

## Education Platforms of the Presidential Candidates

With Election Day fast approaching, many Americans have yet to decide on their choice for President. Since early child care and education is near and dear to our hearts at Action For Children, we have summarized both candidates' plans for early childhood and k-12 education if elected.

Republican presidential candidate John McCain states that as president he would support a federally funded school-voucher program. According to McCain, bringing free market principles to education "will not be the demise of the public school system in America, but competition that will help make public schools accountable and . . . successful." McCain continues to support the No Child Left Behind Act, which he sees as a way to demand the same high standards from all schools and all students. He believes that we can no longer expect more from some students than we do from others. McCain emphasizes that his proposal for private school vouchers will give parents more education choices. McCain also supports merit pay for teachers and principals as an incentive to improve the quality of education.

Senator John McCain has not yet proposed any early childhood education program. David Crane, McCain's domestic policy adviser stated, "Sen. McCain does not support universal pre-k as defined by the government paying for pre-k for every child in America." To read more about John McCain's education platform, [click here](#).

Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama believes that main problem is the lack of funding or lack of investment in education. Obama has proposed spending an additional \$28 billion on education annually, on items ranging from

pre-K programs to college tuition aid. Senator Obama also supports merit pay for teachers and principals. Obama agrees with the goals of No Child Left Behind but he believes the act as it currently stands puts too much focus on standardized testing, at the expense of other aspects of education.

Senator Barack Obama has outlined a comprehensive "Zero to Five" plan with the goal of providing critical support to young children and their parents. This plan places key emphasis on early care and education for infants. He proposes to create Early Learning Challenge Grants to promote state "zero to five" efforts and help states move toward voluntary, universal preschool. In addition, he plans to quadruple Early Head Start, increase Head Start funding and improve quality for both. Senator Obama would double quality funding within CCDBG (the federal funding stream for the Child Care Assistance Program), and would encourage states to use their quality set-aside funding to develop strategic plans that better coordinate all birth-to-five services. Finally, Obama has proposed spending an additional \$10M on care and education for children under the age of 5. To learn more about Barack Obama's education platform, [click here](#).

## Newly Released Data on Poverty, Income and Health Insurance

On August 26, the U.S. Census Bureau released its 2007 census data on national and state poverty, median household income and health insurance coverage. The overall poverty rate remained unchanged from 2006, though the number of Americans in poverty rose to 37.3 million people in 2007, up from 36.5 million in 2006. 15.6 million Americans live in extreme poverty. Among ethnic groups, 21.5% of Hispanics earn below the poverty line, up from 20.6% in 2006. Poverty rates remained unchanged among other ethnic groups. Child poverty has increased since 2006. For children, the poverty rate rose from 17.4% in 2006 to 18.0% in 2007. The number of children in poverty increased from 12.8 million in 2006 to 13.3 million in 2007.

While real median earnings increased for the first time in 3 years, women's earnings are still significantly below that of men. Women that work full time earn 78% of that for corresponding men, 2% better than 2006. Household income also increased by 1.3% from 2006 to 2007, though households headed by someone under 65 remained unchanged. The number of American uninsured fell from 47 million to 45.7 million over the last year and the number of uninsured children decrease from 8.7 million to 8.1 million.

In Illinois, poverty decreased from 12.3% to 11.9% but still remains well above the 2000 poverty rate of 1.7%. The same is true of Illinois children. While child poverty decreased from 16.8% to 16.3%, it is well above the 14% of 2000. Illinois has 511,142 children living in poverty. Illinois also experienced a small increase in real median household income and a slight decrease in the number uninsured.

To read more analysis about the U.S. Census Bureau statistics please click [here](#) or [here](#).

## Preschool for All Grant Awards Announced

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has approved 79 new entities to provide Preschool for All services for approximately 4,000 additional children outside the city of Chicago in FY09. With these new grant awards, the number of children served by the state prekindergarten program will reach at least 95,000 children statewide.

As the Preschool for All program expands, funding is prioritized for programs serving primarily at-risk children. This means that at least 51% of the three- and four-year-old children in a Preschool for All classroom must be at-risk, while the remainder of the other children can be from lower middle-income families.

Each year, providers interested in applying for funding from ISBE to provide Preschool for All services respond to a Request for Proposals (RFP) released by the

ISBE Division of Early Childhood. RFPs are usually released in the winter, with proposals due in spring. Action For Children will be coordinating trainings for those interested in applying for Preschool for All again this fiscal year. Stay tuned to learn more about this year's trainings.

To see a list of programs receiving Preschool for All funding, [click here](#).

## Voter Registration Deadline 10/7/08

Election day is November 4, 2008, are you registered to vote? This is a critical election, where we will be making decisions about who we want to represent our issues here in Illinois and in Washington DC. The last day to register to vote is October 7, 2008. Registering can be as simple as completing the mail-in "motor voter" form, so don't miss out on your chance to participate in this critical election.

[Click here](#) to complete a mail-in registration form in English. ([Oprima aquí](#) para completar la forma en español).



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