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### Candidates on Children (Zero to Five)

Compiled by Brookings Institution experts, this chart is part of a series of issue indices to be published during the 2008 Presidential election cycle. The policy issues included in this series were chosen by Brookings staff and represent the most critical topics facing America's next President. Available voting records and statements vary based on time in office. For candidates who have not been a Member of Congress, public statements are noted when available.

**CANDIDATES**



**Hillary Clinton (D)**  
 Senator from New York



**Barack Obama (D)**  
 Senator from Illinois



**John McCain (R)**  
 Senator from Arizona

Published 5/15/2008. The index displays the top candidates from both major parties. Opportunity 08, a Brookings project in partnership with ABC News, aims to help presidential candidates and the public focus on critical issues facing the nation, providing ideas, policy forums, and information on a broad range of domestic and foreign policy questions. Brookings is an independent think tank (501c3) that does not support or oppose any candidate for public office. Voters should learn all they can about the candidates on a range of issues and should not rely on any single source of information before making their decision.

Candidates	Clinton (D)	Obama (D)	McCain (R)
<b>Overview: Children Zero to Five</b>	<p>As president, she'll launch a major Zero-to-Five initiative that includes:                      Nurse-Home Visitation for Every New At-Risk Mother; Tripling Early Head Start and Growing Head Start Enrollment by 160,000 Children; Providing Universal Pre-K; Expanding Access to Affordable, Quality Child Care;                      Enabling Working Parents to Take Leave to Stay Home with Their Children.                      – HillaryClinton.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>	<p>His comprehensive “Zero to Five” plan will provide critical supports to young children and their parents by investing \$10 billion per year to:                      Create Early Learning Challenge Grants to stimulate and help fund state “zero to five” efforts;                      Quadruple the number of eligible children for Early Head Start, increase Head Start funding and improve quality for both;                      Work to ensure all children have access to pre-school;                      Provide affordable and high-quality child care that will promote child development and ease the burden on working families;                      Create a Presidential Early Learning Council to increase collaboration and program coordination across federal, state, and local levels.                      – BarackObama.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a> and <a href="#">read more</a></p>	<p>McCain believes the tax code should be less of a burden on those, whether they are mothers and fathers or single parents, who are trying to raise a family. He proposes to raise the personal exemption for each dependent from \$3,500 \$7,000.</p> <p>He believes that outside of essential military and veterans programs there should be a one-year pause in discretionary spending growth that should be used for a top-to-bottom review of the effectiveness of federal programs.                      – John McCain.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p> <p>I will cut middle class taxes and keep them low the right way – by also cutting spending so we don’t add to the debt we leave to our children.                      – John McCain.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>
<b>Pre-K/Preschool</b>	<p>The federal government will allocate \$5 billion in the first year to states to establish and administer universal Pre-K... Over the next five years, the federal commitment will increase to \$10 billion....States would have to ensure their pre-K programs are high quality... [which] means... teachers with a bachelor’s degree and specialized training in child development... an age-appropriate curriculum;... low teacher to child ratios; and monitoring ... children’s health and safety...States must provide pre-K services free of charge to four-year-olds from low-income working families and children from limited English households.                      – HillaryClinton.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>	<p>[His plan will] Encourage all states to adopt voluntary, universal pre-school...States may use Early Learning Challenge Grants to fund high-quality preschool programs that seek to enroll every four-year-old or every three-and four-year-old. The Early Learning Challenge Grants will provide states with the flexibility to adopt sliding-scale systems, target, and other measures designed to give children in greatest need priority.                      – BarackObama.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>	<p>Officials for Sen. John McCain said the research has convinced the Republican nominee of the value of investing in early development, but he has not yet proposed changes to existing policies.                      – ChicagoTribune.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>

