The Children's Defense Fund Leave No Child Behind(®) mission is to ensure every child a Healthy Start, a Head Start, a Fair Start, a Safe Start and a Moral Start in life

New data released by the U.S. Census Bureau today reveals 46.2 million poor people in America, about the same as last year's record high number. Although the number of children living in poverty decreased slightly in 2011, children remain the poorest age group in the country. Nearly 22 percent of America's children--16.1 million--more than one in five children were poor in 2011. Children under five continued to suffer most--one in four infants, toddlers and preschoolers were poor in 2011 during the years of greatest brain development. Almost half of those children lived in extreme poverty. "Children only have one childhood and it is right now. Our political leaders need to wake up and change course to protect our children and their families. Parents alone cannot protect children. We need to protect the already porous safety nets that are keeping children from falling deeper into poverty, and invest in the health and education of our children," said Marian Wright Edelman, president of the Children's Defense Fund. "Congress needs to be careful what it cuts. Dangerous proposals, including the Ryan budget, that cut food stamps, healthcare, education and tax credits for low-income families while giving more tax cuts to the richest Americans and corporations are shameful and would send many more children into poverty. This is the time to get our values straight and protect and invest in our children first."
Census Bureau data released today shows:

-- More than one in five children--16.1 million--were poor in 2011. Over 5

million of these children were under the age of 5.

-- Poverty is defined as an annual income below $23,021 for a family of four--$1,918 a month, $443 a week, or $63 a day. Extreme poverty, defined as an annual income of less than half of the poverty level, means $11,511 a year, $959 a month, $221 a week, or $32 a day for a family of four.

-- Children of color were disproportionately poor: 4.3 million Black children--more than one in three--and 6 million Hispanic children--more than one in three--were poor. Nearly 5 million White, non-Hispanic children--one in eight--were poor.

  -- Almost 43 percent of Black children under age 5--1.3 million--were poor; nearly one in four were extremely poor.

-- Sixty-five percent of poor families with children under 18 have at least one worker.

-- More than 60 percent of all poor children--over 10 million--lived in single parent families.

-- Married couple families with children were not immune; almost 9 percent of all married couples with children under 18 years old were poor.

The Children's Defense Fund Leave No Child Behind(®) mission is to ensure every child a Healthy Start, a Head Start, a Fair Start, a Safe Start and a Moral Start in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities.