
MEMORANDUM

To: Save the Children Action Network
From: Michael Meyers, TargetPoint Consulting
Regarding: Potential Cuts to Head Start Funding
Date: March 13, 2017

TargetPoint Consulting (R) was commissioned by Save the Children Action Network to conduct a national survey among registered voters to measure opinions on federal funding for Head Start. Below are four key findings from this survey and the resulting analysis of 800 registered voters and key demographic groups. Live interviews were collected from March 6 – 8, 2017. The margin of error is +/- 3.5%.

Key Findings

1. Head Start has strong favorability among voters. Before being given any details about Head Start education programs, **63% of voters have a favorable opinion** toward Head Start. After being told Head Start serves low-income families with comprehensive education and social services for children under five to better prepare them for life, **86% of voters have a favorable opinion** toward the program.
2. Voters want to preserve funding for Head Start. **43% want to increase funding for Head Start**, and another 39% want to continue the current level of funding. Only 8% want significant cuts to funding.
3. Information galvanizes support for funding Head Start. Support for funding increased as the following points are outlined: the need for Head Start to keep American children from falling behind in math and science, to assist families in tough times, and to reduce negative outcomes like grade repetition. After receiving these key messages, **88% want to preserve funding for Head Start**.
4. Cutting Head Start funding could have negative consequences for elected officials. 66% of voters think it's a bad idea to cut Head Start in order to fund other agenda items. **68% of voters are less likely to vote** for a member of Congress who votes to eliminate federal funding for Head Start.

Head Start has Strong Favorability among Voters

Without being given any details about Head Start education programs, 63% of voters have a favorable opinion toward Head Start. After being told Head Start serves low-income families with comprehensive education and social services for children under five to better prepare them for life, 86% of voters have a favorable opinion toward the program.

This includes above average support from women, millennials, seniors, Hispanics, and Democrats. Head Start has a 78% and 79% favorability rating among Republicans and Trump voters respectively.

Voters Want to Preserve Funding for Head Start

43% want to increase funding for Head Start, and another 39% want to continue the current level of funding. Altogether, 82% of voters do not want to make cuts to the program. Only 8% want significant cuts or to eliminate all federal funding for Head Start. Among Republicans and Trump voters fewer than 1 in 7 want to see significant cuts or eliminate all funding.

Information Galvanizes Support for Funding Head Start

Support for funding increased as the following points are outlined: the need for Head Start to keep American children from falling behind in math and science, to assist families in tough times, and to reduce negative outcomes like grade repetition. The most popular piece of information dealt with putting American children first:

“In science and math scores, American children are falling behind students in other countries because countries like China are investing in early education programs. It is time we put American children on a level playing field with other countries by investing in early childhood education programs like Head Start.”
(55% said very convincing, 73% total convincing)

After hearing key facts about Head Start, voters are more likely to support funding:

- **56%** of voters want to increase federal funding for Head Start (a 14-point increase in support)
- **32%** of voters want to continue the current level of funding for Head Start
- **8%** of voters want to significant cut or eliminate all federal funding for Head Start

Nearly half of Trump voters (47%) want to continue funding, and almost a third say funding should be increased.

The Politics of Head Start

Cutting Head Start funding could have negative consequences for elected officials. 68% of voters are less likely to vote for a member of congress who votes to eliminate federal funding for Head Start. This includes half of Trump voters, 52% of Republicans, 65% of Independents, 85% of Democrats, and more than 66% of every age group including millennials and seniors.

Furthermore, 66% of all voters think it's a bad idea (47% think it's very bad) to cut spending on programs like Head Start to fund other agenda initiatives. This includes several key groups such as parents, millennials, low income voters, and middle class voters.