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<b>Head Start</b>	<p>Early Head Start and Head Start provide comprehensive services for young children.....and their families living in poverty. These programs provide home visits, health, nutrition, pre-literacy and a strong focus on children's social and emotional development. As President, Hillary will triple enrollment in Early Head Start.... and grow Head Start's enrollment by 160,000 children. – HillaryClinton.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>	<p>Barack Obama will quadruple the number of infants and toddlers participating in Early Head Start.... Obama supports increasing Head Start funding to provide low-income preschool children with critically important learning skills. He also recognizes and supports the important role parents play in the success of Head Start. [To] Improve quality of Head Start and Early Head Start Barack Obama will provide \$250 million in dedicated funds to create or expand regional training centers designed to help Head Start centers implement successful models. – BarackObama.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>	<p>McCain plans to better prepare American kids for school by reforming Head Start 'into a program that serves the essential need of America's children to be prepared to learn when they enter school,' says Holtz-Eakin, [McCain's chief economic advisor]. – Education.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>
<b>Child Care</b>	<p>Hillary will increase child care funding through the Child Care and Development Block Grant ... And she will improve the quality of child care by investing in: helping states improve and enforce licensing and safety standards; supporting innovative public-private partnerships... supporting quality rating systems that help families evaluate programs; and supporting workforce initiatives that help child care providers get the right training. – HillaryClinton.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p> <p>She is proposing to allow qualifying, low-income parents who want to stay at home rather than place their children in child care to receive child care subsidies through the Child Care and Development Block Grant. – HillaryClinton.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>	<p>Barack Obama will reverse this policy [of insufficient funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant] and ensure that CCDBG remains adequately funded every year...[he] will encourage states to use their CCDBG quality set-aside funding and other federal support to develop strategic plans that better coordinate all state birth-to-five services....Obama will also double the resources for quality within CCDBG to support efforts such as developing quality rating systems. Other examples include improving student/teacher ratios, providing family support in child care settings and increasing professional development and teacher training. – BarackObama.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>	<p>He believes that outside of essential military and veterans programs there should be a one-year pause in discretionary spending growth that should be used for a top-to-bottom review of the effectiveness of federal programs. – JohnMcCain.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>

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<b>Child Tax Credits and Exemptions</b>	<p>Hillary will create a third tier in the EITC for families with three or more children to help lift the children living in larger families out of poverty. This will provide at least 3 million families with \$1,000 in additional income. – HillaryClinton.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p> <p>She will also work with Congress to reform the Dependent Care Tax Credit to address its shortcomings. – HillaryClinton.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>	<p>Obama will increase the number of working parents eligible for EITC benefits, increase the benefits available to parents who support their children through child support payments, increase benefits for families with three or more children, and reduce the EITC marriage penalty, which hurts low-income families. – BarackObama.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p> <p>Barack Obama will reform the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit by making it refundable and allowing low-income families to receive up to a 50 percent credit for their child care expenses. – BarackObama.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>	<p>John McCain believes the tax code should be less of a burden on those, whether they are mothers and fathers or single parents, who are trying to raise a family. He proposes to raise the personal exemption for each dependent from \$3,500 to \$7,000. – JohnMcCain.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>
<b>Child Safety</b>	<p>Introduced the <a href="#">Home Lead Safety Tax Credit Act</a> (2007) to provide critically needed resources to reduce home lead hazards.</p> <p>[Clinton] joined Senator Kit Bond in reintroducing the Education Begins at Home Act [which supports] home visitation services at the state and local level. This legislation ... will also establish a hospital-based public education and awareness campaign aimed at preventing child abuse through increased parental education about the proper care of infants and young children. – Clinton.Senate.gov</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p> <p>A priority as president [will be] protecting children against violence and sexual content in the media and studying the impact of electronic media on children’s cognitive, social, and physical development. –HillaryClinton.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>	<p>Obama is committed to preventing child abuse and supports proven and effective means to combat the tragedy of child abuse...</p> <p>Barack Obama helped create a national sex offender database through his co-sponsorship of Dru’s Law...Obama also cosponsored the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act...Obama supports the KIDS Act, which requires sex offenders to provide their Internet identifiers...for use in the National Sex Offender Public Registry.</p> <p>Obama also introduced legislation that would help protect children from lead poisoning by requiring all non-home-based child care facilities, including Head Start programs and kindergartens, to be lead-safe within five years. –BarackObama.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>	<p>America’s most precious asset is its children. The innocence of childhood provides hope for the future and refreshes and restores the ideals of this great country. However, there are those who prey upon this innocence...John McCain has taken a hard line against pedophiles that would use the Internet to prey upon children by proposing the first-of-its-kind national online registry for persons who have been convicted of sex crimes against children. Senator McCain’s legislation requires that sex offenders register all online accounts .... It is the responsibility of government to do all that can be done to protect children from predators who lurk on the Internet. –JohnMcCain.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>

