



March 4, 2019

Dear Rep. Ocasio-Cortez,

We saw your recent Instagram Live video in which you raised a difficult question that many are now asking - is it ok to have kids in the face of climate change? Thank you for helping to break the taboo on this subject and highlighting our collective responsibility to kids. We could not agree more with your follow up comment:

*"...even if you don't have kids, there are still children here in the world and we have a moral obligation to them to leave a better world to them."*

**The Green New Deal presents an opportunity. But it does not address the most important factor in creating a better world: better family planning.**

### **What's Missing**

How can we address things like climate change and inequality without addressing their underlying driver, and most effective solutions? The Green New Deal should reform our family planning system, and change the focus to ensure [smaller families that work together](#) – yes, transfer significant resources – in order to give every child a fair start in life. The Green New Deal needs to include a transition from parent-focused to child-focused family planning, using something like the Fair Start model.

### **Addressing Sustainability**

People drive emissions and use resources. While transitioning to a carbon-neutral economy is important, it's not enough to protect natural spaces and [species](#) that are disappearing due to urban sprawl. It's not enough to protect us from water scarcity and an [increasingly crowded planet](#).

[Research indicates](#) that family planning investments result in smaller families which demand less on our communities and more sustainable. Improving family planning in our country and across the world would allow us to fulfill the moral obligation we have to our kids.

## **Addressing Inequality**

Family planning investments and policies also [improve lives](#) and [reduce inequality](#). Right now 41% of American children live in or near poverty. Inequality in the U.S. is so pervasive that the UN has called us “the most unequal society in the developed world.”

- Being born into poverty [harms kids for life](#).
- The longer inequality is experienced, the harder it is to overcome.
- Unequal opportunities translate into [unequal lifelong outcomes by the time children reach the age of five](#).

The evidence is [clear](#). Parents who plan, [wait](#), and have [smaller families](#) are more financially secure and stable, parent better, and invest more in each child. The results pay off for kids in the form of greater academic achievement, emotional health, social mobility, health, community participation, gender equality, lifetime success, and more. [Research](#) indicates that better family planning is the [most effective way](#) to [end the cycle of poverty](#).

## **How to Improve the Green New Deal.**

History shows that fairer taxes, better jobs, and clean energy are not enough. All of that [must go hand-in-hand](#) with investments in children and family planning to enable every child to succeed throughout their development and into adulthood. Sen. Warren has proposed universal childcare. Perhaps that could be tied to new parent education with information on the benefits of smaller families?

Another solution? Guaranteed Minimum Income tied to family planning. [Having Kids has proposed such a plan](#) to reduce inequality in D.C. Another approach is having great success in Colorado through the [LARC4CO](#) program, a partner of Having Kids. They offer affordable long-acting reversible contraception (LARC) to reduce unintended pregnancy and empower families to achieve greater stability before having kids.

**Until we invest in better family planning, we will be reacting with downstream solutions. We are asking that you include family planning in the Green New Deal to reduce inequality and put us on a path towards a sustainable future.**

Sincerely,

Erika Mathews  
Executive Director  
HavingKids.org