What Does Caring Mean?

A New Framing Strategy to Shift Thinking about Kids and Families

A FrameWorks Research Report

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Sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Children's Hospital Association

MAY 2024

FRAME WORKS

Leading for Kids

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Preface

The mission of Leading for Kids is to create a culture where the health and wellbeing of children is central to all of our society's decisions. We took on this mission because despite the efforts of countless children's advocates over many years, progress on many of the issues we care about has been, at best, incremental.

We believe that part of the reason for this is that our messages are not having the impact that we intend and hope for. The frames American child advocates have been using for decades to encourage positive change on behalf of children and their families have gotten us to where we are today, but they have not catalyzed as much progress as we all hope for.

In 2020, we began a project with the FrameWorks Institute, Framing a New Narrative for Our Kids, that has been generously funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Children's Hospital Association. This is the fourth research report to come out of this project. *Why Aren't Kids a Policy Priority?* examines the deep cultural mindsets that shape Americans' thinking about children and families. *How Are Advocates Talking about Children's Issues?* examines the framing being used today by advocates and how this framing intersects with these mindsets, and *How Are Children's Issues Portrayed in the News?* does the same for media coverage of kids.

With this work as a background, social scientists at FrameWorks began to search for and test new frames that could raise the salience of kids' issues and increase both our sense of collective responsibility for all kids and our sense of efficacy about making positive change. I am very excited about this new research report, *What Does Caring Mean? A New Framing Strategy to Shift Thinking about Kids and Families,* and the strategy that it presents for framing the issues we all care about as children's advocates. This new frame has not only been demonstrated to increase salience, collective responsibility, and collective efficacy. It also takes on the mindsets that underlie Americans' tendency to evaluate some children as less deserving than others and dampen support for policies that support children and families who our systems have historically and persistently left out.

These framing recommendations have the potential to catalyze a significant change in the way our society prioritizes kids. Yet knowing that these framing techniques work is only a start. We realize that a new frame is not a magic bullet that will suddenly create change. Instead, culture change takes repeated efforts to advance new ideas over time. Children's advocates will need to incorporate these frames in their daily communications efforts over a sustained period for them to create real change. We are excited to have received additional funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to begin to implement this research. We believe the ideas in this report will be a critical part of creating the culture that all of us as child advocates hope for—one where whenever we make a decision, we ask one of the most important questions: "Is it good for the kids?"

- David Alexander, Leading for Kids

SECTION ONE

Introduction and Project Background

Introduction

Children and families in the United States lack the support they need—and some more than others. This is directly tied to how we think and talk about children in our society. While increases in the Child Tax Credit during the COVID-19 pandemic temporarily decreased child poverty, the pandemic exacerbated racial and income disparities in health and education, and affordable, high-quality child care remains out of reach for many, as proper care infrastructure was put on the back burner in favor of other priorities. As the pandemic faded, temporary gains were lost while losses in wellbeing threaten to endure. Throughout, children are too often absent from our public conversations, and our conversations about children and families have been hijacked by "parents' rights" framing that uses parents and children to foster a politics of white racial grievance and transphobia.

Children and family are typically only considered in public policy conversations when we talk about a narrow set of "kids issues"—child care, education, and a small set of other issues involving home and school. This focus is driven by underlying cultural mindsets. People assume that the key to children's wellbeing is *care* and see this care as being provided by the individuals in direct contact with children—parents, other caregivers, and teachers. These adults are, in turn, assumed to be personally responsible for children's wellbeing. When children don't do well, it is assumed to be a result of inadequate care and failures by these adults. This opens the door for racist and classist stereotypes, as families of color and low-income families are blamed for their children's struggles. To the extent that people see a role for government, it's typically limited to policies related directly to home and school, like child care and education policies, and even these policies are—partly for gendered reasons—often deprioritized.

We need a new way of talking about children and families that broadens our understanding of what counts as a kids issue, shifts responsibility for children's wellbeing to society, and cultivates a sense of efficacy about our ability as a society to ensure the wellbeing of all children and families, including Black, Latine, low-income, and other children whom our society has historically excluded from the sphere of concern. The right framing strategy can change the context for collective decision making and ensure that children and families are at the center of our public conversation and prioritized in our decision making.

This report outlines a new framing strategy that can do just this: the frame of *Collective Caregiving*. This strategy emerges from three years of in-depth research that FrameWorks Institute has conducted in partnership with Leading for Kids and other children's advocates. The *Collective Caregiving* frame leverages the assumption that care is central for children while stretching and redefining what care *is*—who does it, what it requires, and what it can yield. The strategy characterizes care as *collective* (it's something we do as a society), *inclusive* (it's something we must extend to all children, across race, background, and other identities), and *expansive* (it shows up in every decision we make about *all* social issues). The strategy provides a way to articulate a positive vision of a future in which our society has

a fundamentally different relationship with children and families—a future in which we take care of all children, address the current reality of uneven collective caregiving, and consider the wellbeing of children and families in all of our collective decisions and policymaking.

Below, we describe this framing strategy and lay out the evidence behind it. We begin the report with a brief explanation of the key concepts of cultural mindsets and framing. We then outline what the *Collective Caregiving* frame was designed to accomplish and review the research methods we used. The rest of the report takes a deep dive into the strategy, the specific recommendations and tips that comprise it, and the evidence behind these ideas.

In this report, we focus on what the research tells us about what the framing strategy does and why it works. The report is accompanied by a short strategic brief, which provides a summary of the strategy and offers guidance about how advocates and other communicators can put the recommendations into practice. These two reports are accompanied by a toolkit that shows how the strategy can be used in different communications contexts and for different audiences.

What Are Cultural Mindsets and What Is Framing—and Why Do They Matter?

In our discussion of the framing strategy below, we rely on two key concepts—cultural mindsets and framing.

What Are Cultural Mindsets?

Cultural mindsets (or mindsets, for short) are deep, assumed patterns of thinking that shape how we understand the world and how we make decisions. In shaping how we think, mindsets structure and produce our beliefs and attitudes. Mindsets shape how we make sense of and engage with the social order. They can lead us to see the status quo as natural, inevitable, or sensible, or they can lead us to question or challenge it.

We all have multiple mindsets that we can use to think about a given issue. For example, while Americans often think individualistically, we also have access to more systemic mindsets. Cultural mindsets are also highly durable. They emerge from and are tied to cultural and social practices and institutions with deep historical roots.

In our research, we focus on cultural mindsets that are shared across our national culture, though it is important to recognize that different people and groups will engage with these common mindsets in different ways. In addition, cultural subgroups within society also have access to distinctive mindsets that emerge from institutions and practices specific to these groups.

For more on cultural mindsets and mindset shifts, see *Mindset Shifts: What Are They? Why Do They Matter? How Do They Happen?* For a deep dive into the mindsets that people use to think about children and families, see *Why Aren't Kids a Policy Priority? The Cultural Mindsets and Attitudes That Keep Kids off the Public Agenda*.

What is Framing?

Frames are ways of packaging and making sense of information. They involve choices about how an issue is presented—what is and isn't emphasized, how it is explained, what connections are made, and which commitments are invoked.

We make framing choices all the time—in both formal and informal communications—from the values we invoke to explain why something matters (e.g., justice or freedom) to the metaphors we use when talking about how things work (e.g., knowledge as sight or life as a journey). We can think of these different types of framing choices as frame elements that together can be combined into a cohesive framing strategy.

The frames we use shape how people make sense of and respond to what we're communicating. They affect people's understanding of the issue—what's going on, and how does it work? They affect people's support for solutions and the actions they're willing to take (e.g., their level of support for needed policies). They also affect people's attitudes—like who they see as responsible for an issue and whether they feel a sense of personal or collective efficacy.

Frames interact with the cultural mindsets available to people. Frames often cue particular mindsets, pulling them to the forefront of thinking, while backgrounding others. With enough repetition, the right frames can change the salience of mindsets within the culture at large, so that people draw on mindsets more or less frequently. Certain frames can also, over time and with enough exposure, expand or stretch existing mindsets, changing the boundaries or shape of a current mindset. For example, the love and commitment frame used in the marriage equality campaign cued the existing understanding of marriage but stretched this mindset to encompass same-sex couples.

What Is the New Framing Strategy Designed to Accomplish?

The framing strategy developed in this project was designed to place children at the center of collective concern and decision making. Specifically, the strategy was designed to cultivate four changes in thinking among the broader public:

1. **Increase salience.** The strategy was designed to increase the salience of children in collective decisions, including public policymaking. This means that in their consideration of policy issues, members of the public prioritize children across policies and issue areas.
2. **Foster a sense of collective responsibility.** The strategy was designed to increase collective responsibility for children's wellbeing. This means that the public believes society has a responsibility to act through collective institutions, such as governmental institutions, to ensure the wellbeing of children across class and race.
3. **Build collective efficacy.** The strategy was designed to increase collective efficacy around children's wellbeing. This means that the public believes society has the ability through collective institutions to improve the wellbeing of children across class and race.
4. **Counter deservingness.** The strategy was designed to decrease support for the idea that Black, Latine, and other families of color are to blame for the challenges they face and that they don't deserve public support.

These seemingly straightforward shifts in attitudes require shifts in fundamental assumptions about the relationship among children, families, and society. Bringing about these changes in attitudes requires three deeper shifts in cultural mindsets:

1. **Broadening beyond the family.** Across political ideology and demographics, members of the public understand the family as almost wholly responsible for how children do. A new framing strategy must bring into view how social systems and structures shape children's wellbeing and help people see that our collective choices fundamentally affect children and families.
2. **Countering racist mindsets.** Racist cultural mindsets and stereotypes, coupled with class stereotypes, stand at the root of judgments of deservingness and undercut public support for equitable solutions. A new framing strategy must generate an expansive understanding of what we collectively must do to properly support children and families across race and class and of who is included in this new vision.

3. **Moving past the government as opposition**. People often assume that the government has little role in children's lives beyond a relatively narrow set of "children's issues," including education, child protection, and perhaps helping families, in some way, with child care. Even in these areas, people tend to be wary of government overstepping. A new framing strategy must enable people to see a robust role for the government in supporting children and families.

The framing strategy is designed to shift these underlying mindsets. Because the attitudes described above are rooted in these deep, tacit ways of thinking, durably changing these attitudes requires shifting these mindsets.

Framing can lead to shifts in mindsets, but this doesn't happen overnight. While the Collective Caregiving frame described below is capable of shifting mindsets across the broader culture, this will only happen if the frame is used again and again so that it consistently shapes our conversations about—and, ultimately, our actions toward—children and families. In the short term, the strategy is useful—it pushes thinking in the right direction and, as we show below, can yield immediate shifts in thinking that help achieve wins now. But realizing the sorts of durable, deep shifts in mindsets that can lead to fundamental and wide-ranging changes in how our society acts toward children and families will take time.

The framing strategy developed in this project is designed to shift attitudes and mindsets across groups, rather than target a specific segment of the public. While there are, of course, differences in thinking about children and families between groups, basic assumptions about children and society—and even, to some extent, the racist mindsets that fuel judgments of deservingness—cut across all groups within American society.[1] By shifting assumptions about children and families that are widely shared across groups, we can create a fundamentally different context for collective action and policymaking.

Research Methods

To systematically identify an effective framing strategy on children and families, FrameWorks researchers developed a wide range of specific frame elements that could be components of the strategy and tested them with members of the American public. These methods are described briefly below. Fuller descriptions of methods can be found in the appendix.

Frame Development

Building on an earlier phase of research that explored the cultural mindsets that members of the US public use to think about children and families,[2] FrameWorks researchers developed a set of framing "tasks" that articulated what a framing strategy would need to accomplish. We then engaged in a brainstorming process to come up with sets of frames and frame elements that could potentially achieve these goals. This brainstorming included three groups:

1. FrameWorks staff. Building on decades of combined experience in framing research and practice, including deep expertise in framing children's and families' issues, FrameWorks engaged in internal brainstorming to identify candidate frames and frame elements.
2. Field stakeholders. Leading for Kids convened leaders in the children's advocacy field to provide feedback on the usability and aptness of FrameWorks' initial ideas and to brainstorm other candidate frames and frame elements.
3. Creatives. FrameWorks and Leading for Kids brought together a diverse set of creatives—people with experience and expertise in narrative strategy, storytelling, and communications campaigns—to generate innovative ideas about how to accomplish our framing tasks. FrameWorks' researchers analyzed the conversation to pull out candidate frames and frame elements to test.

Drawing on these three streams of input and ideas, FrameWorks researchers selected a set of frames and frame elements to test.

On-the-Screen Interviews

On-the-screen interviews are an exploratory method that can help ascertain whether and how frames affect how people think about an issue. In May and June 2022, we conducted 56 one-on-one interviews, testing eight frames/frame elements. Each frame was tested in seven interviews. A diverse sample of participants from across the United States was recruited that included variation by age, gender, race/ethnicity, household income, education level, and political party identification. Interviews were conducted over Zoom and with the consent of participants.

Survey Experiments

FrameWorks researchers conducted two online survey experiments to test frames and frame elements in November 2022 and August 2023. These experiments included 2,714 and 2,705 participants, respectively, or 5,419 people in total. Sampling employed quotas to match national demographics such as age, race, and income.

The experiments were used to test a range of frame elements, such as impact stories and vision framing. Participants were randomly assigned to one of several treatment conditions or to a control condition. Participants in the control condition read an unframed description of a proposed bill that included a range of policies supported by children's advocates. Participants in each treatment condition read a particular framed message, which used the frame element to make a case for the proposed legislation. All participants then answered a series of survey questions designed to gauge targeted attitudes and levels of mindset endorsement. (See appendix for message language and survey questions.)

We used multiple regression analysis to determine whether there were significant differences on outcomes between each of the experimental frame conditions and the control condition. A threshold of $p < .05$ was used to determine whether the experimental frame conditions had any significant effects. Significant differences were understood as evidence that a frame influenced a particular outcome (for example, collective efficacy). Researchers also noted outcomes of marginal significance ($p < .10$) when there was other evidence supporting a frame effect (i.e., other quantitative or qualitative evidence).

Stretch Tests

Stretch tests are a mixed method that combines focus groups with pre- and post-surveys to understand frames' ability to stretch mindsets. Given the deep and durable nature of cultural mindsets, shifting them typically requires repeated engagement with frames. A single brief exposure to a frame can shift attitudes, but it is less likely to shift mindsets at a deeper level.

To approximate the type of deeper engagement with frames that people might experience if a frame enters public discourse and effectively structures public and private conversations, stretch tests engage research participants in multiple activities around a single frame during hour-long focus groups. Each focus group included five to eight participants. Focus groups were conducted over Zoom, with the consent of participants. Three to five days before the session, participants took a pre-survey to measure attitudes and endorsement of key mindsets. In the focus-group sessions, they participated in a combination of personal reflections and group activities around a single frame. At the conclusion of the sessions, participants took an identical post-survey.

We tested six frames in these sessions. Halfway through the sessions, we eliminated three frames that we determined, based on qualitative assessment, were less promising and focused on the three remaining frames.

For comparison purposes, we also fielded two controls: a focus-group control and a survey-only control. In the focus-group control condition, participants engaged in reflection and conversation about children's issues without researchers introducing a frame into the conversation. In the survey-only control condition, research participants took the pre- and post-tests three to five days apart without participating in a focus-group session. The controls and the three fully tested frames each had 30–36 participants.

Repeated measures ANOVA was used to determine whether deeply engaging with any of the frames in a focus group significantly shifted participants' attitudes from pre- to post-test. In addition, after controlling for participants' pre-test survey scores, we examined whether each of the three framed focus-group conditions caused a change in key attitudes and outcomes when compared to the two control conditions. A threshold of $p < .05$ was used as a threshold of significance. Researchers also noted outcomes of marginal significance ($p < .10$) when there was other evidence supporting a frame effect (i.e., other quantitative or qualitative evidence).

Peer Discourse Sessions

The final method used to empirically test frames was peer discourse sessions. Peer discourse sessions are a focus-group method that identifies patterns of reasoning about a topic and explore the potential of reframing strategies to shift group discussion and thinking in productive directions. We conducted a total of six two-hour peer discourse sessions in September 2023. Sessions were conducted over Zoom, with the consent of participants. Five sessions had six participants, and the sixth session had seven participants. Participants were recruited to capture variation across a range of demographic characteristics, including race, education, political ideology, age, and gender.

The sessions focused on countering deservingness and racist mindsets and stereotypes. The sessions tested the ability of frames and particular frame elements to inoculate against these mindsets and build support for equitable solutions.

SECTION TWO

Collective Caregiving— A New Frame

The Framing Strategy and Its Core Elements

FrameWorks has identified a frame that effectively centers children in our consideration of public policies and other collective decisions: the *Collective Caregiving* frame.

The Big Idea

The big idea at the heart of this frame is that caregiving is a collective endeavor. Here is the idea:

> Taking care of children and youth is one of our society's most important responsibilities. Whether or not we're parents, we're all caregivers as citizens. Collective caregiving encompasses all the decisions we make as a society, about every social issue, and we owe care to kids and families of all races, backgrounds, and identities.

