



The Children's Partnership

DIRECTORS

Wendy Lazarus
Laurie Lipper

February 7, 1997

Dear Colleague:

We are pleased to send you *Lessons from History: Building a Movement for America's Children* as well as findings from a recent public opinion research survey commissioned by The Children's Partnership and other national organizations. This monograph by Dr. Theda Skocpol is part of a series "Next Generation Publications," that are published by The Children's Partnership to help inform and inspire leaders for children.

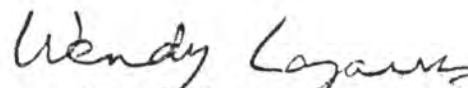
Dr. Skocpol's monograph was developed from a speech given at the Wingspread Center in Racine, Wisconsin at a conference entitled "Building a Constituency for Children: Community and National Strategies." One of the crucial points it makes is that successful movements throughout American history have had several common characteristics, including a broad-based grassroots constituency.

We are including a summary of the public opinion research, undertaken in December 1996, because it provides provocative new information on the emerging constituency for children and how it relates to a children's agenda.

We look forward to your comments and feedback.

Best wishes,


Laurie Lipper
Director


Wendy Lazarus
Director

*
1460 4th Street
Suite 306
Santa Monica, CA 90401
TEL: 310-260-1220
FAX: 310-260-1921

*
5505 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Suite 271
Washington, DC 20015-2601
TEL: 202-362-5902
FAX: 202-362-3598

E-MAIL: HN1824@handsnet.org
I-NET: <http://www.childrenspartnership.org>

Board of National Advisors

Richard Atlas
Goldman, Sachs & Co.

Susan Nall Bales
Coalition for America's
Children & the Benton
Foundation

Angela Glover Blackwell
The Rockefeller Foundation

Marlene Canter
Lee Canter & Associates

Peggy Charren
Founder, Action for
Children's Television

Nancy Daly
United Friends
of the Children

Robert Greenstein
Center on Budget and
Policy Priorities

Hon. Shirley M. Hufstедler
Morrison & Foerster

Judith E. Jones
National Center for
Children in Poverty

Carol Kamin
Children's Action Alliance

Janice Kreamer
Coalition of Community
Foundations for Youth
& Greater Kansas City
Community Foundation

Celinda Lake
Lake Research

Stuart Lazarus
Learning Design
Associates, Inc.

Lawrence S. Lewin
Lewin-VHL, Inc.

Donna Lucas
Nelson & Lucas
Communications

Milli M. Martinez
KABC-TV

Mark Real
Children's Defense
Fund-Ohio

Carolyn Reid-Green
Drew Child Development
Corporation

Tamara Ritchey Powers
Community Volunteer

Jack Sansolo
Point A Consulting

Lisbeth B. Schorr
Harvard Project on
Effective Services

Raphael J. Sonenshein
California State
University, Fullerton

James P. Steyer
Children Now

Arthur Ulene, MD
ACOR Programs, Inc.

Steven O. Weise
Heller, Ehrman,
White & McMillen

A project of the Tides Center



The Children's
Partnership

DIRECTORS

Wendy Lazarus
Laurie Lipper

HOW AMERICAN VOTERS VIEW CHILDREN'S ISSUES

Key Findings From a National Poll

February 1997

Background: In December 1996 a national poll was undertaken to probe the role children's issues played in the 1996 Presidential election. Conducted by the bipartisan team of Lake Research and the Tarrance Group, the poll surveyed 800 registered representative voters of the 1996 election. The poll was commissioned by The Children's Partnership along with the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Coalition for America's Children, KidsCampaigns, the National Association of Children's Hospitals and Related Institutions and the National PTA.

Key Findings:

1. Perhaps as never before, children's issues were among the top priorities for individuals voting in the Presidential election.

- More than eight out of ten voters identified children's issues specifically as being important in their 1996 voting decision.
- Children's issues ranked first among a list of key concerns impacting voter support for candidates -- above the usually highly valued issues of Medicare and Social Security. The additional children's issues of education and crime and violence received top ranking from 48 percent of voters.
- 45 percent of voters reported that children's issues are more important to them now than they have been in the past.

2. While there remains a core constituency for children, support for children's issues extends beyond gender, partisan, economic and ethnic lines.

- Across the board, Americans reported that children's issues were an important part of their voting decision, with at least two-thirds of every demographic subgroup ranking children's issues an "8" or above on a 10 point scale.
- In addition, a core group of individuals (34 percent) -- homemakers, college-educated women, Democrats, African Americans and parents -- claimed they would unlikely support a candidate who disagreed with them on children's issues.

3. Unlike other issues, voters want government to play a large role in solving the problems facing children -- and are willing to put money towards it.

