First Focus is proud to introduce the 11th annual release of its signature *Children’s Budget* publication. *Children’s Budget 2018* illustrates where our federal government is succeeding—and, often, falling short—in making kids the priority in its budget making decisions.

*Children’s Budget 2018* serves as a valuable resource for advocates, policymakers, and program administrators seeking to make federal investment in children and families a priority. It offers comprehensive analysis of how kids and families have been faring in the federal budget since Fiscal Year (FY) 2014. Our review tracks 180 mandatory and discretionary programs whose funding is either entirely or partially dedicated to children’s health, early and K-12 education, nutrition, income security, housing, safety, training, and welfare. Even as the economy grows, child poverty remains unconscionably high—17.5 percent¹ in 2017—underscoring the importance of these investments.

**Key Findings**

When it comes to total spending on children—who represent nearly a quarter of the population and our nation’s future—*Children’s Budget 2018* shows a one-year improvement that fails to overcome an overall decline since FY 2014. We have a long way to go: experts anticipate the share of spending on children to keep shrinking. At the same time, increases in spending fall short of the growing needs of the nation’s children.

- Children receive a smaller piece of the federal pie today than they did five years ago. The share of total federal spending on children has declined by **1.70 percent** since FY 2014 (from **8.20 percent** to **8.06 percent**)

- However, the share of total federal spending on children rose **1.10 percent** from FY 2017 (when it was **7.97 percent**), thanks to important investments following passage of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 (PL 115-123)

- In FY 2018, the federal government spent **7.70 percent** of its budget on the interest on the national debt—nearly as much as the **8.06 percent** it spent on children. The Urban Institute estimates federal spending on interest on the debt will surpass all federal investments on children in FY 2020²

- If enacted, the President’s FY 2019 Budget Proposal would eliminate **41** programs serving children and cut numerous others, reducing the share of spending on kids to **6.89 percent**

- The Budget Control Act of 2011 (PL 112-25) cap on non-defense discretionary spending will drop **$55 billion** (from **$597 billion** to **$542 billion**) in FY 2020—jeopardizing gains under the Bipartisan Budget Act