Three Recommendations

The research yields three key recommendations about how to convey this big idea:

> **Recommendation #1:** Frame collective action as a form of caregiving.
>
> **Recommendation #2:** Emphasize that we owe collective care to children of every race, ethnicity, and identity, and not just "our own" kids.
>
> **Recommendation #3:** Illustrate how collective caregiving happens everywhere and through every issue.

As quick shorthand, we can summarize these recommendations as talking about caregiving as ***collective, inclusive, and expansive***.

The research has generated not only these general recommendations but more specific tips about how to execute them—ways to convey what it means for care to happen through collective action, for us to care for *all* children across groups, and for us to care for children and families across spaces and issues. In the next section, we outline these recommendations and tips for communicators and share the evidence behind them.

How the Strategy Works: What to Do and the Evidence Behind It

RECOMMENDATION #1

Frame collective action as a form of caregiving.

The cultural context

At the deepest level, members of the US public understand children in terms of their need for care. Care is assumed to be *the* key to children's wellbeing.[3]

When people think about care, they think of it in interpersonal terms. Care is provided by the adults in children's lives—parents and other caregivers in particular, but also teachers and other adults who interact closely and directly with children. When people think with this *Centrality of Care* mindset, they understand care as both a type of action (caregiving) and as a motivation (adults must *care* about children in the sense of being concerned about their wellbeing). As we have consistently seen in our research on child development and education, people see this inherent concern for children as what distinguishes good parents and teachers from bad ones: good parents and teachers *care*, while parents and teachers who "don't care" enough let children down.

When people think in this way, they attribute responsibility for children's wellbeing wholly to these adults in children's lives, and especially parents. While, of course, these close relationships and interpersonal care *do* matter tremendously, by shrinking our focus down to these relationships, this spotlight on interpersonal care leaves out of view the social systems, structures, and policies that fundamentally shape children's and families' wellbeing.

The interpersonal understanding of care and focus on families also creates skepticism about the role of government in children's and families' lives. The assumption that what matters for children is parents and other adults in kids' lives leads people to think of government involvement in ensuring children's wellbeing as interference rather than partnership with or support for families.

How to convey the idea that care is collective

The first element of the *Collective Caregiving* frame involves redefining care as collective as well as interpersonal. While care is interpersonally provided, care is *also* provided collectively, through the actions we take and decisions we make as a society that establish the contexts that kids and their caregivers live in.

Tip #1: Talk explicitly about "collective caregiving" and explain how we care for kids in our role as citizens.

To stretch thinking about care so that people apply the idea not merely to interpersonal relationships but to collective actions, communicators must talk explicitly about "collective caregiving" or use similar language that clearly refers to acting collectively. The term "collective caregiving" not only gets across the core idea that caregiving is something we do collectively as a society, but it provides a memorable tag or handle for a new idea.

Communicators can elaborate this idea by explaining how we engage in collective caregiving through our roles as citizens. Activating the identity of *citizen* brings to mind a broader range of actions than those we take in personal caregiving—both actions we take as individuals through our political and civic participation (e.g., participating in a community meeting or voting) and our collective actions as a political society.

It's important to use examples that bring to mind a *broad understanding of citizenship* that includes all members of the community, not just people with legal citizenship, and that goes beyond voting. This is critical for a couple of reasons. First, it's essential to avoid excluding immigrants without legal citizenship. Second, it's important to avoid inadvertently cuing a narrow sense of political participation that starts and stops with voting.[4] To cultivate consideration of children across issues and activities, we need to activate a robust understanding of citizenship that includes wide-ranging civic and political engagement.

The Core of the Frame—Articulating the Idea of Collective Caregiving

The *Collective Caregiving* frame was tested in multiple versions across multiple methods. Here is a lightly adapted excerpt from a message tested in stretch tests that illustrates the core idea. For the exact language of messages tested in each method, see the appendix.

> Taking care of children and youth is one of our society's most important responsibilities. Whether or not we're parents, we're all caregivers in our role as citizens. We engage in collective caregiving by participating in community meetings and writing our elected representatives to demand action to support children and families.[5]

We share this and other excerpts of tested messages to illustrate the elements of the framing strategy. These are *not intended as messages to be repeated word for word.* The frame is flexible and can be used in different ways, in different contexts, for different audiences. For more guidance on how to apply the recommendations in real-world communications, see the strategic brief that accompanies this report.

The evidence behind tip #1

In multiple rounds of qualitative and quantitative research, we found that the idea of collective caregiving shifted conversations about the relationship between children and society in productive directions. We tested versions of this *Collective Caregiving* frame in on-the-screen interviews, stretch tests, and peer discourse sessions. Across these methods, we found that this frame increased a sense of collective responsibility toward children while being memorable and "sticky." Participants not only recalled the language of the frame, they repeated and used terms like "collective caregiving" and "citizen-caregivers" well after we shared the framed message with them.

In both individual interviews and focus-group conversations, explicit redefinition of care as collective shifted the conversation from the interpersonal realm to the realm of collective consideration and responsibility. In stretch test personal reflections, participants responded to the framed message by talking about how "it takes a village" or "we're all in it together," translating the idea of collective concern into familiar language. In on-the-screen interviews and stretch tests, participants directly connected the idea of collective caregiving to government action. While participants sometimes expressed skepticism about how the government currently operates, the *Collective Caregiving* frame frequently led participants to productively consider the role of members of society in holding government accountable—how could they, as citizen-caregivers, make sure that government is providing what children and families need?

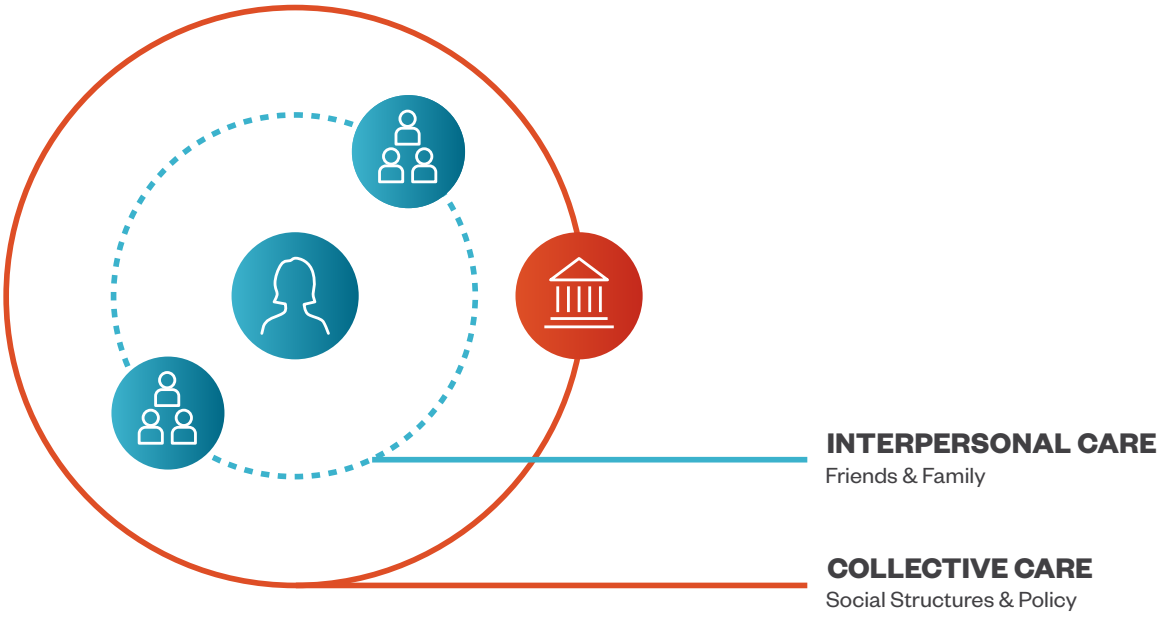
The language of "citizen-caregivers" was particularly sticky. This language was used in messages in both peer discourse sessions and stretch tests, and in both, participants frequently latched onto this term, repeating it back to facilitators and using the term to explain our collective responsibilities toward children. The stickiness of this phrase is a sign that the frame is easily communicable and likely to be picked up and used when people hear it, signaling its potential to enter into and shape public discourse about children. Moreover, the stickiness of the phrase indicates that it had entered into and was easily incorporated into people's *thinking*, providing a new but intuitive way of thinking about our responsibilities toward children.

Quantitative analysis of stretch test pre- and post-surveys buttresses these qualitative findings. **Analysis found that for participants who received the *Collective Caregiving* frame, from pre- to post-survey, there was a 5.72 percentage-point decrease in endorsement of the *Centrality of Care* mindset**—that is, the assumption that personal care from parents and other adults in kids' lives is the sole determinant of how well they do (this was marginally significant, at $p = .08$). In other words, as a result of participating in a conversation framed by the *Collective Caregiving* frame, participants endorsed the *Centrality of Care* mindset less than they had in answering the same survey questions prior to the session. This frame was the only frame tested that affected endorsement of this critical mindset.

As we discussed above, the *Centrality of Care* mindset is arguably the most important barrier to a more collective and systemic understanding of children, given its profound dominance and the way in which, in spotlighting parents and other caregivers, it obscures how social structures and policy choices about everything from housing and transportation to economic policy and health care affect children's wellbeing. The fact that, after a short conversation framed by the idea of collective caregiving, we see a shift in levels of endorsement of this mindset is, thus, powerful evidence of this frame's effectiveness.

While the frame introduces the idea of collective responsibility for care, it doesn't undercut the importance of parental responsibility or the idea that parental care is essential. Quantitative analysis found, comparing pre- to post-survey responses of participants who received the *Collective Caregiving* frame, an increase in endorsement of parental responsibility for children's wellbeing. Taken together, these results indicate that the frame leads people to simultaneously recognize that parental care is essential *and* that it helps them see that it's not *only* parental care that matters—collective care matters too.

We believe, drawing on the qualitative insights discussed above, that the frame is leading people to think of care as a continuum. It's true that parents *do* have a responsibility to care for children, and this personal care matters. Yet the frame helps people recognize that this care isn't all that matters—that's what the decrease in endorsement of the *Centrality of Care* mindset indicates. In other words, **the frame enables people to hold in mind simultaneously the importance of interpersonal care *and* collective care.**[6]



Tip #2: Connect collective caregiving to public policies.

When talking about collective caregiving, it's essential to talk explicitly about public policies to ensure that people extend this idea to collective actions by the government. If collective caregiving isn't explicitly applied to public policies, there is a tendency for people to fall back on an interpersonal notion of care, since this is people's default understanding.

Communicators can use varied language to connect the idea of collective care to policies. For example, we can talk about "taking care" of children by demanding better health care or mental health services, "caring for" children and youth by pushing for economic policies that ensure families have the resources they need, or engaging in "caregiving" by participating in community meetings to make sure public transportation helps kids get to the enriching activities they need to develop and grow.

We are not suggesting that communicators use the words "public policy," but rather that they should use examples of policies, such as the ones noted above, to ensure that people see collective caregiving as something that requires collective action through government.

An Example of How to Connect Collective Caregiving to Public Policies

Here is an illustration of what it looks like to connect collective caregiving to policies. This is an adapted excerpt from a message tested in stretch tests (see appendix for exact message).

> We care for kids when we demand better health care and mental health services for children and families. We act as caregivers by making sure our kids have healthy air to breathe and healthy water to drink. We engage in collective caregiving by pushing for low-cost, high-quality public child care for all families.

Communicators can use the *Collective Caregiving* frame to talk about whatever policies they are focused on—these policies are simply used for illustration. The key point is that being explicit about policies is important to keep the focus on collective action.

The evidence behind tip #2

In peer discourse sessions, we initially introduced the *Collective Caregiving* frame in a simple form that did not mention policies:

> Taking care of children and youth is one of our society's most important responsibilities. Whether or not we're parents, we're all caregivers in our role as citizens.

This basic kernel—the core idea of collective care—successfully oriented people in a collective direction. In contrast to the unframed conversation about children that preceded introduction of this frame, which centered almost exclusively on families and parents, once participants were introduced to the idea of collective caregiving, they began talking in more communitarian and collective terms. Participants talked much more in "we" terms, about what we must do, all together, for children.

However, absent explicit mentions of public policy in the message, participants' talk sometimes fell back into an interpersonal understanding of this "we"—that we, as individuals, have to look out for all kids in our community and do what we can individually to make sure all kids do well. While this talk represented a shift from focusing on parents and families toward a sense that *everyone* has responsibility for children's wellbeing, the focus remained in these moments on individual rather than collective action.

At other points in the research, including later in these same peer discourse sessions and in stretch tests, the *Collective Caregiving* frame was paired with mentions of public policies (as an example, see the excerpt adapted from stretch tests above). In these instances, we found participants did not tend to fall back into interpersonal thinking to the same extent. Using the frame to talk explicitly about public policy decisions led participants to see collective caregiving as requiring collective action and policy change.

Tip #3: Talk about policies, not "the government."

In order to leverage the idea of collective care to build support for government action, communicators should be specific and concrete about policies that would make a difference for children. By giving examples of policies that would help, communicators can prevent people from falling back on an interpersonal understanding of care while being clear that government has an essential role.

Talking about policies that can make a difference is more effective than talking abstractly about "the government," for two reasons. First, abstract discussion of the government's role tends to create skepticism, cuing worries that the government will try to displace parents' and families' role rather than supporting them. Giving examples of policies that can and should be enacted makes clear that supporting kids requires government action without cuing these worries. Second, when we attempt to explain the importance of a role for government, it can easily seem like we're saying that everything the government *currently does* is good—that we're cheerleaders for government *as it is*. When people hear this, they reasonably object that the government falls short in all sorts of ways and become dismissive. Talking about policy *needs and demands* immediately makes clear that government action is necessary *and* that the government is currently failing to do right by kids and families. Being specific and concrete about policy needs is the simplest and most effective way to move beyond the idea of the government as the opponent of families and to open the door for government action for kids.

The evidence behind tip #3

Across qualitative research methods, when we gave examples of public policies needed to support children and families, research participants latched onto these policies, tended to be receptive to them, and were willing to engage in careful consideration of their merits. By contrast, when we introduced messages that talked abstractly about the government and its role in partnering with or supporting families, participants became skeptical and resistant to any policies we proposed.

In stretch tests and peer discourse sessions, we included in framed messages examples of policy changes that would help children and families, such as improving health care and mental health services or air and water quality protections (see the adapted excerpt above, under tip #2). People frequently repeated these examples in their discussions and were generally receptive to them.[8] The policies helped to stretch people's understanding of what counts as a "children's issue" while opening space for the idea that government has a central role in ensuring children's wellbeing.

By contrast, our attempts to reframe the role of government directly were much less successful. In on-the-screen interviews and our first survey experiment, we tested several frames that position "the government" as critical to children and families' wellbeing: *Government as a Partner to Families, Government as a Pillar of Children's Wellbeing,* and *Government as Us* (i.e., government is how we act together as a society). In the experiment, none of these frames resulted in positive movement on outcomes, and the *Government as Us* frame led to a statistically significant decrease in salience and marginally significant decreases in collective efficacy and collective responsibility. In other words, these frames at best didn't work and at worst backfired.

Talking about "the Government": Frames That Didn't Work

Here are excerpts from three framed messages tested in our first survey experiment. These excerpts articulate the core idea of each frame.

Government as a Partner to Families: Caring for children and youth is a hard job, and families don't have to do it alone. Our government can be an effective partner in helping to care for young people by ensuring access to things like decent housing, good public transportation, and clean air to breathe.

Government as a Pillar of Children's Wellbeing: Caring for children and youth is a hard job, and requires three pillars of support: family, community, and government. Families do much of the child-rearing, but the community and government play important roles in kids' wellbeing, too.

Government as Us: Government is us. It is how we, as a society, act together to accomplish a common goal. Caring for children and youth is a hard job, and by acting through the government, we can make sure families don't have to do it alone.

More generally, in our qualitative research, anytime messages talked abstractly about the government's role, participants tended to become wary and much less receptive. Such mentions led to explicit pushback and a tendency to reassert the primacy of parents and families and made people less willing to consider specific policies if they were introduced.

Taken together, this evidence makes clear that examples of concrete policies help people see the importance of a broader role for the government in supporting children's and families' wellbeing, while discussions of "the government" in the abstract are unhelpful.

Tip #4: Give parents and other caregivers a clear role in collective caregiving.

While it's critical to connect collective caregiving explicitly to public policies, it's also critical to talk about parents' and other caregivers' roles in bringing about these policies. This can involve talking about parents demanding change or coming together to create change, or it can involve highlighting how we are listening and responding to parents in policymaking.

Talking about parents' and other caregivers' roles in collective caregiving for children can prevent people from thinking of public policy as something that *happens to* parents and families and instead see policies that ensure children's wellbeing as *responding to* or *resulting from* parents' and families' needs and demands. By giving parents a clear role in collective caregiving, communicators can ward off the sense that government is acting *on* or *against* parents and families.