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Candidates	Clinton (D)	Obama (D)	McCain (R)
<b>Home Visiting</b>	<p>Hillary will expand home visitation programs, including The Nurse Family Partnership program, one of the most proven interventions for improving child outcomes for at-risk children..                      ....As president, Hillary will ensure that every new at-risk mother is offered access to this valuable intervention.                      – HillaryClinton.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>	<p>Barack Obama will expand evidence-based home visiting programs to all low-income first-time mothers. The Nurse-Family Partnership, for example, provides home visits by trained registered nurses to low-income expectant mothers and their families.                      – BarackObama.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>	<p>No public statements available.</p>
<b>Child Health</b>	<p>Voted yes for reauthorization of the <a href="#">State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)</a> (August, 2007)</p> <p>[Clinton will] strengthen Medicaid and CHIP: The Plan will fix the holes in the safety net to ensure that the most vulnerable populations receive affordable, quality care.                      – HillaryClinton.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p> <p>The main goal of the Clinton health care proposal is to achieve universal coverage. See Opportunity 08 <a href="#">Candidate Issue Index on Health Care</a> for more details.</p>	<p>Voted yes for reauthorization of the <a href="#">State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)</a> (August, 2007)</p> <p>Obama will expand eligibility for the Medicaid and SCHIP programs and ensure that these programs continue to serve their critical safety net function.                      – BarackObama.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p> <p>The main goal of the Obama health care proposal is to achieve universal coverage, but it does not include an individual mandate for all Americans. Obama proposes that all children must have health insurance coverage. See Opportunity 08 <a href="#">Candidate Issue Index on Health Care</a> for more details.</p>	<p>Voted against the reauthorization of the <a href="#">State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)</a> (August, 2007)</p> <p>In 1997, Congress created SCHIP... I was pleased to join many of my colleagues in supporting its establishment.... however, I am greatly concerned that...the CHIP Reauthorization Act, which was reported by the Finance Committee, would greatly expand SCHIP beyond its original framework, lead to an explosion in new spending, and reduce private health coverage in our country ....I support the ideas contained in the alternative bill, the Kids First Act, which I believe would keep SCHIP focused on providing health insurance coverage to low-income children and would do so without dramatic increases in federal spending or higher taxes on Americans.                      – McCain.senate.gov</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p> <p>The main goal of the McCain health care proposal is to reduce health care costs and make health insurance more affordable. See Opportunity 08 <a href="#">Candidate Issue Index on Health Care</a> for more details.</p>

Candidates	Clinton (D)	Obama (D)	McCain (R)
<b>Foster Care/Adoption</b>	<p>Hillary is announcing a plan to ... double the number of children adopted out of foster care from 50,000 to 100,000 over five years...and to restore the foster care system to its original intent--a temporary home, not a home for life.....In order to achieve this goal, Hillary will reform the way our nation funds child welfare services. ...She will preserve the entitlement for children in foster care, yet at the same time create more flexibility and new resources so that states can put the interests of children first.... She will...recruit adoptive parents....require states to streamline their adoption processes in order to make them user-friendly...make the Adoption Tax Credit Permanent....fund comprehensive post-adoption services...increase access to adoption assistance.... provide federal resources to support subsidized guardianship programs for children.                      –HillaryClinton.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>	<p>The foster care system is failing children who need help the most. Obama recognizes that part of the solution is to increase the quantity of foster homes, improve training for foster parents and increase coordination between law enforcement and child welfare officials so that abuse can be stopped....Obama will invest in innovative new job training and workforce development programs that will provided those in foster care with the skills necessary to compete in the modern American workforce.                      –BarackObama.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>	<p>In 1993, John McCain and his wife, Cindy, adopted a little girl from Mother Teresa’s orphanage in Bangladesh....As president, motivated by his personal experience, John McCain will seek ways to promote adoption as a first option for women struggling with a crisis pregnancy. In the past, he cosponsored legislation to prohibit discrimination against families with adopted children, to provide adoption education, and to permit tax deductions for qualified adoption expenses, as well as to remove barriers to interracial and inter-ethnic adoptions.                      –JohnMcCain.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>
<b>Proposed Legislation: (110<sup>th</sup> Congress)</b>	<p>Clinton introduced the <a href="#">Ready to Learn Act</a> (2007), which would provide states with grants for full day voluntary pre-kindergarten programs; the <a href="#">Quality Child Care for America Act</a> (2007), which authorizes child care workforce development initiatives; the <a href="#">Choices in Child Care Act</a>, which would establish demonstration projects for at-home infant care benefits; and the <a href="#">Children’s Health First Act</a> (2007), which would allow states to expand SCHIP coverage; and the <a href="#">Home Lead Safety Tax Credit Act</a> (2007), which would provide a tax credit for property owners who remove lead-based paint hazards.</p> <p>Clinton co-sponsored the <a href="#">Education Begins at Home Act</a>, which would expand programs of early childhood home visitation.</p>	<p>Obama introduced the <a href="#">Lead Poisoning Reduction Act</a> (2007), which would assess and reduce the levels of lead found in child-occupied facilities in the United States.</p> <p>Obama co-sponsored the <a href="#">Education Begins at Home Act</a>, which would expand programs of early childhood home visitation; the <a href="#">Working Family Child Assistance Act</a> (2007), which would modify the income threshold for the refundable portion of the child tax credit; the <a href="#">Healthy Kids Act</a> and the <a href="#">Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) Reauthorization Act of 2007</a>, both of which would expand SCHIP coverage; and the <a href="#">Home Lead Safety Tax Credit Act</a> (2007), which would provide a tax credit for property owners who remove lead-based paint hazards.</p>	<p>McCain introduced the <a href="#">Securing Adolescent from Exploitation-Online Act</a> (2007), which would expand reporting requirements relating to child pornography.</p>

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