

Federal Legislation

SCAA is a member of [Voices for America's Children](#), a network of children's advocates from around the country that advocates at the national level for improved services for children. Voices has put out a list of some of the important bills before Congress that children's advocates should watch. They include Health Care Reform, Home Visiting, and Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment (CAPTA) reauthorization.

Health Care Reform:

During the next couple of weeks both Senate committees with jurisdiction over health reform – Finance and Health, Education, Labor and Pension (HELP) – will release their bills. The House of Representatives will follow with their own bill. The HELP Committee has released its principals for health reform. Although it doesn't offer much detail, the document provides us with a roadmap of ideas that will be considered as the health reform debate unfolds. See the Senate HELP document [here](#).

A coalition of nearly 50 leading national children's policy and advocacy organizations sent a letter to Capitol Hill calling on members of Congress "to make the unique health care and developmental needs of children a centerpiece of this historic" debate. See the letter [here](#).

According to a [new report from the Urban Institute](#), millions of children and parents stand to gain coverage under health care reform improving access to care. The effects of reform are much less clear, however, for the more than 25 million children who currently have coverage under Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) - children who are disproportionately likely to be poor, to belong to racial or ethnic minorities, and to have chronic health problems. The paper considers the potential risks of shifting children who currently have public coverage into plans sold in a new exchange, and explores how health care reform could be structured to address these children's needs.

A new website has been created dedicated to giving children a voice in health reform. [Speak Now For Kids](#) is an effort by the National Association of Children's Hospitals, Children's Defense Fund, First Focus and the March of Dimes.

Home Visiting

The [Early Support for Families Act](#) (H.R. 2667) is bipartisan legislation that seeks to fulfill the president's commitment for the expansion, or establishment of voluntary home visitation programs. The legislation is expected to receive

immediate action as the House Ways & Means Subcommittee on Income Security and Family Support held a hearing to review the bill on June 9th.

The Early Support for Families Act adopts many of the principles laid out in the president's final budget proposal to Congress, including the provision of up to \$700 million of mandatory funding by 2014 to support high quality programs for families with or expecting young children. The House and Senate are both attempting to include the initiative as part of the broader health reform package expected to move this summer.

[Winning Beginning NY](#) has prepared a [brochure](#) on the importance of home visiting programs.

Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Reauthorization Begins

The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pension Committee (HELP) has circulated for the reauthorization of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). The draft, developed jointly by Senators Ted Kennedy (D-MA) and Mike Enzi (R-WY) would enhance the prevention and treatment of child abuse through greater collaboration with early education systems, domestic violence agencies, mental health agencies, and greater utilization of best practices for differential response systems. The draft also addresses children with disabilities and increases supports for parents with disabilities.

The president's budget proposal to Congress for Fiscal Year 2010 recommends flat funding for CAPTA, a trend that has continued over the past five years. Members of the HELP Committee have indicated that they would like to approve the legislation this summer.

Voices has produced a review of the draft that is available [online](#).