It can be helpful to stress how parents and families can come together across their differences to push for policies that would benefit their children. Framing parents—including parents of color—as actors to whom we must be responsive can help inoculate against the tendency to blame parents, and especially parents of color, when children are not doing well.

Across communications, it's important to balance depictions of parents and other caregivers as actors who bring about change with discussion of how policies are responding to their demands and needs. Portraying parents as agents of change is productive in countering worries about the government acting *against* parents, but solely focusing on parents as instigators of change could run the risk of placing the burden for action exclusively on parents, rather than on everyone. Talking about policymaking as responding *to* parents is a way to give parents a role without always representing them as the ones bringing about change.

How to Give Parents a Clear Role

Here is an example of a message that conveys parents' agency in collective caregiving in a message from a parent as messenger. The language is taken directly from a message tested in our second survey experiment, with minor adjustments for consistency with other recommendations and tips.

> As parents, we want what's best for our children. Our country's debates often pit different groups of parents against each other—parents who live in different areas, have different backgrounds or identities, or have different beliefs. And it's true that different groups of parents do have different perspectives and needs. Yet our kids *all* need care to do well, not only from us but from society as a whole—to make sure they have good child care when they're young, good health care, healthy air to breathe, and access to the resources they need as they grow. If we come together across our differences, we can recognize that society should be doing much more to support all of us and our kids.

The evidence behind tip #4

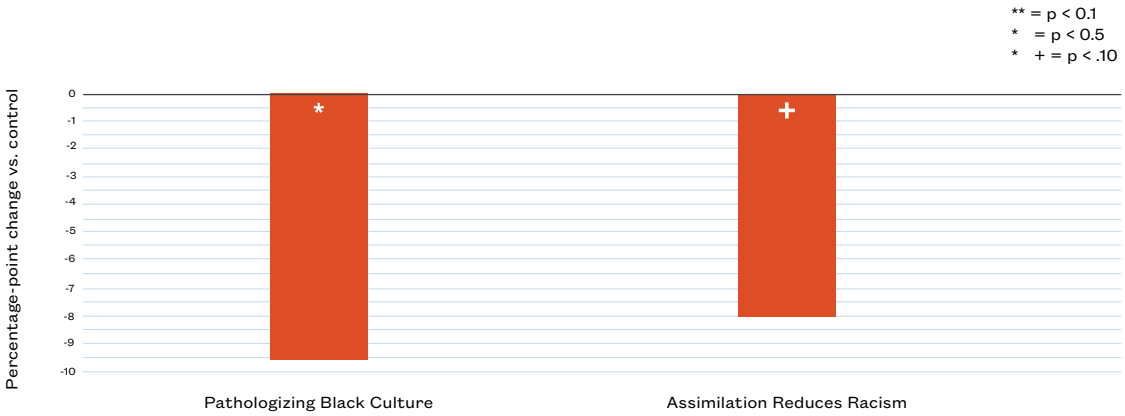
At different points in the research process, we found that talking about an active role for parents in collective action—in *pushing* for action or *informing* what should be done—decreased worries about the government acting *against* parents or taking over responsibilities *from* parents. Here, we focus on a specific frame element tested in our second survey experiment and highlight its effects in combating racist mindsets.

In the experiment, we tested a frame element (*Parents Working Across Difference*) that centers on the idea of parents working together across differences to demand governmental action to ensure their children's wellbeing (see above for a lightly adapted version of this message, and see the appendix for the full, exact language). We found that this frame element reduced endorsement of racist cultural mindsets among Republicans, who tend to endorse these mindsets more strongly than others.

In the experiment, we measured endorsement of two slightly different mindsets that fuel racist judgments of (non)deservingness. The *Pathologizing Black Culture* mindset is grounded in the idea that Black people share a pathological culture with deficient values. This mindset is used to blame racial inequities on Black people, as it attributes disparate outcomes to Black people's values and efforts. (Similar pathologizing thinking is often used to talk about other groups, such as Latine people. In this survey, we measured endorsement of the version of this mindset that applies to Black people specifically.) The *Assimilation Reduces Racism* mindset blames people of color for the racism they experience, seeing discrimination as a reasonable response to deviation from mainstream (white) culture. People of color are assumed to be responsible for better assimilating into dominant culture in order to get along and avoid "standing out."[9]

We found that the *Parents Working Across Difference* message led to a 9.6 percentage-point decrease in endorsement of the *Pathologizing Black Culture* mindset among Republicans (significant, at p = .012) and led to an 8.0 percentage-point decrease in endorsement of the *Assimilation Reduces Racism* mindset among Republicans (marginally significant, at p = .074). The message also increased Republicans' support for a proposed bill that included multiple child- and family-supporting provisions (an increase of 7.83 percentage points, at p = .03).

Effects of *Parents Working Across Difference* frames among Republicans



We did not see an effect on these outcomes among Democrats, but this is almost certainly a result of Democrats' strong baseline disagreement with these mindsets. While Republicans in our control condition, on average, were neutral about these mindsets, neither agreeing nor disagreeing with them, Democrats in the control overwhelmingly disagreed with them. This created a "floor" effect for Democratic participants in the survey: because Democrats, at baseline, already disagreed with these mindsets, it was hard to detect any further reduction in the strength of these mindsets among Democrats.

These explicit measures likely understate implicit and more subtle reliance on these mindsets among Democrats and their strength among Republicans. When posed questions that make these mindsets explicit, people are more likely to recognize that these ideas are racist and disagree with them due to social desirability bias or because they recognize, at an explicit level, that these ideas are wrong. However, in qualitative research, we find that across the political spectrum, many people (including sometimes people of color) draw on these mindsets subtly, without recognizing it. The same person might reject an explicit statement like "Black parents would do better if they took responsibility for their lives rather than relying on welfare," yet, in an interview, draw on coded language and suggest that in "urban communities" families don't always teach their children about the importance of education.

We view these effects among Republicans as important for two reasons. First, to undercut the prevalence of anti-Black and other racist narratives in US discourse, we need to undercut their traction with the people they are most likely to resonate with.[10] If a frame decreases the strength of these mindsets among Republicans *only*, that is strategically important in itself. Second, we suspect that this frame element is also likely to decrease the strength of these mindsets among Democrats as well. The failure to pick up these effects in the survey experiment may be due to the explicit character of the survey measures, which produced floor effects that leave little room to detect movement. There is thus a good possibility that the frame element is, in fact, effective in pushing back against these mindsets across the political spectrum.

We believe this frame element inoculates against racist thinking by depicting parents as agents of change advocating for their children while highlighting that society needs to do better by kids. The positive image of parents as advocates disrupts stereotypes of unconcerned parents of color and, in identifying the need for collective action to support children, disrupts the assumption that families are to blame if children are struggling.

RECOMMENDATION #2

Emphasize that we owe collective care to children of every race, ethnicity, and identity, and not just "our own" kids.

The cultural context

Racist mindsets affect every social issue in the United States and undermine racial justice across issues, yet racist thinking takes a distinctive form in thinking and talk about children and families. In this context, mindsets that blame Black people and other people of color for inequities are combined with the idea that how well children do in life is the result of how well parents and families care for them. Together, these mindsets lead people to blame Black, Latine, and other families of color for disparities between white children and children of color and yield racist judgments that "those" families aren't deserving of collective support.

When people draw on these ways of thinking, they reason that families of color need to take responsibility for their children's outcomes and do more to support their children. They conclude that collective steps to support "those" families who purportedly don't work hard or teach their children good values are both unnecessary and undeserved. These mindsets combine to legitimate existing systems of oppression and exclusion that leave Black, Latine, and other families of color outside the sphere of collective concern.

While the coupling of racist mindsets with the idea of care can lead to stigmatization of supposedly uncaring families, it also opens a door to challenge and displace these mindsets. By redefining what care is and using this reframed idea to shift judgments about who is responsible for providing it, we can change judgments about who is to blame for racial disparities between groups of children and build support for the collective steps needed to promote racial justice for children and families.

Using the *Collective Caregiving* frame to talk about race and racism cues and leverages systemic models of racism, which don't typically surface in thinking about children and families but are reasonably strong in other domains (e.g., policing and employment).[11]

How to convey the idea that care must be inclusive

The second element of the *Collective Caregiving* frame focuses on the need to extend collective care to *all* children, across race, background, and other identities. By explaining that collective caregiving must be inclusive in its reach, we can combat racist judgments of deservingness and more generally expand the sphere of collective concern.

Tip #1: Emphasize that as citizen-caregivers, *all* kids are our kids—no matter their race or identity.

Communicators can build on and extend the idea of collective caregiving to broaden the sphere of care. Talking about how, as citizen-caregivers, *all* kids are our kids, no matter their race, ensures that when people are thinking about what collective care means, they're thinking inclusively.

We can convey collective responsibility for inclusive care by talking about white children and children of color alike as "our kids": as *citizen-caregivers, all kids are our kids*. This inclusive language can help prevent the othering of children and families of color.

Extending the Frame: Talking about Race

Here is an excerpt of a message tested in peer discourse sessions that illustrates how the *Collective Caregiving* frame can be used to talk about race.

> As citizen-caregivers, *all* kids are *our* kids, whether they're white, Black, or brown. Yet the US doesn't live up to this idea—we don't extend collective caregiving to Black and brown kids. We need to do more to collectively care for *all* children and families—white, Black, and brown—while making sure to extend that care to Black and brown children and families.

In this and other tested messages, we used generalized language, such as "people of color" or "white, Black, and brown families." Developing iterations that were explicit in their mention of race without being overly specific was important for testing purposes, to account for a wide range of potential associations and interpretations, and ultimately to ensure broad applicability of the frames. To be clear, we are *not* suggesting that communicators use this type of generic language across their own communications. In fact, such language is often *not* appropriate. Outside of a controlled research environment, real world communications typically benefit from more precise group references and context-specific descriptions.

Talking about race is highly contextual, and communicators must take context into account. Here are several rules of thumb that communicators may want to keep in mind:
When possible, be specific about the groups you're talking about. Different racial and ethnic groups are positioned differently, with different histories and current situations. While it is sometimes important to be able to talk more generally (e.g., about how racism affects people of color broadly), coupling general talk with group-specific talk is important to deepen understanding, respect difference, and acknowledge the distinctive situations of different groups.

Name white people and families. Talking only about groups of color can inadvertently reinforce our tendency to make whiteness invisible—to treat whiteness as a "normal" baseline.

Take into account your own positionality and that of your audience. The way talk about race is received and understood is shaped by the positions of both speaker and audience. Ways of talking about race that are appropriate for one speaker might not be appropriate for others.

The evidence behind tip #1

In peer discourse sessions, we tested two versions of the *Collective Caregiving* frame that centered race and highlighted the need to extend collective care to all children, across race. One focused on our historical and current failures to extend collective caregiving to children of color (a problem-focused version), and the other focused on what can and must be done to extend this care (a solutions-focused version).

Qualitative analysis found that both versions were effective in bringing racial justice to the forefront of conversations. For some participants, the messages focused attention on injustices that children and families of color face and the need to address those. As expected, introducing race into the conversation was at times polarizing and led some participants (largely but not exclusively white participants and Republicans) to push back and suggest that race is a divisive issue and we should focus on *all* children rather than talking about race, or suggest that we should focus on class rather than race. This pushback is unsurprising, given the strength of racism denial and discomfort talking about race within substantial parts of the US public. Yet despite this pushback, framing sample solutions (e.g., baby bonds) as ways of extending care to children of color didn't lead to dismissal or rejection. To the contrary, participants widely expressed openness to these solutions. In other words, while the frame did not lead all participants to explicitly embrace the *idea* of race consciousness in policymaking, framing policies explicitly as a way of extending care to children of color didn't undercut support for them and in fact tended to generate support for them.

The versions of the *Collective Caregiving* frame tested in peer discourse sessions, in addition to centering race, incorporated the idea that "all kids are our kids"—a frame element tested previously in stretch tests. This frame element showed promise in stretch tests. Specifically, quantitative analysis found that

for participants who received the *All Kids Are Our Kids* message, from pre- to post-survey, there was a 5.9 percentage-point decrease in endorsement of the *Assimilation Reduces Racism* mindset ($p = .03$). However, the message also led to a decrease in the salience of children in thinking about public policy, and qualitative analysis was mixed. Qualitative analysis found that the notion that "all kids are our kids" increased a sense of solidarity across groups, yet it did not displace the idea that parents are the main party responsible for children's wellbeing.

While the idea that "all kids are our kids" appears not to be sufficient as a stand-alone frame, it can be used to articulate the inclusive scope of collective caregiving. Alongside an explicit call to extend collective caregiving across race, this idea can dampen pushback, help prevent racist mindsets from being cued, and build solidarity and collective identity around addressing the racial injustice children of color experience.

Tip #2: Explain how we currently provide collective care unevenly.

Providing specific, concrete explanations of the ways in which collective care has historically been and continues to be uneven can help people recognize the need for change. For example, within a message that is framed using the idea of *Collective Caregiving,* explaining how our society underfunds schools in mostly Black neighborhoods can prompt a recognition that we are failing to uphold our collective responsibilities to Black kids in education. Explaining the roots of the racial wealth gap in our country's history of slavery and racial discrimination and highlighting how this affects Black kids' opportunities can prompt recognition that addressing this gap is necessary in order to extend collective care to not only white but also Black kids.

Talking about Uneven Care

Here is a lightly adapted excerpt from a message tested in peer discourse sessions that illustrates how the idea of uneven care can be used to talk about racial inequities.

> Our society doesn't provide care evenly to all kids. We underfund schools in neighborhoods that are mostly Black and brown. Due to our country's history of slavery and racial discrimination, Black families on average have less wealth than white families, so Black kids tend to have fewer opportunities. And Black and brown children's mental health is harmed by everyday bias and enduring stereotypes.*

*See note on page 27 about the generalized descriptions and generic language developed for testing purposes, versus more precise and context-relevant language recommended for use across real world communications.

The evidence behind tip #2

In our analysis of peer discourse sessions, we found that using the *Collective Caregiving* frame in this way—explaining how we fail to extend collective care to Black and brown kids—was effective in increasing the salience of racial inequities among children. While participants at times argued against *focusing* on race in the message, none disputed the reality of these inequities. The frame was, thus, effective in highlighting the inequities children of color face and gaining recognition that these are a problem.

Tip #3: Offer concrete solutions to extend collective care to children and families of color while stressing the goal of *universal* care for all kids.

Just as it is important to be specific in explaining how our society provides collective care unevenly, it is critical to be specific in showing people what it would look like to extend care to children and families of color. Communicators should highlight the need for specific steps to extend collective care to kids of color while explaining how these move us toward the universal goal of good care for all kids.

1. *The goal is universal.* Communicators should stress how the goal is to provide collective care for all children and families, across race.

2. *Getting there requires specific steps to extend care.* Addressing the historical and current realities of *uneven* collective care requires taking specific steps to address issues like the racial wealth gap and uneven education funding, in addition to the universal steps needed to help all children and families.

This is, of course, simply a way of articulating what equity requires, but communications about equity don't always explicitly highlight both aspects, which can cause problems. If communicators stress only universality, this undercuts the need for race-conscious policies. If communicators stress only the need for targeted solutions, it perpetuates resistance to equitable policy—resistance we tend to see among some, though certainly not all, white people—by seeming to validate the false idea that white children are being ignored. Communicators can build widespread openness to race-conscious policies by explaining how specific, concrete solutions can lead to collective care for all children and families while extending care to children and families of color.

The evidence behind tip #3

In peer discourse sessions, we tested a message that used the *Collective Caregiving* frame to talk about race-conscious policies. The key here is the idea of extending collective care to children and families of color so that we are caring for all children and families, across race. Here is an excerpt from the message we tested:

> We need to do more to collectively care for *all* children and families while making sure to extend that care to Black and brown children and families. We can provide collective care through better funding for schools in neighborhoods that are mostly Black and brown. By providing "baby bonds"—money all children receive at birth that they can use when they come of age—we can make sure that white, Black, and brown kids alike are set up for adulthood. And by combating bias and stereotypes in children's environments, we can create a more caring social environment for Black and brown children.*

*See note on page 27 about the generalized descriptions and generic language developed for testing purposes, versus more precise and context-relevant language recommended for use across real world communications.

In sharing this tested language, we are not suggesting that communicators talk about these specific solutions. These solutions were stand-ins that allowed us to gauge whether framing equity-promoting solutions as a way to *extend collective care* is effective. As we discuss, the evidence indicates that this way of framing solutions is effective. Communicators can use this frame to talk about whatever solutions they are promoting to advance racial equity.

In peer discourse sessions, framing solutions as ways of extending collective care led to an open and generative conversation among participants about how our society can better support children and families generally and children and families of color specifically. As we saw in other conversations framed in terms of collective caregiving, participants' attention remained at the collective level. Framing the conversation in this way prevented people from focusing solely on the family. This helped to inoculate against the idea that we so often see in conversations that center Black, Latine, or other children and families of color—that racial disparities must be due to faults of these families.