- Nearly two-thirds of voters believe government should play a large role in solving the problems facing children.
- A strong majority of voters (56 percent) would favor proposals for children and families, even if they increased the deficit -- while an even bigger majority (65 percent) would favor the proposals if they would only result in slowing down deficit reduction. In addition, 62 percent of voters would oppose a balanced budget amendment if it would require cuts in children's programs.

1460 4th Street
Suite 306
Santa Monica, CA 90401
TEL: 310-260-1220
FAX: 310-260-1921

5505 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Suite 271
Washington, DC 20015-2601
TEL: 202-362-5902
FAX: 202-362-3598

E-MAIL: HN3824@handsnet.org
I-NET: <http://www.childrenspartnership.org>

Board of National Advisors

Richard Atlas
Golman Sachs & Co

Susan Hall Bales
Coalition for America's
Children & the Benton
Foundation

Angela Glover Blackwell
The Rockefeller Foundation

Mariene Canter
Lee Canter & Associates

Peggy Charren
Founder, Action for
Children's Television

Nancy Daly
United Friends
of the Children

Robert Greenstein
Center on Budget and
Policy Priorities

Hon. Shirley M. Hufstедler
McMahon & Forster

Judith E. Jones
National Center for
Children in Poverty

Carol Kamin
Children's Action Alliance

Janice Kremer
Coalition of Community
Foundations for Youth
& Greater Kansas City
Community Foundation

Celinda Lake
Lake Research

Stuart Lazarus
Learning Design
Associates, Inc

Lawrence S. Lewin
Lewin-VHL, Inc

Donna Lucas
Neison & Lucas
Communications

Milli M. Martinez
KABC-TV

Mark Real
Children's Defense
Fund, Ohio

Carolyn Reid-Green
Drew Child Development
Corporation

Tamara Ritchey Powers
Community Volunteer

Jack Sansolo
Point A Consulting

Lesbeth B. Schorr
Harvard Project on
Effective Services

Raphael J. Sonenshein
California State
University, Fullerton

James P. Steyer
Children Now

Arthur Ulene, MD
ACOR Programs, Inc

Steven O. Weiss
Heiler, Ehrman,
White & McQuigge

A project of the Tides Center

- Voters would favor proposals for children even if they increase taxes -- with 62 percent saying they would support children's issues even if it raised their taxes \$100 a year.

4. Although voters want politicians to be accountable for enacting a children's agenda, many still do not have the information needed to judge their representatives' actions.

- 76 percent of voters said that they would be more likely to vote for a candidate who supported increased spending for children's programs -- up from 63 percent in 1993.
- Nine out of 10 voters reported that they will be watching the next Congress' performance on children's issues.
- However, 58 percent of voters remain unsure whether their member of Congress has supported or opposed increased spending for children's programs. Voters want more information on children's issues from sources they trust including teachers, church leaders, local PTA members and national child advocates.

5. The issue of education receives the strongest support -- and from the largest number of voters -- as the best way to better the future for all children and solve the economic and values problems facing society.

- When education is included as a children's issue it brings in support from across party lines -- with Republican women ranking it highly.
- Voters support a broad range of education reforms but most center around parental involvement -- with 94 percent of voters believing that progress on the educational front will only come with greater parental involvement.
- Voters also favor a number of educational proposals including unpaid leave for families to attend parent-teacher conferences or doctors' appointments, setting a ceiling on the number of students in classes, increased government spending on public education, physical upkeep of schools and investment in technology.

6. Although voters think of health care as a "family" problem, not as a children's problem, they recognize the importance of comprehensive health coverage for children and support reforms for attaining it.

- Most people do not think children have a problem getting adequate health care coverage -- with only 8 percent viewing children as in jeopardy. Instead voters think unemployed adults (31 percent), seniors (28 percent) and working parents with children (20 percent) are the groups having problems getting health care coverage.
- Once presented with the facts, however, voters support a range of health care reforms for children including a Medicare-like system to cover all children (18 percent), tax breaks for parents (15 percent), requiring insurance companies to offer low-cost children-only policies (14 percent), tax incentives for employers to provide health care (14 percent) and government vouchers for low-income families (12 percent).

The full report of the national poll findings, entitled "Great Expectations: How American Voters View Children's Issues," can be obtained for \$10 per copy by contacting the Coalition for America's Children at (202) 638-5771.

Clinton Presidential Records Digital Records Marker

This is not a presidential record. This is used as an administrative marker by the William J. Clinton Presidential Library Staff.

This marker identifies the place of a publication.

Publications have not been scanned in their entirety for the purpose of digitization. To see the full publication please search online or visit the Clinton Presidential Library's Research Room.

**LESSONS
FROM
HISTORY**

*Building a
Movement
for America's
Children*



**A MONOGRAPH BY
THEDA SKOCPOL**

January 1997

A PUBLICATION OF THE CHILDREN'S PARTNERSHIP