
A 1,000-Day Human Infrastructure: Smart Investments in Maternal and Child Nutrition and Health

Human capital is a society's most valuable economic asset. As the Biden administration and Congress negotiate a once in a generation infrastructure package, they should remember that nothing exceeds policies and programs designed to reach young children when it comes to returns on investment in human capital. This includes reaching pregnant and postpartum women too and centering racial equity to mitigate the effects of discrimination.

The 1,000 days between pregnancy and a child's second birthday is the most critical period impacting maternal and child health. Physical and cognitive setbacks during this time are generally irreversible, leading to lifelong health problems and a continual struggle to learn and to earn an income.

Research in neuroscience, biology, and early childhood development provides powerful insights into how nutrition, health, and education coalesce during the 1,000 days. It is why several of the world's leading economists have called for more significant investments in the nutrition and well-being of mothers, infants, and toddlers.

Therefore, we urge members of Congress to prioritize the following in a 1,000-days infrastructure package:

- Make the Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit expansions permanent.
- Include all provisions of the Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act of 2021.
- Waive recertification requirements in Medicaid and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).



- Expand high-quality childcare by ensuring free access to low-income families, so that no family regardless of its income, has to spend more than 7 percent of that income on childcare.
- Expand paid family leave and medical leave.

The priorities of a 1,000-day infrastructure package presented here cover a range of policies and programs, from nutrition and health care to childcare, paid leave, and tax credits. Individually, each one makes a difference; when they are aligned, they create synergies for better outcomes all around.

The investment in an infrastructure package that includes the priorities listed above would be immediate and durable. They would lower rates of maternal and infant mortality and other preventable health conditions, reduce hunger and food insecurity in families with very young children, and enable the children to realize their God-given potential to learn and develop.