Some participants did, at times, question the focus on race. In a few cases, participants asked why baby bonds would *only* be given to children and families of color. This is notable because the message specifically said that *all* children and families would receive baby bonds in order to "make sure that white, Black, and brown kids alike are set up for adulthood." The misreading of the message is a result of participants' existing mindsets and the assumption that race-conscious policymaking involves privileging children of color over white children (i.e., "reverse racism").[12]

Susceptibility to this misreading speaks to the strength of racism-denial mindsets, as well as the need to emphasize the ultimate, universal goal—collective care for *all* children—when talking about race-conscious policies. It will take time and repetition to overcome these racism-denial mindsets. The only way to do so is to talk explicitly about race, highlight both universal and targeted aspects of race-conscious policies, and use frames that, like the *Collective Caregiving* frame, create racially inclusive groups: we, citizen-caregivers, *must work across difference* to extend care so that *all children, white children and children of color alike*, receive collective care.

Tip #4: Highlight the need to listen to families across groups.

As we discussed at multiple points above, it's critical to highlight the agency of parents and families in collective caregiving and the need for government responsiveness to families. The idea of listening to families emphasizes this need for responsiveness while positioning families as experts on what their children need. In the context of discussions of racial justice, communicators should be explicit about the importance of listening to families of different races, identities, and backgrounds to show what inclusive collective caregiving requires.

The evidence behind tip #4

In peer discourse sessions, we tested a *vision* frame element that offered a vision of a future in which we consider the impact of all our collective decisions on children and families and think about whether they have different effects on kids from different racial groups. The framed message talked about the need to "listen to families of all races—white, Black, and brown—to understand [collective decisions'] impact." (As above, we are not recommending this specific language. See above sections on the need to adjust for context when choosing language to talk about groups.)

Analysis found that the discussion around this frame element was generally productive. It prompted a sense of shared responsibility to demand government action to help children and families and confront the country's racist history in the process. The frame element successfully inoculated against "colorblind" thinking about race and generated a recognition of our need to grapple with racism.

The idea of listening seemed to activate a participatory orientation. Participants saw not only a shared responsibility to demand just action for all families, but a role for families of all races in holding the government accountable.

This message did, at times, provoke a degree of fatalism, as participants suggested that the country is too divided to engage in this kind of collective action. This is not all bad—it is reasonable, when recognizing the scale of action needed, to worry that it will be hard to accomplish. However, generating a sense of collective efficacy *is* critical, and as we discuss below, there are other steps communicators can take to accomplish this.

RECOMMENDATION #3

Illustrate how collective caregiving happens everywhere and through every issue.

The cultural context

When people think about children and public policy, they think almost exclusively about a narrow set of "children's issues" that concern the care children receive at home and in school. This traces back to the *Centrality of Care* mindset in thinking about children and to the interpersonal understanding of care as personal care and love by the adults in children's lives (especially mothers, who are assumed to bear primary responsibilities for care). As a result, "children's issues" are those policy issues that directly concern the care children receive at home (parenting) and the care they receive at school (teaching)—issues like child care, family leave, child protection, and education.

As a result of this narrow understanding of what counts as a "children's issue," children only enter into our public conversations about policy when we talk about this narrow set of "children and family" policies. In conversations about other policies and social issues—from taxes and economic policy to housing and transportation—children are largely missing. People simply don't think about children when considering these issues because they don't obviously relate to interpersonal care.

The tendencies to deprioritize "children's issues" and not to consider children in conversations about other policies are, of course, both bound up with gendered understandings of care and space. Historically, care has been treated as women's responsibility, happening in domestic and private spheres set off from the public sphere of economic and political activity, which is implicitly understood as men's space. The deprioritizing of issues like child care and family leave in public policymaking stems in part from the undervaluing of women's spaces and work. The exclusion of children from conversations about other policies is reinforced by the gendered demarcation of private and public spaces, which makes it easy for people to treat policies about home and school as different in kind and separate from other policy issues.

Stretching people's understanding of care helps to disrupt this boundary between spaces and types of issues and brings children into the center of our public conversations across policy issues. By expanding how we talk and think about what care involves, and who is responsible for providing it, we can pull children's wellbeing into a broader set of policy conversations and change the understanding of "children's issues."

How to convey the idea that care is expansive

The third element of the *Collective Caregiving* frame involves connecting collective caregiving to a wide range of public policies and social issues. By explaining how every social issue affects children and stretching caregiving to encompass all social issues, we can bring children into thinking about policies beyond a narrow set of "children's issues."

Tip #1: Tell stories that illustrate how policies of *all* types shape children's experiences.

Communicators can build an expansive understanding of the scope of collective caregiving by telling stories that illustrate how a wide range of policies shape children's and families' environments and, in turn, their wellbeing. These stories must show how the policy choices we make across issues – from traditional "children's issues" like child care and education to issues outside this sphere like health care, environmental issues, and economic policy—shape children's lives.

Stories are highly effective in bringing into view the ways in which broader contexts and systems, and the policies that shape them, affect children. While these effects are typically out of view for people, when confronted with a story that traces how policies of all sorts have affected a child's life, people can quickly see these impacts.

In telling these stories, communicators should make sure to offer positive examples of how children's wellbeing can be improved by policies that create a supportive context. Focusing exclusively on negative stories about how policies have failed a child is likely to reinforce fatalism.

Stories about the impacts of policies on children and families must be paired with messages that give parents and other caregivers a role in bringing about change. Talking about parents and other caregivers as actors who demand or create change, or as people to whom we must listen and respond, is important for multiple reasons. As we discussed above, this decreases worries about government acting *against* parents. It is also important to avoid suggesting paternalism or saviorism—the idea that society needs to step in and take care of people unable to solve their own problems. Communicators can give parents and caregivers a clear role in stories themselves, or emphasize their role in other aspects of their communications.

Telling Policy Impact Stories

Here is a lightly adapted excerpt from a story tested in our second survey experiment. It offers an illustration of a story that traces the impacts of policies on a child's life.

> Michelle is 12 years old and in the sixth grade. She has a good life and a promising future because of support from her city and state.

> When Michelle was little, she attended a public child care center created by her governor as part of a new program. The quality care she received set her up to thrive in elementary school. Michelle was diagnosed with cancer when she was seven, but because her state provides substantial public funding for health care, Michelle received the treatment she needed for a full recovery. Michelle's city used to have problems with lead in the water, but the city fixed this, so Michelle has healthy water to drink. And Michelle's state gives every family $1,000 per child each year, which helps her get nutritious food and enriching activities. As a result of all this, Michelle is healthy, happy, excelling in school, and pursuing interests in music and science.

The evidence behind tip #1

In our second survey experiment, we found that stories about policies' impacts on a child were effective in building an understanding of how a wide range of policies affect children and increasing support for child-supporting policies.

We tested two versions of the same story: the first illustrated how policies can help a child directly, while the second illustrated how policies can help children by helping their parents (participants in the experiment read one version or the other). The main character of the first story was Michelle, a fictional 12-year-old (see above for an excerpt from this story); the main characters of the second were Michelle and Richard, who in this version were parents of three children (see the appendix for this story). The stories both illustrated how specific policies made by the city and state had specific positive impacts on the main characters, from public funding for health care to lead mitigation to basic income policies that enabled the children to eat well and participate in enriching activities. The first version of the story (*Child Impact Story*) connected these policies directly to (child) Michelle's wellbeing, while the second version (*Parent Impact Story*) explained how these policies helped (parents) Michelle and Richard take care of their children.

The first story was effective in building support for child-supporting policies. In the experiment, we gauged the level of policy support by introducing a sample policy initiative that covered the policy areas discussed in the stories. In the experiment, participants in the control condition read an unframed description of a policy proposal designed to cover a range of issues, including the traditional "children's issue" of child care, but also health care, air and water quality protections, and an expansion of the Child Tax Credit (see the pullout for the exact text). In the policy impact story conditions, an impact story preceded this same text describing the bill proposal, and the stories were presented as a reason to pass the bill—passing the bill would ensure that every child or parent has the support that the characters in the story did.

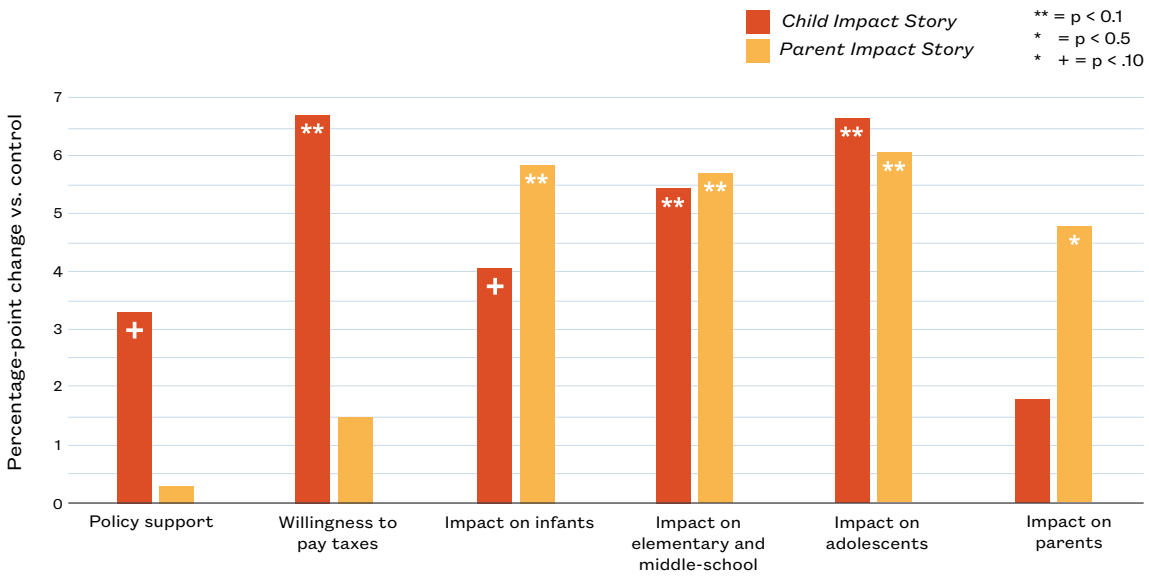
A Sample Policy

The following description of a child-supporting bill was included in the messages read by participants in all conditions in the survey experiment. See the appendix for full messages.

> The Children and Families Act is a major bill before the US Congress. The bill would create publicly run child care centers to provide low-cost care for all families. It would expand health care coverage and mental health services for children and families. The bill would strengthen clean air protections and give money to cities and states to fix water quality issues. And it would give families $4,000 per child every year by doubling the Child Tax Credit. Altogether, this would double what our country spends on children and families.

The *Child Impact Story* increased support for this bill by 3.29 percentage points in comparison to the control, a marginally significant increase ($p = .097$). Perhaps more notably, it led to a significant increase in participants' willingness to pay higher taxes to support the bill ($p = .002$). This is an important indicator that the support for a policy is meaningful, and not an empty gesture, as the prospect of higher taxes creates a potential cost of support.

Effects of policy impact stories



Both stories, the *Child Impact Story* and the *Parent Impact Story*, increased people's understanding of how this proposed policy would affect children and youth. The *Child Impact Story* had significant or marginally significant effects on the understanding of impacts on infants, elementary- and middle-school-aged children, and adolescents. The *Parent Impact Story* had significant effects on the understanding of impacts on children and youth of every age and increased the understanding of the policy's impacts on parents.

These results provide clear evidence that these kinds of policy impact stories can help people see how policies beyond narrow "children's issues" affect children and families. Focusing on direct impacts on children can also, in turn, increase support for the sorts of policies needed to support children and families.

These results indicate that stories are particularly effective in building this understanding, which typically remains elusive. Only by tracing and illustrating the concrete impacts of policies in particular cases can we build understanding of why *every* issue is a children's issue.

Tip #2: Use the natural environment as an example of where collective action is needed to care for children.

While people don't automatically think of environmental policies when thinking about children and public policy, they *can* readily and easily see how environmental policies affect kids. And because the natural environment is clearly outside of any individual's or family's control, when the environment is brought up, there is not a tendency—as there is in other discussions of children and social issues—for people to default back to the idea that it's really an issue for parents and families to deal with.

This unique feature of the issue—that it's wholly outside of parents' and other caregivers' control—makes the natural environment a useful jumping off point for the idea that we need to take collective action to care for kids. While parents' ability to provide for their children's needs is, of course, always reliant on society as a whole, it's easy to tell a story about provision of food, housing, or health care, for example, that attributes responsibility for provision solely to parents—namely, through their ability to get a job and benefits. By contrast, it is virtually *impossible* to tell a story in which parents can, through their own efforts, ensure good air and water quality for their children, given the very character of air and water as resources that are both shared and natural. The character of these resources prevents participants from falling back on the idea of parental responsibility.

By talking about issues like water and air quality alongside *other* social issues that affect children, communicators can stretch people's understanding of "children's issues" and broaden understanding of the range of policies that must be considered to promote children's wellbeing.

The evidence behind tip #2:

In multiple rounds of qualitative research, analysis showed that whenever air and water quality was given as an example of a policy issue that affects children, not only did participants tend to note and repeat this example in their responses, but their talk about the example shifted in all the desired ways. Participants readily recognized and affirmed that air and water quality affects children's wellbeing, and they overwhelmingly recognized that we have a collective responsibility to ensure that children have good air to breathe and water to drink. Moreover, participants recognized that ensuring air and water quality requires collective action—namely, public policies and government action.

When discussing air and water quality, participants almost never reverted from a sense of collective responsibility to the idea that parents are primarily responsible for children's outcomes. Across our research, when participants discussed other issues (e.g., economic policy or housing policy), even when frames productively oriented participants toward collective responsibility and action, there was a tendency for participants to slip back into focusing on the family and parental responsibility (e.g., that it's parents' responsibility to make sure their children have good housing and food). While all of the framing recommendations and tips discussed in this report limit this tendency, they don't perfectly inoculate against this slippage back to parental responsibility—which is to be expected given the strength of default assumptions about the family's role. It is thus striking that the focus on environmental issues did almost *perfectly* inoculate against this slippage.

The effectiveness of the example of air and water quality in orienting people toward collective responsibility and action is, analysis found, due to the unique features of this issue (discussed above). The character of these resources prevents participants from falling back on the idea of parental responsibility, because it's almost impossible to imagine what any individual could do on their own to ensure air or water quality. The analysis indicates that communicators can use air and water quality, and likely other environmental issues (e.g., climate change), to bring immediately to mind the ways in which policies outside the scope of traditional "children's issues" affect children.

While this is an incredibly useful issue to highlight, it's not a silver bullet. Using the natural environment as an example doesn't automatically generate a collective orientation *toward* other social issues. In peer discourse sessions, while participants retained a collective orientation whenever they talked about the environment, when they pivoted to other issues, they sometimes fell back into the default focus on the family. Environmental issues can help orient people collectively, but to have the greatest impact, they should be talked about within the broader *Collective Caregiving* strategy discussed in this report.

Tip #3: Provide a vision of a future where we prioritize children in decision making around all issues—and explain how we're currently falling short.

Painting a picture of a future in which we prioritize children in decision making across *all* issues gives people a sense of what it looks like to engage in collective caregiving. Communicators should highlight how the *process* of collective decision making would be different in this future—when debating and making decisions about issues ranging from the environment to health care to the economy, we'd consider how these decisions affect children and listen to families' concerns and needs.

It's important to focus on the *process of decision making* rather than the *outcomes of collective decisions*, for two reasons. First, focusing on how decisions are made helps people imagine what it *means* to engage in collective caregiving. Since this is a new idea for most people, it's important to give people an image of what the practice of collective caregiving involves. Second, getting specific about future *outcomes* is more likely to raise questions and worries about how we get there, which gets in the way of the shifts in orientation we're trying to foster—the shifts toward being collective, inclusive, and expansive in how we care for kids.

Consider the difference between depicting a future in which we consider impacts on children and families when we make economic policies, and depicting a future in which all families have enough money to provide for their children. While the difference may seem subtle, the former vision orients people toward centering children in their consideration of policies, while the latter is likely to sidetrack at least some people with questions: How are families getting this money? Are we talking about direct redistribution? A jobs program? What? While these are, of course, necessary questions, jumping quickly to these questions can short-circuit the initial shift that's needed: getting people to think about children and families *at all, in the first place,* when thinking about economic policy.

This vision of a future where we center children in collective decision making must be paired with a description of how we're currently letting down children and families. This critique must be broad, touching on issues beyond interpersonal care at home and school. For example, communicators might explain how bad air quality is making children sick, health care is too expensive for most families to afford, good child care for young kids is hard to find and too expensive, and many parents have low-wage jobs that don't pay enough for them to provide for their children.

Pairing vision and critique boosts urgency about the need for change while giving people a sense of what a different future might involve.

