

# 71,000 Utah Kids Still Without Health Insurance... Why?

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Written by: Questions?

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This Legislative Session, we have heard a lot of thoughtful, important discussion around children's access to health coverage and care, including needed mental health care. Health insurance helps children connect with affordable care, yet thousands of Utah children are not enrolling in coverage. Utah has the highest rate of kids currently *eligible* for health insurance, but not enrolled.

Following the Session, Voices for Utah Children will be releasing an in-depth "State of Children's Care" report that reviews kids' coverage and care across the state. Here's a preview look at some reasons why Utah kids are still uninsured...

- **Uninsured Parents= kids more likely to be uninsured:** Thousands of parents have been left without have health insurance for too long. On April 1<sup>st</sup>,

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parents with incomes between 60-100% of the federal poverty level will be able to enroll in Medicaid coverage. After the passage of Proposition 3 and then Senate Bill 96, there is a lot of [confusion](#) among parents around what affordable health care options are still available and the new requirements to getting care. It's important that up-to-date information is provided to families, so that eligible parents can begin enrolling on April 1<sup>st</sup>. [Research shows](#) that covering parents helps kids.

- **Keeping kids covered after they enroll:** Once kids get enrolled, we need to help them *stay* covered. Kids can lose coverage because of administrative error, a small change in parents' income or an employer's failure to return requested information on behalf of the parent.
- **Misinformation and lack of outreach:** Many families are confused about what types of affordable options are available to them. Unfortunately, statewide there is a significant lack of outreach funding to help families learn about options and dispel confusion.
- **Fear:** The federal administration has contributed to a climate of fear that is causing many immigrant families to not enroll, or dis-enroll, their children from Medicaid or CHIP, for fear of reprisal. The majority of children with immigrant parents are eligible for coverage but are not enrolling. We need to counter this climate of fear, create a welcoming environment for new Americans and fight the misinformation of using public benefits.
- **Coverage disparities:** Utah has one of the highest rates of uninsured Latino/Hispanic children. Alongside fighting the climate of fear for immigrant families, we must also continue to outreach to communities and support families who may not enroll alone.

Unfortunately, as we reported last year, the rate of uninsured Utah children [is trending in the wrong direction](#). For the first time in almost ten years, we saw a troubling rise in the number of uninsured children in our state. Voices for Utah Children is currently working to increase coverage and care for all children with our [100% Kids Coverage Campaign](#). Let's work together to help all Utah kids get the coverage and care they need to be healthy and thrive.