our emergency response team to meet the needs of newly-arriving Afghan children and families.



ENGAGING COMMUNITIES IN ADVOCACY

Our advocacy arm, Save the Children Action Network, builds grassroots community support in key states and across the nation to advocate for public investment in early childhood education and child nutrition.

OUR IMPACT

In 2020, we **directly served over 1.1 million children** through our core rural education programs and COVID-19 response activities across 12 states. Nine out of 10 children in our Early Steps programs across the U.S. scored at or above the normal range of vocabulary achievement – an exceptional result given that we only work with at-risk children. Our national literacy results also showed big gains. Children in our programs read an average of 69 books during the school year. Four-in-five children who began the school year reading below grade level showed significant reading improvement at the end of the year, with an average literacy improvement rate equivalent to an additional seven months of schooling.

Note: these results are from the 2018-19 school year. We were unable to conduct year-end assessments during the 2019-20 school year due to the pandemic.

Together, we can make a difference in rural areas where one-in-four children grows up in poverty and relative isolation.

When we resource rural communities, we grow stronger children, families and communities.

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

\$100,000

Provides hygiene kits and personal protective equipment (PPE) to 18,000 children and families at one of the 10 transit shelters where we're working at the U.S. border.

\$350,000

Expands our Collective Impact initiative to one new community in Mississippi or South Carolina.

\$550,000

Supports our continuum of rural education programs in one community, ensuring that children have access to early childhood education, in-school literacy interventions, and afterschool and summer programs.

\$1 million

Helps us scale our food security programs to ensure children have access to healthy, nutritious food year-round, addressing rural child hunger.