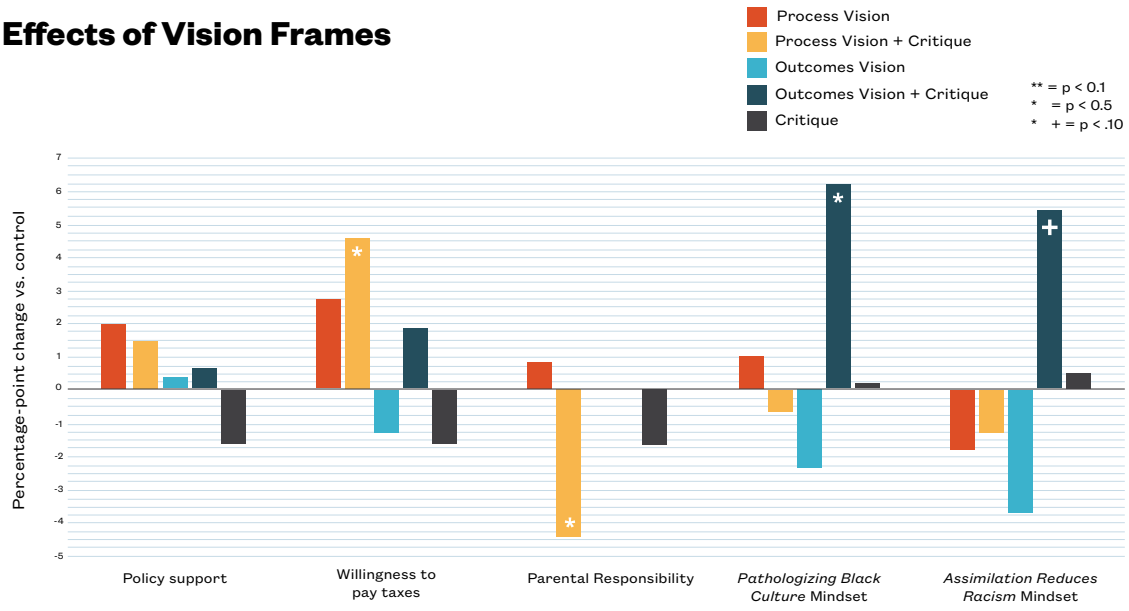
Vision and Critique

The following is a condensed, lightly adapted excerpt of a message tested in our second survey experiment. This message illustrates how vision framing can be paired with critique. As elsewhere, we share this message to illustrate the framing recommendation, not to suggest specific wording, which can and should be adapted for context.

> We can create a better future for children and families—a future where, as a society, we prioritize children's needs. In this future, when we make collective decisions about the environment, health care, and economic policy, we consider their impact on children and families.
>
> Unfortunately, this isn't the world we live in. Our society is letting down children and families. Bad air quality is making our kids sick, yet basic health care is too expensive for most families to afford. Good child care for young kids is hard to find and more expensive than ever. And many parents have to take low-wage jobs that don't pay enough for them to provide for their children.

The evidence behind tip #3

In our second survey experiment, we found that coupling a vision of a future in which children are prioritized in collective decision making (*Process Vision*) with a critique of the status quo (*Critique*) increased people's willingness to pay higher taxes to support proposed legislation while decreasing people's sense that parents are wholly responsibility for children's wellbeing. The effects resulted from the combination of this vision and the critique, as they had no effects on their own.



Providing a vision of the future that depicts specific outcomes (*Outcomes Vision*) was ineffective, failing to shift thinking in desired ways. And when this vision was paired with the critique of the status quo, it actually backfired, increasing endorsement of two racist mindsets—the *Pathologizing Black Culture* mindset and the *Assimilation Reduces Racism* mindset. Follow-up qualitative research did not provide a clear answer to *why* the combination of the outcome-focused vision and the critique backfired in this way. We suspect that the depiction of a future in which "all families have enough money" may have led to worries about how this was being paid for and who money was being taken *from*. With these worries in mind, references in the critique to parents with "low-wage jobs" may have cued racial stereotypes, as Blackness and poverty are often linked in public thinking.[13]

Analysis of subsequent peer discourse session conversations around the *Process Vision* frame element reinforced our conclusion that this frame element opens space for thinking about change to the status quo. Analysis found that offering this vision led to greater attention to the economic challenges parents face and, in turn, consideration of and support for social programs that would address these challenges, from paid family leave and child care to health care coverage. By enabling people to envision a different way of orienting toward children in collective decision making, the frame fostered a sense of collective efficacy—a sense that, as a society, we can take actions that support children and families across groups.

In peer discourse sessions, we tested a very short Process Vision message that didn't mention specific policy areas. The limitations of this message reveal the importance of naming specific issues (e.g., the environment, housing, health care) and specific policy solutions. Absent mention of these specific issues, abstract discussion about the importance of prioritizing children in "collective decision making" led to worries about government overreach, since people didn't know what this decision making would be *about*. Would this mean that the government would be making decisions *for* families about family affairs? The appearance of these worries alongside more productive talk reinforces the recommendation, offered in multiple places in this report, to use specific and concrete examples of issues and policies to ground talk. Being concrete and specific about issues and policies helps people see that we're talking about *supporting* families rather than telling parents how to parent.

FRAME WORKS | Leading for Kids

How to convey the idea that care is collective

RECOMMENDATION #1

Frame collective action as a form of caregiving.

— **Tip #1:** Talk explicitly about "collective caregiving" and explain how we care for kids in our role as citizens.

— **Tip #2:** Connect collective caregiving to public policies.

— **Tip #3:** Talk about policies, not "the government."

— **Tip #4:** Give parents and other caregivers a clear role in collective caregiving.

RECOMMENDATION #2

Emphasize that we owe collective care to children of every race, ethnicity, and identity, and not just "our own" kids.

— **Tip #1:** Emphasize that as citizen-caregivers, *all* kids are our kids—no matter their race or identity.

— **Tip #2:** Explain how we currently provide collective care unevenly.

— **Tip #3:** Offer concrete solutions to extend collective care to children and families of color while stressing the goal of *universal* care for all kids.

— **Tip #4**: Highlight the need to listen to families across groups.

RECOMMENDATION #3

Illustrate how collective caregiving happens everywhere and through every issue.

— **Tip #1:** Tell stories that illustrate how policies of *all* types shape children's experiences.

— **Tip #2:** Use the natural environment as an example of where collective action is needed to care for children.

— **Tip #3:** Provide a vision of a future where we prioritize children in decision making around all issues—and explain how we're currently falling short.

SECTION THREE

Conclusion, Appendixes, and Endnotes

Conclusion

The *Collective Caregiving* framing strategy can increase the salience of children in consideration of policies, foster a sense of collective responsibility, build collective efficacy, and counter deservingness. By stretching existing understandings of care—from *interpersonal* to *collective care*, from *exclusive care for "our own" kids* to *inclusive care for all kids*, and from *care at home and school* to *care across spaces and issues*—we can shift basic understandings of society's role in children's lives.

The strategy involves fundamental but intuitive changes in how we talk about kids. The strategy's power comes from the fact that these new ways of talking can quickly be taken on board as a new common sense. It is, thus, easy to miss just how different this framing strategy is from existing communications practice. Here are a few differences between the field's existing framing practices[7] and the new strategy we are recommending:

- The new strategy frames care as a collective activity as well as an interpersonal one. This differs from the typical strategy of talking about the need to better support those engaged in (interpersonal) caregiving.
- Currently, there is a tendency to focus on instrumental reasons to support children and families or the future benefits of doing so, such as enabling them to achieve their potential. The new strategy talks about collective caregiving as a responsibility in and of itself.
- By giving parents and families a role in collective caregiving, the strategy portrays parents as agents of change and actors to be engaged, rather than merely as recipients of support.
- The strategy moves away from making the direct case that government is good. Instead, it shows the value of government action by talking about how policies can help, while simultaneously allowing space for criticism of government as it is.
- The strategy moves beyond simply naming racial equity to explaining what's needed to extend collective caregiving to children and families across race.
- Instead of talking about the vulnerability of children from marginalized groups, the new framing strategy locates the problem in inadequate and uneven collective caregiving.

— Often, existing field communications focus overwhelmingly on problems. The new strategy pairs a critique of the status quo with a vision of what it would look like to actually center children in our collective decision making.

— The field often talks about "child wellbeing" in abstract terms. The strategy gets concrete about how we can improve kids' lives by using stories to illustrate the real-life impacts of policies.

The research demonstrates the potential of this strategy, though using it to *actually* shift attitudes and mindsets is a much larger endeavor. It requires advocates and other stakeholders working at scale, over the long term, to change how our society talks about kids in order to shift how we think and ultimately act.

Appendix A: Research Methods and Samples

To arrive at the recommendations in this brief, we applied Strategic Frame Analysis®—an approach to communications research and practice that yields strategies for shifting the discourse around social issues. This approach has been shown to increase understanding of and engagement in conversations about scientific and social issues.

This work builds on earlier research we conducted that involved reexamination of previous research[15], peer discourse sessions with members of the public to understand public thinking about children and policy, a survey on cultural mindsets and attitudes, an analysis of frames in field communications, and an analysis of frames in current and historical news media.

Below, we describe the research we conducted to design and test frames in order to identify an effective framing strategy on children and families. These frames were tested in 2022–2024 and refined using four methods: on-the-screen interviews, survey experiments with a nationally representative sample, stretch tests, and peer discourse sessions. In total, 5,706 people from across the United States were included in this research.

Frame Design

Building on an earlier phase of research on the cultural mindsets that members of the US public use to think about children and families, FrameWorks researchers developed a set of framing "tasks" that articulated what the new framing strategy would need to accomplish. We then engaged in a brainstorming process to come up with sets of frames and frame elements that could potentially achieve these goals. This brainstorming included three groups:

1. ***FrameWorks sta .*** Building on decades of combined experience in framing research and practice, including deep expertise in framing children's and families' issues, FrameWorks engaged in internal brainstorming to identify candidate frames and frame elements.

2. ***Field stakeholders.*** Leading for Kids convened leaders in the children's advocacy field to provide feedback on the usability and aptness of FrameWorks' initial ideas and to brainstorm other candidate frames and frame elements.

3. ***Creatives.*** FrameWorks and Leading for Kids brought together a diverse set of creatives—people with experience and expertise in narrative strategy, storytelling, and communications campaigns—to generate innovative ideas about how to accomplish our framing tasks. After presenting the framing tasks, FrameWorks staff engaged the creatives in these three brainstorming activities:

- Imagine an issue campaign designed to broaden people's understanding of how policies outside of traditional "children's issues" affect children. What kind of campaign would it be? What messages would it carry? What visuals or slogans might it use?
- Imagine you have a partnership with a TV producer to make a show about a lower-income family of color with young kids. How would you use the show to counter ideas of deservingness among the American public? What types of storylines or narratives would the show feature, and how might those combat stereotypes and existing assumptions about deservingness?
- Imagine you're working for a candidate whose opponent is running on a "parents bill of rights." How would you advise your candidate to message about this policy and to make a case for the importance of systems and government in children's lives?

FrameWorks' researchers analyzed the conversation to pull out candidate frames and frame elements to test.

Drawing on these three streams of input and ideas, FrameWorks researchers selected a set of frames and frame elements to test.

On-the-Screen Interviews

Frame design was followed by a set of on-the-screen interviews. On-the-screen Interviews are an exploratory method that can help ascertain whether and how frames affect thinking about an issue. In May–June 2022, we conducted 56 one-on-one interviews, testing eight frames/frame elements. Each frame was tested in seven interviews. A diverse sample of participants from across the United States was recruited that included variation by age, gender, race/ethnicity, household income, education level, and political party identification. Interviews were conducted over Zoom and with the consent of participants.

Two sets of frames were tested. Four frames were designed to expand people's understanding of "children's issues" beyond the narrow set of issues people currently associate with care of children. Four frames were designed to build an understanding of government that includes a robust role in promoting children's wellbeing rather than a limited role in preventing harm. See Appendix A for the frames tested.

Researchers used two different interview guides for the two sets of frames. All interviews began with open-ended questions on the topic. The guide for the first set of frames asked about the issues that affect children's wellbeing, while the guide for the second set asked about government and its role in promoting children's wellbeing. Participants were then presented with one of the frames and asked a series of follow-up questions on the same topic.

Data from the sessions were analyzed qualitatively. Researchers coded videos and transcripts to identify patterns in participants' talk. Analysis identified how these patterns changed once the frame was introduced into conversation and looked for signs that the frame accounted for changes in talk, including explicit uptake and use of message language, use of conceptually related language (as a sign of internalization of the frame), and nonverbal signs of uptake such as gestures.

APPENDIX A

Experimental Surveys

FrameWorks researchers conducted two online survey experiments to test frames, in November 2022 and August 2023. These experiments included 2,714 and 2,705 participants, respectively, or 5,419 people in total. Sampling employed quotas to match national demographics such as age, race, and income.

Demographic Variable	Experiment 1 Frequency	Experiment 1 Percent	Experiment 2 Frequency	Experiment 2 Percent
Age				
18–29	592	22%	597	22%
30-44	740	27%	693	26%
45-59	664	24%	661	24%
60+	718	26%	754	28%
Sex[16]				
Male	1266	47%	1287	48%
Female	1428	53%	1413	52%
Nonbinary/Other	20	1%	5	0%
Parental Status				
Yes	1669	61%	1620	60%
No	1045	39%	1085	40%
Ethnicity				
Caucasian/White (non Hispanic/Latino)	1661	61%	1644	61%
Hispanic or Latino	503	19%	480	18%
Black/African American	309	11%	324	12%
Asian	89	3%	91	3%
American Indian/ Alaska Native	51	2%	53	2%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	8	0%	8	0%
Other/Biracial or multiracial	93	3%	105	4%
Income				
0-24,999	643	24%	585	22%
25,000-49,999	729	27%	751	28%
50,000-99,999	865	32%	879	32%
100,000-149,000	302	11%	295	11%
150,000+	175	6	195	7%

Education				
HS diploma or less	1125	41%	1045	39%
Some college or associate's degree	764	28%	809	30%
Bachelor's degree	560	21%	564	21%
Graduate/ professional degree	265	10%	287	11%
Party Leaning				
Closer to Republican Party	1001	37%	118	24%
Closer to Democratic Party	1267	47%	198	25%
Neither	446	16%	410	52%
Marital Status				
Single	1027	38%	1103	41%
Married	1187	44%	1083	40%
Married but separated	62	2%	50	2%
Divorced	289	11%	324	12%
Other	149	5%	145	5%

In the first survey experiment, participants were randomly assigned to one of 12 experimental frame treatments or a null control condition. In the second survey experiment, participants were randomly assigned to one of 12 experimental frame treatments or a control condition that included an unframed description of proposed legislation. Between the two experiments, a range of frames were tested, such as vision and solidarity frames, impact stories, and metaphors that were aimed at identifying the best ways to expand people's understanding of the issues that impact children and build recognition of the central role of social systems and structures in shaping children's outcomes. All experimental frames tested across the two experiments can be found in Appendix A.

In survey experiment 1, participants assigned to an experimental frame condition were asked to read a short message before answering a series of survey questions designed to gauge targeted attitudes and levels of mindset endorsement (see appendix for message language and survey questions). Participants assigned to the null control condition were directed to answer the survey questions without reading any message. Each battery consisted of multiple questions and were primarily measured using Likert-type scales with five or seven points.

In survey experiment 2, participants assigned to an experimental frame condition were asked to read a framed message advocating for a proposed legislative bill before answering a series of survey questions (see appendix for message language and survey questions). Participants assigned to the control condition read an unframed description of the proposed bill that included a range of policies supported by children's advocates before being directed to answer the survey questions.

Prior to any inferential analysis, we conducted a series of randomization checks. Chi-square analyses indicated that all target demographics were evenly distributed across conditions. We also conducted a series of exploratory factor analyses to determine the psychometric qualities of our outcome scales. Items with rotated factor loadings below |.50| were dropped from each battery. Once finalized, Cronbach's alpha (α) was used to assess internal consistency among the items in each battery. Given that there are various heuristics for determining acceptable internal consistency, we determined that batteries with internal consistency scores approaching .60 or above would be considered acceptable. After assessing internal consistency, items within each battery were combined into composite scores that indicated participants' average ratings of the attitudes or stereotypes measured by each battery.

We used multiple regression analysis to determine whether there were significant differences on outcomes between each of the experimental frame conditions and the control condition. A threshold of $p < .05$ was used to determine whether the experimental frame conditions had any significant effects. Significant differences were understood as evidence that a frame influenced a particular outcome (for example, collective efficacy). Researchers also noted outcomes of marginal significance ($p < .10$) when there was other evidence supporting a frame effect (i.e., other quantitative or qualitative evidence).

As with all research, it is important to remember that results are based on a sample of the population, not the entire population. As such, all results are subject to margins of error.

Stretch Tests

Stretch tests are a mixed method that combines focus groups with pre- and post-surveys to understand frames' ability to stretch mindsets. Given the deep and durable nature of cultural mindsets, shifting them typically requires repeated engagement with frames. A single brief exposure to a frame can shift attitudes, but it is less likely to shift mindsets at a deeper level.

To approximate the type of deeper engagement with frames that people might experience if a frame enters public discourse and effectively structures public and private conversations, stretch tests engage research participants in multiple activities around a single frame during hour-long focus groups. Each focus group included five to eight participants. Focus groups were conducted over Zoom, with the consent of participants.

Three to five days before the session, participants took a pre-survey to measure attitudes and endorsement of key mindsets. Survey items are provided in Appendix B. In the focus group sessions, participants engaged in a combination of personal reflections and group activities around a single frame. Researchers shared a framed message at the beginning of the sessions. Participants were then asked to briefly summarize, in a written personal reflection, the idea that was shared with them, in their own words, and to share their thoughts about the idea. Researchers then facilitated a group activity in which participants were asked to imagine they were participating in a community meeting. Participants were asked to use the idea (the frame) we shared with them to make a case for why other community members should write their member of Congress in support of a (fictional) child- and family-friendly bill under consideration by the US Congress. Following the group activity, participants were asked to

write again about the idea (frame) shared with them, highlighting the aspects of the message that made sense to them and the aspects they still had questions or doubts about. At the conclusion of the sessions, participants took a post-survey that was identical to the pre-survey.

Across sessions, we tested six frames: Beyond Care, Collective Caregiving, All Kids Are Our Kids, System Is Rigged Against Families, "Parents Rights" as Division Tactic, and Government as a Partner to Families. Frames tested in the sessions are provided in Appendix A. Halfway through the sessions, we eliminated three frames that we determined, based on qualitative assessment, were less promising and focused on the three remaining frames: Beyond Care, Collective Caregiving, and All Kids Are Our Kids.

For comparison purposes, we also fielded two control conditions: a focus-group control and a survey-only control. In the focus-group control condition, participants engaged in reflection and conversation about children's issues without researchers introducing a frame into the conversation. In the survey-only control condition, research participants took the pre- and post-tests three to five days apart, without participating in a focus group session. For analysis, the controls and the three fully tested frames each included 30–36 participants. In total, 194 participants participated in stretch tests (some participants were excluded from analysis due to issues with the timing of pre- and post-surveys).

Quantitative analysis of pre- and post-surveys involved repeated measures ANOVA, which was used to determine whether deeply engaging with any of the frames in a focus group significantly shifted participants' attitudes from pre- to post-test. In addition, after controlling for participants' pre-test survey scores, we examined whether each of the three framed focus groups' conditions caused a change in key attitudes and outcomes when compared to the two control conditions. A threshold of $p < .05$ was used as a threshold of significance. Researchers also noted outcomes of marginal significance ($p < .10$) when there was other evidence supporting a frame effect (i.e., other quantitative or qualitative evidence). As with all research, it is important to remember that results are based on a sample of the population, not the entire population. As such, all results are subject to margins of error.

Demographic Variable	Stretch Tests Frequency
Age	
18-29	38
30-44	69
45-59	55
60+	32
Sex	
Male	83
Female	109
Nonbinary/Other	2
Parental Status	
Yes	121
No	73

Ethnicity	
Caucasian/White (non-Hispanic/Latino)	91
Hispanic or Latino	30
Black/African American	47
Other	26
Income	
0-24,999	26
25,000-49,000	52
50,000-99,999	40
100,000-149,000	37
150,000+	39
Education	
HS diploma or less	23
Some college or associate's degree	67
Bachelor's degree	70
Graduate/professional degree	34
Party Leaning	
Republican	51
Democratic	74
Independent/other	69
Marital Status	
Single	92
Married	102

The sessions were also analyzed qualitatively. Researchers analyzed participants' written personal reflections to identify how people made sense of the frames. In addition, the personal reflection from the beginning of the sessions was compared with the reflection written at the end of the session to determine whether there were any differences between them. Any differences were understood as indicators that engagement with the frame over the course of the sessions might be shifting participants' understanding of and response to the frame. Coupled with movement in pre- to post-survey responses, this was interpreted as an indication that a frame might become more effective over time, as people engage repeatedly and more deeply with it.

Participants' talk during the group activity was also analyzed qualitatively. Videos and transcripts were coded to identify patterns in participants' talk. Analysis looked for signs that the frame was being incorporated into thinking and prompting productive talk. Signs that the frame was being incorporated into thinking included explicit uptake and use of message language, use of conceptually related language (as a sign of internalization of the frame), and nonverbal signs of uptake such as gestures.

When these signs that a frame was active in thinking were coupled with productive talk (increased salience, collective responsibility, collective efficacy, lack of deservingness), we attributed these effects to the frame. Analysis also explored how the frames affected the nature of group conversation, how they affected contestation around the issue among the group, and whether and how frame language was passed among participants. This analysis of the group dynamics was understood as a proxy for how social context and frames might interact outside of a controlled research setting.

Peer Discourse Sessions

The final method used to empirically test frames was peer discourse sessions. Peer discourse sessions are a focus group method that identifies patterns of reasoning about a topic and explore the potential of reframing strategies to shift group discussion and thinking in productive directions. We conducted a total of six two-hour peer discourse sessions in September 2023. Sessions were conducted over Zoom, with the consent of participants. Five sessions had six participants, and the sixth session had seven participants. Participants were recruited to capture variation across a range of demographic characteristics, including race, education, political ideology, age, and gender.

The sessions focused on countering deservingness and racist mindsets and stereotypes. The sessions tested the ability of frames and particular frame elements to inoculate against these mindsets and build support for equitable solutions. The sessions explored different versions of the Collective Caregiving frame, vision frames, and solidarity framing. They also included discussion of "parents' rights" framing, in order to understand how to counter opposition framing. The specific frames are included in Appendix A.

Data from the sessions were analyzed qualitatively. Researchers coded videos and transcripts to identify patterns in participants' talk. Analysis identified how these patterns varied depending on the frame introduced into conversation, including for signs that the frame accounted for changes in talk. This included explicit uptake and use of message language, use of conceptually related language (as a sign of internalization of the frame), and nonverbal signs of uptake such as gestures. Analysis also explored how the frames affected the nature of group conversation, how they affected contestation around the issue among the group, and whether and how frame language was passed among participants. This analysis of the group dynamics was understood as a proxy for how social context and frames might interact outside of a controlled research setting.

Appendix B: Tested Framing Strategies

On-the-Screen Interviews

1. Beyond Care
How we care for children is important, but other things are critical to their development too. The quality of the air they breathe, the transportation they rely on, the housing they live in, and many other things influence whether kids thrive or not. How we shape our whole society has an impact on kids.

2. Collective Caregiving (person focused)
arents and teachers aren't the only ones who take care of children. The bus driver who takes them to and from school takes care of kids. The city planner who makes sure families have safe and affordable homes also takes care of kids. So do the scientists who monitor the quality of our air. How we shape our whole society has an impact on kids that's as important as what happens at home and school.

3. Collective Caregiving (issue focused)
Caring for children goes beyond what happens at home and in schools. Making sure children live in decent housing, that they have access to good transportation, and that the air they breathe is healthy – these are all forms of care. Care is woven throughout all of the choices and policies we make that shape our society.

4. Social Determinants of Children's Wellbeing
School and home are critical in shaping how children do, but they don't exist in a vacuum. Everything else in our society shapes what happens at home and school. Homes and schools need to be in safe, affordable neighborhoods with good transportation and healthy environments for children to thrive. How we shape our whole society has an impact on kids by affecting homes and schools.

5. Government as a Partner to Families
Raising children is a hard job, but parents and caregivers don't have to do it alone. Government can be an effective partner in helping us raise our kids. By partnering with the government, those among us who are parents and caregivers can get critical resources and support we need to make our job of raising kids easier.

6. (Government as) Public Services
Raising children is a hard job, and public services can help parents and caregivers. By making sure we provide the public services that those among us who are parents and caregivers need, we can make our job easier. Public services can make sure families have the resources and support we need.

7. Government as Us
Government is us. Our government is how we, as a society, act together. Through our government, we can help those of us who are parents and caregivers as we raise our children. We can work through our government to make sure we all have the resources and support we need.

8. Government as a Pillar of Children's Wellbeing
There are three pillars that support our children's wellbeing: family, community, and government. Families do most of the child-rearing, while the community supports them. Government is there to support families and communities with resources and services they need.

Experimental Surveys

Survey Experiment #1

1. Collective Caregiving (issue focused)
Caring for children and youth goes beyond what happens at home or in school. Care also includes making sure that young people have access to decent housing, good public transportation, and healthy air to breathe. In this way, caring for kids goes well beyond issues at home and school – it also involves the collective choices we make and policies that shape young people's access to the critical resources they need to develop well.

2. Collective Caregiving (person focused)
Parents and teachers provide care for children and youth, but so do many others. Care is also provided by people that kids don't ever meet. For example, the city planner cares for children by making sure that families have access to decent housing. The director of the department of transportation cares for young people by providing good public transportation so they can safely get where they need to go. And scientists, who monitor the air quality, care for kids by ensuring that they have clean air to breathe. The care that children and youth receive from those close to them matters, but so too does the care—or the lack of care—they receive from the people who shape how our society works.

3. Beyond Care (issue- focused)
How we care for children and youth is important, but other things are also critical for young people's wellbeing. Access to things like decent housing, good public transportation, and healthy air to breathe also influences the wellbeing of young people. The care that kids receive matters, but so do many other things – including the collective choices we make and the policies that shape young people's access to the critical resources they need to develop well.

4. Beyond Care (person focused)
How parents and teachers care for children and youth is important, but the actions of other adults matter too. For example, the city planner who makes sure that families have access to decent housing plays a vital role in kids' wellbeing. The director of the department of transportation helps keep young people safe by ensuring that they can get where they need to go. And the scientists who monitor the quality of our air help to keep children healthy by ensuring they have clean air to breathe. The care that kids receive from those close to them matters, but so too do the efforts of many other people who shape how our society works.

5. Government as a Pillar of Children's Wellbeing

Caring for children and youth is a hard job, and requires three pillars of support: family, community, and government. Families do much of the child-rearing, but the community and government play important roles in kids' wellbeing, too. Community members and organizations–like neighbors and schools–help care for young people outside of the home. And, the government is there to support both families and communities with access to things like decent housing, good public transportation, and clean air to breathe.

6. Government as a Partner to Families

Caring for children and youth is a hard job, and families don't have to do it alone. Our government can be an effective partner in helping to care for young people by ensuring access to things like decent housing, good public transportation, and clean air to breathe. And by partnering with the government, families and communities are better able to provide kids with the critical resources they need to develop well.

When it comes to caring for kids, families don't have to go it alone. The government can be an effective partner that provides support to ensure that young people have what they need to do well.

7. Government as Us

Government is us. It is how we, as a society, act together to accomplish a common goal. Caring for children and youth is a hard job, and by acting through the government, we can make sure families don't have to do it alone. When we act through government, we're using our collective means to support ourselves. Through these actions, we can ensure that young people across the country have access to decent housing, good public transportation, and clean air to breathe.

Government is us, and it's how we make sure our families and communities can provide kids with the critical resources they need to develop well.

8. Government as "We the People"

Our government is how we, the people, act together to accomplish a common goal. Caring for children and youth is a hard job, and by acting through the government, we can make sure families don't have to do it alone. When we act through government, we're using our collective means to support ourselves. This means that we the people can ensure that kids across the country have access to decent housing, good public transportation, and clean air to breathe.

Government is by the people, for the people, and it's how we make sure our families and communities can provide children and youth with the critical resources they need to develop well.

9. Woven Fabric (government as a thread)

Children and youth are embedded within a social fabric that is held together by many interconnected threads, including families, communities, and government. To keep this fabric strong enough to support young people as they develop, each thread must be woven tightly with the others around it. Our government is a crucial part of this weave because it helps connect children and youth to things like decent housing, good public transportation, and clean air to breathe. And, when the weave is strong, our government can support families and communities so that they are better able to provide kids with the critical resources they need to develop well.

10. Woven Fabric (issue focused)

Our society is a woven fabric held together by many interconnected threads, and children and youth are at the center. To keep this fabric strong enough to support young people as they develop, each thread must be woven tightly with the others around it. These threads include things like access to decent housing, good public transportation, and clean air to breathe. When the weave is strong, these threads create a strong social fabric that ensures all children and youth have the critical resources they need to develop well.

11. Parents Rights (opposition frame)

Parents have a right to care for their children as they see fit, but our government continues to pass laws that make it more difficult for parents to do this. For example, when the government decides what kids will learn in school, or allows young people to receive medical care without parental consent, parents' fundamental rights to decide what's best for their children are stripped away. Parents will always know best what their kids need, and to ensure that children and youth develop well, we must restore parental authority and keep the government out of children's lives.

Survey Experiment #2

1. Control—Description of a Proposed Bill

The Children and Families Act is a major bill before the US Congress. The bill would create publicly run childcare centers to provide low-cost care for all families. It would expand healthcare coverage and mental health services for children and families. The bill would strengthen clean air protections and give money to cities and states to fix water quality issues. And it would give families $4000 per child every year by doubling the Child Tax Credit. Altogether, this would double what our country spends on children and families.

2. Child Impact Story

Michelle is 12 years old and in the 6th grade. She has a good life and a promising future because of support from her city and state governments.

When Michelle was little, she attended a public childcare center created by her governor as part of a new program. The quality care she received set her up to thrive in elementary school. Michelle was diagnosed with cancer when she was seven, but because her state provides substantial public funding for healthcare, Michelle received the treatment she needed for a full recovery. Michelle's city used to have problems with lead in the water, but the city fixed this, so Michelle has healthy water to drink. And Michelle's state gives every family $1000 per child each year, which helps her get nutritious food and enriching activities. As a result of all this, Michelle is healthy, happy, excelling in school, and pursuing interests in music and science.

We can make sure that every child in our country has the same support as Michelle by passing the Support Every Child Act, a major bill before the US Congress. The bill would create publicly run childcare centers to provide low-cost care for all families. It would expand healthcare coverage and mental health services for children and families. The bill would strengthen clean air protections and

give money to cities and states to fix water quality issues. And it would give families $4000 per child every year by doubling the Child Tax Credit. Altogether, this would double what our country spends on children and families.

Every child should have the support Michelle does. By passing the Support Every Child Act, we can make sure all children can thrive, no matter where they live, their faith, or the color of their skin.

3. Parent Impact Story

Michelle and Richard have three kids in elementary and middle school. They're able to provide their kids with a good life and a promising future because of support from their city and state governments.

When their kids were little, Michelle and Richard enrolled them at a public childcare center created by their governor as part of a new program. This allowed them to get their kids quality care, which set them up to thrive in elementary school. Michelle and Richard's kids had some health issues—one of their kids even had cancer—but because their state provides substantial public funding for healthcare, their children got the treatment they needed. The city where Michelle and Richard live used to have problems with lead in the water, but the city fixed this, so they know their kids have healthy water to drink. And the state gives every family $1000 per child each year, which helps Michelle and Richard pay for nutritious food and enriching activities for their kids. As a result of all this, Michelle and Richard's kids are healthy, happy, excelling in school, and pursuing interests in music and science.

We can make sure that every parent in our country can provide for their kids, like Michelle and Richard, by passing the Support Every Family Act, a major bill before the US Congress. The bill would create publicly run childcare centers to provide low-cost care for all families. It would expand healthcare coverage and mental health services for children and families. The bill would strengthen clean air protections and give money to cities and states to fix water quality issues. And it would give families $4000 per child every year by doubling the Child Tax Credit. Altogether, this would double what our country spends on children and families.

All parents should have the support Michelle and Richard do. By passing the Support Every Family Act, we can make sure all families can thrive, no matter where they live, their faith, or the color of their skin.

4. Vision—End State

We can create a better future for children and families—a future where all children can live, learn, and play in environments that allow them to thrive. In this future, the air children breathe and the water they drink is clean. In this world, children can make meaning and learn from difficult life experiences because they have access to mental health services. And families can get good childcare, so they can make sure their kids are set up to thrive in school. In this world, all families have enough money, so parents can provide for their children.

This future is possible. By passing the Better Futures Act, a major bill before the US Congress, we can begin to create it. The bill would create publicly run childcare centers to provide low-cost care for all families. It would expand healthcare coverage and mental health services for children and families. The

bill would strengthen clean air protections and give money to cities and states to fix water quality issues. And it would give families $4000 per child every year by doubling the Child Tax Credit. Altogether, this would double what our country spends on children and families.

A better future for children and families is possible. By acting now, we can make sure all families can thrive, no matter where they live, their faith, or the color of their skin.

5. Vision—Process

We can create a better future for children and families—a future where, as a society, we prioritize children's needs. In this future, when we make collective decisions, we consider their impact on children and families. In this world, when we make decisions about the environment, we think about how our choices will affect children. When we set up mental health services or make healthcare policies, we consider how they will support children and families. In this world, our decisions about everything from childcare to economic policy include a discussion of their effects on children.

This future is possible. By passing the Prioritizing Children's Future Act, a major bill before the US Congress, we can begin to take seriously what children need. The bill would create publicly run childcare centers to provide low-cost care for all families. It would expand healthcare coverage and mental health services for children and families. The bill would strengthen clean air protections and give money to cities and states to fix water quality issues. And it would give families $4000 per child every year by doubling the Child Tax Credit. Altogether, this would double what our country spends on children and families.

A better future for children and families is possible. By acting now, we can begin prioritizing children's needs and make sure all families can thrive, no matter where they live, their faith, or the color of their skin.

6. Critique of Status Quo

Our society is letting down children and families. Polluted air is making our children sick, yet basic healthcare is too expensive for most families to afford. Young people are increasingly thinking about and attempting suicide, yet quality mental health services are often unavailable or extremely costly. Good childcare for young kids is hard to find and more expensive than ever, so many children aren't set up to thrive in school. And many parents have to take low-wage jobs that don't pay enough for them to provide for their children.

We need to fix these problems. We can start by passing the Fixing the Status Quo Act, a major bill before the US Congress. The bill would create publicly run childcare centers to provide low-cost care for all families. It would expand healthcare coverage and mental health services for children and families. The bill would strengthen clean air protections and give money to cities and states to fix water quality issues. And it would give families $4000 per child every year by doubling the Child Tax Credit. Altogether, this would double what our country spends on children and families.

Our society is failing children and families. This is true no matter where people live, their faith, or the color of their skin. We must act now to fix this.

7. Vision (End State) + Critique of Status Quo

We can create a better future for children and families—a future where all children can live, learn, and play in environments that allow them to thrive. In this future, the air children breathe and the water they drink is clean. In this world, children can make meaning and learn from difficult life experiences because they have access to mental health services. And families can get good childcare, so they can make sure their kids are set up to thrive in school. In this world, all families have enough money, so parents can provide for their children.

Unfortunately, this isn't the world we live in. Our society is letting down children and families. Polluted air is making our kids sick, yet basic healthcare is too expensive for most families to afford. Young people are increasingly thinking about and attempting suicide, yet quality mental health services are often unavailable or extremely costly. Good childcare for young kids is hard to find and more expensive than ever, so many children aren't set up to thrive in school. And many parents have to take low-wage jobs that don't pay enough for them to provide for their children.

We can begin to fix these problems and create the world we need by passing the Better Futures Act, a major bill before the US Congress. The bill would create publicly run childcare centers to provide low-cost care for all families. It would expand healthcare coverage and mental health services for children and families. The bill would strengthen clean air protections and give money to cities and states to fix water quality issues. And it would give families $4000 per child every year by doubling the Child Tax Credit. Altogether, this would double what our country spends on children and families.

Our society is failing children and families, but a better future is possible. By acting now, we can make sure all families can thrive, no matter where they live, their faith, or the color of their skin.

8. Vision (Process) + Critique of Status Quo

We can create a better future for children and families, a future where, as a society, we prioritize children's needs. In this future, when we make collective decisions, we consider their impact on children and families. In this world, when we make decisions about the environment, we think about how our choices will affect children. When we set up mental health services or make healthcare policies, we consider how they will support children and families. In this world, our decisions about everything from childcare to economic policy include a discussion of their effects on children.

Unfortunately, this isn't the world we live in. Our society is letting down children and families. Polluted air is making our kids sick, yet basic healthcare is too expensive for most families to afford. Young people are increasingly thinking about and attempting suicide, yet quality mental health services are often unavailable or extremely costly. Good childcare for young kids is hard to find and more expensive than ever, so many children aren't set up to thrive in school. And many parents have to take low-wage jobs that don't pay enough for them to provide for their children.

We can begin to fix these problems and take seriously what children need by passing the Prioritizing Children's Future Act, a major bill before the US Congress. The bill would create publicly run childcare centers to provide low-cost care for all families. It would expand healthcare coverage and mental health

services for children and families. The bill would strengthen clean air protections and give money to cities and states to fix water quality issues. And it would give families $4000 per child every year by doubling the Child Tax Credit. Altogether, this would double what our country spends on children and families.

Our society is failing children and families, but a better future is possible. By acting now, we can begin prioritizing children's needs and make sure all families can thrive, no matter where they live, their faith, or the color of their skin.

9. Legacy

The choices we make as a society shape the world our children grow up in and the world they'll inherit. When we make decisions in the present, we have to think about the legacy we're passing on. Our legacy depends on passing on a world where children and families can get quality childcare and healthcare, where the air is clean to breathe and the water is clean to drink, and where all families have the money to provide for their children so they can grow into thriving adults. What we do now shapes the world our children will inherit.

We can leave our children a strong legacy by passing the Legacy Act, a major bill before the US Congress. The bill would create publicly run childcare centers to provide low-cost care for all families. It would expand healthcare coverage and mental health services for children and families. The bill would strengthen clean air protections and give money to cities and states to fix water quality issues. And it would give families $4000 per child every year by doubling the Child Tax Credit. Altogether, this would double what our country spends on children and families.

The world we leave for children depends on what we do now. By passing the Legacy Act, we can create a world where all children can thrive, now and into the future, no matter where they live, their faith, or the color of their skin.

10. Legacy + Collective Responsibility

We have a responsibility, as a society, to do what's best for our children's future. The choices we make as a society have moral consequences—they shape the world our children grow up in and the world they'll inherit. When we make decisions in the present, we owe it to our children to think about the legacy we're passing on. Our legacy depends on passing on a world where children and families can get quality childcare and healthcare, where the air is clean to breathe and the water is clean to drink, and where all families have the money to provide for their children so they can grow into thriving adults. We have a shared responsibility to take the right steps now, so the world our children inherit is the one they are owed.

Given our responsibility to leave our children a strong legacy, we need to pass the Legacy Act, a major bill before the US Congress. The bill would create publicly run childcare centers to provide low-cost care for all families. It would expand healthcare coverage and mental health services for children and families. The bill would strengthen clean air protections and give money to cities and states to fix water quality issues. And it would give families $4000 per child every year by doubling the Child Tax Credit. Altogether, this would double what our country spends on children and families.

The world we leave for children depends on what we do now. We have a responsibility to pass the Legacy Act in order to create a world where all children can thrive, now and into the future, no matter where they live, their faith, or the color of their skin.

11. Parents Coming Together Across Difference—Parent Messenger

As parents, we want what's best for our children. Our country's current debates often pit different groups of parents against each other—parents who live in different areas, have different backgrounds or identities, or have different beliefs. And it's true that different groups of parents do have different perspectives and needs. Yet *all* of us need society's support to give our kids a good life—to make sure they have good childcare when they're young, good healthcare, clean air to breathe, and access to the resources they need as they grow. If we come together across our differences, we can recognize that society should be doing much more to support all of us and our kids.

We should come together in support of the Families United Act, a major bill before the US Congress. The bill would create publicly run childcare centers to provide low-cost care for all families. It would expand healthcare coverage and mental health services for children and families. The bill would strengthen clean air protections and give money to cities and states to fix water quality issues. And it would give families $4000 per child every year by doubling the Child Tax Credit. Altogether, this would double what our country spends on children and families.

We can come together across our differences and do what's best for our kids. By supporting the Families United Act, we can make sure all of our kids can thrive, no matter our faith, where we live, or the color of our skin.

12. Parents Coming Together Across Difference—Youth Messenger

As young people, all we want is a chance to thrive. Our country's current debates often pit families against each other–families who live in different areas, have different backgrounds or identities, or have different beliefs. And it's true that different families–including young people–do have different perspectives and needs. Yet *all* of us–all children and youth–need society's support to do well. We need good childcare when we're young, good healthcare, clean air to breathe, and access to the resources we need as we grow. For us to thrive, we need adults to come together across their differences and recognize society should be doing much more to support our generation.

We need adults to come together in support of the Families United Act, a major bill before the US Congress. The bill would create publicly run childcare centers to provide low-cost care for all families. It would expand healthcare coverage and mental health services for children and families. The bill would strengthen clean air protections and give money to cities and states to fix water quality issues. And it would give families $4000 per child every year by doubling the Child Tax Credit. Altogether, this would double what our country spends on children and families.

As young people, we need adults to come together across their differences and do what's best for our generation. By supporting the Families United Act, adults can help *all* children and youth thrive, no matter our faith, where we live, or the color of our skin.

Stretch Tests

1. Beyond Care

We have a responsibility to care for the children in our lives. This personal care and love is essential. Yet kids need other things too. In addition to love and care, they need resources that only the government can make sure they have.

For children to thrive, the government must guarantee good jobs so families can provide for their kids. Children and families need better healthcare and mental health services. And kids need clean air to breathe and healthy water to drink.

As individuals, we give the kids in our lives care and love. Yet children also need things that we can't provide as individuals. By demanding government action, we can make sure all kids have what they need to thrive, no matter where they live or the color of their skin.

2. Collective Caregiving

Taking care of children and youth is one of our society's most important responsibilities. Whether or not we're parents, we're all caregivers in our role as citizens. We engage in caregiving by how we vote and what we demand of our government.

Caring for children means pushing the government to guarantee good jobs, so families can provide for their kids. We care for kids when we demand better healthcare and mental health services for children and families. We act as caregivers by making sure the air is clean for kids to breathe and water is healthy to drink.

We all need to be citizen-caregivers. By demanding government action to support children and families, we engage in collective caregiving. That way, all kids will have what they need to thrive, no matter where they live or the color of their skin.

3. All Kids Are Our Kids

We all look out for our own kids and the kids in our lives. That's our responsibility as adults. That responsibility doesn't stop with the kids we know. We owe all kids the support they need to thrive. As a society, *all* kids are *our* kids.

To make sure that *all* kids have what they need, we need our government to do more and better. That's how we reach each and every kid. For all kids to thrive, the government must guarantee good jobs so every family can provide for their kids. All children and families need good healthcare and mental health services. And every kid, in every community, needs clean air to breathe and healthy water to drink.

As a society, we need to look out for *all* of our kids. By demanding government action, we can make sure all kids have what they need to thrive—no matter where they live or the color of their skin.

4. System Is Rigged against Families

Our society has the resources to make sure that all families can do well. But corporations have rigged the system to work for them, so the government does what's in their interest rather than what's in families' interest.

Corporations take advantage of families by increasing prices and keeping wages down, which makes it hard for people to provide for their kids. Insurance companies and hospitals use their influence to charge more and more while denying healthcare and mental health services to families. Corporations use their power to pollute and make money off dirty practices, which hurts our kids' health.

We need to take back power from corporations and demand that the government guarantees good jobs, ensures better healthcare and mental health services, and makes sure kids have clean air to breathe and healthy water to drink. By coming together, we can make sure all kids and families have what they need to thrive, no matter where they live or the color of their skin.

5. "Parents Rights" as Division Tactic

Parents in our society need more support. Right now, our society doesn't do enough to help families. If parents band together, we can demand the help we need.

Some groups are working hard to divide parents and undermine our ability to come together. Those talking about "parents' rights" make it seem like they're on our side, but they're really dividing us, pitting white parents against Black and brown parents, and straight families against LGBTQ+ families. This is an attempt to prevent us from coming together to demand what all of our kids need.

Together, we can demand government action that would help all parents and families. We can push the government to guarantee good jobs so we can provide for our kids, ensure better healthcare and mental health services, and make sure our kids have clean air to breathe and healthy water to drink. We must see through attempts to divide us and push for what all our kids need.

6. Government as a Partner to Families

Caring for children and youth is a hard job, and parents need the government to have their back. Right now, the government doesn't do enough to support families. But the government *could* be a supportive partner.

For parents to provide for their kids, they need the government to guarantee good jobs. To make sure their children are healthy, parents need better healthcare and mental health services for themselves and their kids. And they need the government to make sure the air is clean for their kids to breathe and water is healthy to drink.

Parents shouldn't have to go it alone. The government needs to have parents' back, so they can give their kids what they need to do well. With the government as a supportive partner, we can make sure all kids have what they need to thrive, no matter where they live or the color of their skin.

Peer Discourse Sessions

1. Collective Caregiving

Initial message shared:

> Taking care of children and youth is one of our society's most important responsibilities. Whether or not we're parents, we're all caregivers in our role as citizens.

Elaboration of the message:

> Taking care of children and youth is one of our society's most important responsibilities. Whether or not we're parents, we're all caregivers in our role as citizens. We engage in caregiving by how we vote and what we demand of our government. By demanding government action to support children and families, we engage in collective caregiving.

2. Collective Caregiving—Uneven Care as the Problem

As citizen-caregivers, *all* kids are *our* kids, whether they're white, Black, or brown. Yet the US doesn't live up to this idea—we don't extend collective caregiving to Black and brown kids.

Our society underfunds schools in neighborhoods that are mostly Black and brown. Due to our country's history of slavery and racial discrimination, Black families on average have less wealth than white families, so Black kids tend to have fewer opportunities. And Black and brown children's mental health is harmed by everyday bias and enduring stereotypes.

We need to do more to collectively care for *all* children and families—white, Black, and brown—while making sure to extend that care to Black and brown children and families.

3. Collective Caregiving—Extending Care as the Solution

As citizen-caregivers, *all* kids are *our* kids, whether they're white, Black, or brown. We need to do more to collectively care for all children and families while making sure to extend that care to Black and brown children and families.

We can provide collective care through better funding for schools in neighborhoods that are mostly Black and brown. By providing "baby bonds"—money all children receive at birth that they can use when they come of age—we can make sure that white, Black, and brown kids alike are set up for adulthood. And by combating bias and stereotypes in children's environments, we can create a more caring social environment for Black and brown children.

4. Parents' Rights (opposition frame)

Now more than ever we need to honor and protect parents' rights. Parents have the right to direct the education, medical care, and moral upbringing of their children. Too often, parents are subject to government overreach. Schools have stopped teaching core subjects like math and science, instead teaching our children to be ashamed of our country and our history and teaching them inappropriate content about sex. Parents need a voice in their children's upbringing, and parents' rights must be protected.

5. Vision—Process

We can create a better future for children and families—a future where, as a society, we prioritize children's needs. In this future, when we make collective decisions, we consider their impact on children and families.

6. Vision—End State

We can create a better future for children and families. In this future, the air children breathe is clean, children and families can get good healthcare, and all families have enough money, so parents can provide for their children.

7. Critique of the Status Quo

Our society is letting down children and families. Polluted air is making our children sick. Quality mental health services and healthcare for families is often unavailable or extremely costly. Good childcare for young kids is hard to find and more expensive than ever. And many parents have to take low-wage jobs that don't pay enough for them to provide for their children.

8. Vision Process—Racial-Equity Focus

We can create a better future for children and families—a future where, as a society, we prioritize children's needs. In this future, when we make collective decisions, we consider their impact on children and families, and we think about whether decisions will differently affect white, Black, and brown kids. In this world, collective decision making includes a discussion of decisions' effects on children, and we listen to families of all races—white, Black, and brown—to understand their impact.

9. Parents Coming Together across Difference—Racial-Equity Focus

As parents, we want what's best for our children. Our country's current debates often pit parents of different races against each other, leading white, Black, and brown parents to blame each other for problems. This takes the spotlight off the real problem – our society's failure to support parents of *all* races in giving our kids a good life.

All of us need society's support to give our kids a good life. We need to come together across our differences and demand that society does more for *all* of our kids.

Appendix C: Survey Items

Experimental Surveys

Battery A: Bill Support Questions[17]

1. **Do you think the government should fund the [pipe in name from assigned treatment] Act?**
    a. Yes
    b. ***No***
2. **How much do you favor or oppose the [pipe in name from assigned treatment] Act?** *[Five-point Likert scale: "Strongly oppose"; "Oppose"; "Neither favor nor oppose"; "Favor"; "Strongly favor"]*
3. **How willing are you to pay more in taxes to support the [pipe in name from assigned treatment] Act?** *[Five-point Likert scale: "Not at all willing"; "somewhat willing"; "willing"; "very willing"; "extremely willing"]*
4. **How much do you favor or oppose each of the different parts of the [pipe in name from assigned treatment] Act?** *[Seven-point Likert scale: "Strongly oppose"; "Oppose"; "Somewhat oppose"; "Neither favor nor oppose"; "Somewhat favor"; "Favor"; "Strongly favor"]*
    a. Creating publicly run childcare centers to provide low-cost care for all families
    b. Expanding healthcare coverage and mental health services for children and families
    c. Strengthening clean air protections
    d. Giving money to cities and states to fix water quality issues
    e. Giving families $4000 per child every year by doubling the Child Tax Credit
5. **How much do you favor or oppose each of the different parts of the [pipe in name from assigned treatment] Act?** *[Seven-point Likert scale: "Strongly oppose"; "Oppose"; "Somewhat oppose"; "Neither favor nor oppose"; "Somewhat favor"; "Favor"; "Strongly favor"]*
    a. Infants
    b. Elementary- and middle-school children
    c. Adolescents
    d. Parents
    e. Adults without children

Battery B: Collective Efficacy

1. **I am optimistic that we, as a society, can ensure that all children and youth develop well.** *[Seven-point Likert scale: "Strongly disagree"; "Disagree"; "Somewhat disagree"; "Neither disagree nor agree"; "Somewhat agree"; "Agree"; "Strongly agree"]*
2. **We, as a society, can make sure that all children and young people develop well.** *[Seven-point Likert scale: "Strongly disagree"; "Disagree"; "Somewhat disagree"; "Neither disagree nor agree"; "Somewhat agree"; "Agree"; "Strongly agree"]*
3. **Our government has the ability to improve outcomes for all children in our society.** *[Seven-point Likert scale: "Strongly disagree"; "Disagree"; "Somewhat disagree"; "Neither disagree nor agree"; "Somewhat agree"; "Agree"; "Strongly agree"]*
4. **If our government made big new investments in children's wellbeing, this would have a major positive impact on children's lives.** *[Seven-point Likert scale: "Strongly disagree"; "Disagree"; "Somewhat disagree"; "Neither disagree nor agree"; "Somewhat agree"; "Agree"; "Strongly agree"]*
5. **How confident are you that our government will take action to advance the best interests of all children and young people?** *[Seven-point Likert scale: "Not at all confident"; "Slightly confident"; "Somewhat confident"; "Moderately confident"; "Very confident"; "Extremely confident"; "Totally confident"]*

Battery C: Collective Responsibility

Please rate how much you agree or disagree with the statements below. *[Seven-point Likert scale: 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree; 4 = neither disagree nor agree; 5 = somewhat agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree]*

1. We, as a society, have an obligation to support policies that help children and young people develop well.
2. We have a responsibility to support policies that provide all families with children the resources they need to do well.
3. Society has an obligation to support legislation that helps families and children in all communities, not just in my own community.
4. Parents and families are fully responsible for ensuring that their children develop well (reversed).
5. It's entirely up to parents and caregivers to provide what their kids need to do well (reversed).
6. No matter what policies are in place, it is ultimately parents and caregivers who are responsible for how well their children do (reversed).

Batteries D: Salience

1. **How important is it to you that a candidate for political office has a dedicated "children's platform" that lays out their plan to improve children's wellbeing?** *[Five-point Likert scale: "Not at all important"; "Slightly important"; "Moderately important"; "Very important"; "Extremely important"]*

2. **Children's advocates have argued that the federal government should conduct** child impact assessments **for all proposed policies and laws. In putting together these assessments, government officials would determine how the policy or law is likely to affect children and whether it would improve their wellbeing. How important do you think it is for new policies to include a child impact assessment?** *[Five-point Likert scale: "Not at all important"; "Slightly important"; "Moderately important"; "Very important"; "Extremely important"]*

3. **How much do you favor or oppose requiring child impact assessments for all new proposed policies and laws?** *[Five-point Likert scale: "Strongly oppose"; "Somewhat oppose"; "Neither favor nor oppose"; "Somewhat favor"; "Strongly favor"]*

4. **How much do you favor or oppose conducting child impact assessments on all existing federal laws and policies?** [Five-point Likert scale: "Strongly disagree"; "Disagree"; "Neither disagree nor agree"; "Agree"; "Strongly agree"]

5. **Imagine that an election was taking place between two candidates. The first candidate had a record of considering how policies affect children. The second candidate did not have a record of considering how policies affect children. How likely would you be to vote for the first candidate over the second candidate?** *[Five-point Likert scale: "Not at all likely"; "Somewhat likely"; "Likely"; "Very likely"; "Extremely likely"]*

6. **Do you favor or oppose having an independent Children's Commissioner to make sure that children's concerns are heard and addressed across all federal agencies?** *[Five-point Likert scale: "Strongly oppose"; "Oppose"; "Neither favor nor oppose"; "Favor"; "Strongly favor"]*

Battery E: Pathologizing Black Culture cultural mindset[18]

Please rate how much you agree or disagree with the statements below. *[Seven-point Likert scale: 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree; 4 = neither disagree nor agree; 5 = somewhat agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree]*

1. Black parents would do better if they took responsibility for their lives rather than relying on welfare.

2. The reason why urban families are poor is because they don't value hard work.

3. If poor people want to do better, they should stop having children that they cannot afford.

Battery F: Assimilation Reduces Racism cultural mindset

Please rate how much you agree or disagree with the statements below. *[Seven-point Likert scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat disagree, 4 = neither disagree nor agree, 5 = somewhat agree, 6 = agree, 7 = strongly agree]:*

1. If Black and brown parents tried harder to fit into mainstream culture, they could avoid a lot of problems.
2. Black and brown youth would do better in society if they acted like everyone else.
3. If Black and brown kids want to avoid problems, they should dress and speak like everyone else.

Stretch Tests—Pre-/Post-Survey

Battery A: Individualism cultural mindset

Please rate how much you agree or disagree with the statements below. *[Seven-point Likert scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat disagree, 4 = neither disagree nor agree, 5 = somewhat agree, 6 = agree, 7 = strongly agree]:*

1. What happens to a child is primarily the result of the choices their family makes.
2. How well children do is mostly determined by how much willpower and drive they have.
3. If children work hard enough, they'll succeed in life.
4. How well children do is mostly determined by the choices they make.

Battery B: Systemic Thinking cultural mindset

Please rate how much you agree or disagree with the statements below. *[Seven-point Likert scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat disagree, 4 = neither disagree nor agree, 5 = somewhat agree, 6 = agree, 7 = strongly agree]:*

1. How children do is primarily determined by the neighborhood they live in.
2. How children do is primarily determined by how our society is structured.
3. Children can only develop well if they have access to the right resources.
4. Children can only do well if they have access to the right opportunities in life.

Battery C: Limited Government/Government Incompetence

Please rate how much you agree or disagree with the statements below. *[Seven-point Likert scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat disagree, 4 = neither disagree nor agree, 5 = somewhat agree, 6 = agree, 7 = strongly agree]:*

1. When the government tries to help children, it is usually ineffective.
2. When it comes to children, the government should limit itself to protecting their health and safety and shouldn't be in the business of providing for their other needs.
3. Receiving benefits from the government, like subsidized housing or food, teaches children they don't need to get a job or work hard.
4. The government should leave the care of children to parents or guardians.

Battery D: Expanded Government/Government Responsibility

Please rate how much you agree or disagree with the statements below. *[Seven-point Likert scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat disagree, 4 = neither disagree nor agree, 5 = somewhat agree, 6 = agree, 7 = strongly agree]:*

1. It is the government's job to provide children with the services they need.
2. It is the government's job to provide communities with the resources that will help children do well.
3. It is realistic to expect the government to be responsive to the needs of all children.
4. It is the government's responsibility to make sure that all children in our country do well.

Battery E: Centrality of Care cultural mindset

Please rate how much you agree or disagree with the statements below. *[Seven-point Likert scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat disagree, 4 = neither disagree nor agree, 5 = somewhat agree, 6 = agree, 7 = strongly agree]:*

1. Children will do well in life as long as they have caring parents.
2. If children are loved, they'll do well in life.
3. The love children receive from the adults in their life is the only thing that matters for their wellbeing.
4. How well children do is determined by how much the adults in their lives care for them.
5. As long as children have parents and teachers who care, they have everything they need.

Battery F. Pathologizing Black Culture cultural mindset

Please rate how much you agree or disagree with the statements below. *[Seven-point Likert scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat disagree, 4 = neither disagree nor agree, 5 = somewhat agree, 6 = agree, 7 = strongly agree]:*

1. Black parents would do better if they took responsibility for their lives rather than relying on welfare.
2. The reason why urban families are poor is because they don't value hard work.
3. If poor people want to do better, they should stop having children that they cannot afford.

Battery G. Assimilation Reduces Racism cultural mindset

Please rate how much you agree or disagree with the statements below. *[Seven-point Likert scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat disagree, 4 = neither disagree nor agree, 5 = somewhat agree, 6 = agree, 7 = strongly agree]:*

1. If Black and brown parents tried harder to fit into mainstream culture, they could avoid a lot of problems.
2. Black and brown youth would do better in society if they acted like everyone else.
3. If Black and brown kids want to avoid problems, they should dress and speak like everyone else.

Battery H. Salience

1. **How important is it to you that a candidate for political office has a dedicated "children's platform" that lays out their plan to improve children's wellbeing?** *[Five-point Likert scale: "Not at all important"; "Slightly important"; "Moderately important"; "Very important"; "Extremely important"]*
2. **Imagine that an election is taking place between two candidates. The first candidate has a record of supporting policies that improve children's wellbeing. The second candidate did not have a record of supporting these policies. How likely would you be to vote for the first candidate over the second candidate?** *[Five-point Likert scale: "Not at all likely"; "Somewhat likely"; "Likely"; "Very likely"; "Extremely likely"]*
3. **Do you favor or oppose having an independent Children's Commissioner to make sure that children's concerns are heard and addressed across all federal agencies?** *[Five-point Likert scale: "Strongly oppose"; "Oppose"; "Neither favor nor oppose"; "Favor"; "Strongly favor"]*

Battery I: Collective Responsibility

Please rate how much you agree or disagree with the statements below. *[Seven-point Likert scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat disagree, 4 = neither disagree nor agree, 5 = somewhat agree, 6 = agree, 7 = strongly agree]:*

1. We, as a society, have an obligation to support policies that help children and young people develop well.
2. We have a responsibility to endorse policies that ensure all families with children under the age of 18 have the resources they need to do well.
3. Society has an obligation to support legislation that helps families and children in all communities, not just in my own community.
4. Parents and families are fully responsible for ensuring that their children develop well (reversed).
5. It's entirely up to parents and caregivers to provide what their kids need to do well (reversed).
6. No matter what policies are in place, it is ultimately parents and caregivers who are responsible for how well their children do (reversed).

About FrameWorks

The FrameWorks Institute is a nonprofit think tank that advances the mission-driven sector's capacity to frame the public discourse about social and scientific issues. The organization's signature approach, Strategic Frame Analysis®, offers empirical guidance on what to say, how to say it, and what to leave unsaid. FrameWorks designs, conducts, and publishes multi-method, multidisciplinary framing research to prepare experts and advocates to expand their constituencies, to build public will, and to further public understanding. To make sure this research drives social change, FrameWorks supports partners in reframing, through strategic consultation, campaign design, FrameChecks®, toolkits, online courses, and in-depth learning engagements known as FrameLabs. In 2015, FrameWorks was named one of nine organizations worldwide to receive the MacArthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions.

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Endnotes

1. See L'Hôte, E., & Volmert, A. (2021). *Why aren't kids a policy priority? The cultural mindsets and attitudes that keep kids off the public agenda: A FrameWorks strategic brief*. FrameWorks Institute. For a deep dive into cultural mindsets of race and racism and similarities and differences in those mindsets across groups, see Volmert, A., Lyew, D., John, J., Vierra, K., & Moyer, J. (2023). *The terrain of spatial justice: Cultural mindsets of race and place in the United States*. FrameWorks Institute.

2. L'Hôte, E., & Volmert, A. (2021). *Why aren't kids a policy priority? The cultural mindsets and attitudes that keep kids off the public agenda: A FrameWorks strategic brief*. FrameWorks Institute.

3. L'Hôte, E., & Volmert, A. (2021). *Why aren't kids a policy priority? The cultural mindsets and attitudes that keep kids off the public agenda: A FrameWorks strategic brief*. FrameWorks Institute, esp. 11–13.

4. See FrameWorks' recent research on democracy and the tendency to think of participation narrowly, as voting: Volmert, A., Cohen, E., & Pineau, M. G. (2023). *By and for the people? Cultural mindsets of democracy and the US political system: A culture change project report.* FrameWorks Institute.

5. The message tested in stretch tests mentioned "voting" and making demands of "government." As we discuss below, at multiple points in the research, we found that talking about the government tended to cue unproductive thinking. For consistency with tip #3, we have replaced the reference in the message to "government" with talk about demanding action from our "elected representatives." We've also broadened the focus beyond voting, to avoid a narrow understanding of civic and political participation.

6. There are also signs from the quantitative analysis of stretch tests suggesting that the frame increases the salience of children in thinking about collective decision making and increases endorsement of a more expansive role for government in society. After controlling for pre-test scores, participants who received the *Collective Caregiving* frame endorsed salience measures significantly more than participants in the survey control condition (5.7 percentage points more, $p = .04$). They also endorsed expansive government measures significantly more than participants in the survey control (9.7 percentage points, $p = .02$). However, compared to the survey control, participants in the *Collective Caregiving* condition also endorsed individualism significantly more (9.5 percentage points, $p = .02$). We view movement from pre- to post-test within condition as the most appropriate way to quantitatively assess frame effects in stretch tests, as we discuss in the appendix, so don't focus on these comparisons with the survey control in the body of this report.

   We share them, however, as the results on salience and expansive government reinforce our qualitative findings that the frame broadens people's thinking about what we owe to children as a society and generates productive thinking about what government can and should do for children and families. We interpret the apparent backfire effect on individualism in a similar way to how we interpret the increase in endorsement of parental responsibility in the body of the report: in boosting concern for children's wellbeing, the frame strengthens people's sense that *all* actors—individual ones like parents and caregivers, as well as collective ones like communities and government—need to do more to

ensure children's wellbeing. If we saw an increase in individualism *without* a corresponding increase in salience and expansive government, we would worry that the frame was leading people to double down on the idea that responsibility for children's wellbeing lies with individuals. But coupled with these productive results, we interpret this result as a productive sign that the frame is increasing a sense of responsibility across actors, individual and collective.

7. The message tested in stretch tests included reference to a federal jobs program providing a jobs guarantee. This was distracting for participants and raised a lot of questions, so we have replaced that language with mention of public child care, for illustration purposes.

8. The exception was our example of a jobs guarantee in stretch tests, which many participants expressed skepticism about and treated as a "handout." We included this policy as an example of an economic policy that would help children and families because we have seen widespread support for this policy in survey research (in our Culture Change Project), yet in this case, it's clearly unhelpful. We suspect that pairing the issue of children and families cued this "handout" talk, since historically, "lazy parents" (prototypically, single Black mothers) are core characters in anti-social welfare narratives.

9. For more on these mindsets, see Volmert, A., Lyew, D., John, J., Vierra, K., & Moyer, J. (2023). *The terrain of spatial justice: Cultural mindsets of race and place in the United States.* FrameWorks Institute, 35–36.

10. It is, of course, important to decrease the traction of these narratives with white people, but research indicates that political party has a greater effect on endorsement of these mindsets than race does. These mindsets are not only much less salient for white Democrats than for white Republicans, but they're actually less salient for white Democrats than they are for Black Republicans. See Volmert, A., Lyew, D., John, J., Vierra, K., & Moyer, J. (2023). *The terrain of spatial justice: Cultural mindsets of race and place in the United States.* FrameWorks Institute, 64–67.

11. On the rise and subsequent plateauing of systemic thinking about racism in recent years, see FrameWorks Institute. (2023). *Research update: Findings and reflections from our second year studying culture change.* See also Volmert, A., Lyew, D., John, J., Vierra, K., & Moyer, J. (2023). *The terrain of spatial justice: Cultural mindsets of race and place in the United States.* FrameWorks Institute, 25–34.

12. This thinking is closely linked with the Colorblind Racism mindset, which holds that focusing on or talking about race is itself racist. See Volmert, A., Lyew, D., John, J. Vierra, K., & Moyer, J. (2023). *The terrain of spatial justice: Cultural mindsets of race and place in the United States.* FrameWorks Institute, 37–42; Bonilla-Silva, E. (2022). *Racism without racists: Color-blind racism and the persistence of inequality in America* (6th ed.). Rowman & Littlefield.

13. See Moyer, J., Lyew, D., John, J. E., Hestres, L. E., Vierra, K., & Volmert, A. (2023). *Where we thrive: Communicating about resident-centered neighborhood revitalization.* FrameWorks Institute, 10.

14. For a review of the field's framing practices, see Hestres, L., Rochman, A., Busso, K., & Volmert, A. (2021). *How are advocates talking about children's issues? An analysis of field communications.* FrameWorks Institute.

15. See L'Hôte, E., & Volmert, A. (2021). *Why aren't kids a policy priority? The cultural mindsets and attitudes that keep kids off the public agenda: A FrameWorks Strategic Brief*; Hestres, L., Rochman, A., Busso, K., & Volmert, A. (2021). *How are advocates talking about children's issues? An analysis of field communications.* FrameWorks Institute; Hestres, L., Rochman, A., Busso, K., & Volmert, A. (2021). *How are children's issues portrayed in the news? A Media Content Analysis.* FrameWorks Institute.

16. To match US Census data, we rely on responses about sex for demographic quotas. Surveys also ask about gender, which we rely on for stratified analyses.

17. This battery was only included in survey experiment #2.

18. The Pathologizing Black Culture and Assimilation Reduces Racism mindsets were only measured in survey experiment 2.

FRAME WORKS

Leading for Kids

What Does Caring Mean?

A New Framing Strategy to Shift Thinking about Kids and Families

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FrameWorks Institute. (2023). *What Does Caring Mean? A New Framing Strategy to Shift Thinking about Kids and Families.* FrameWorks Institute.