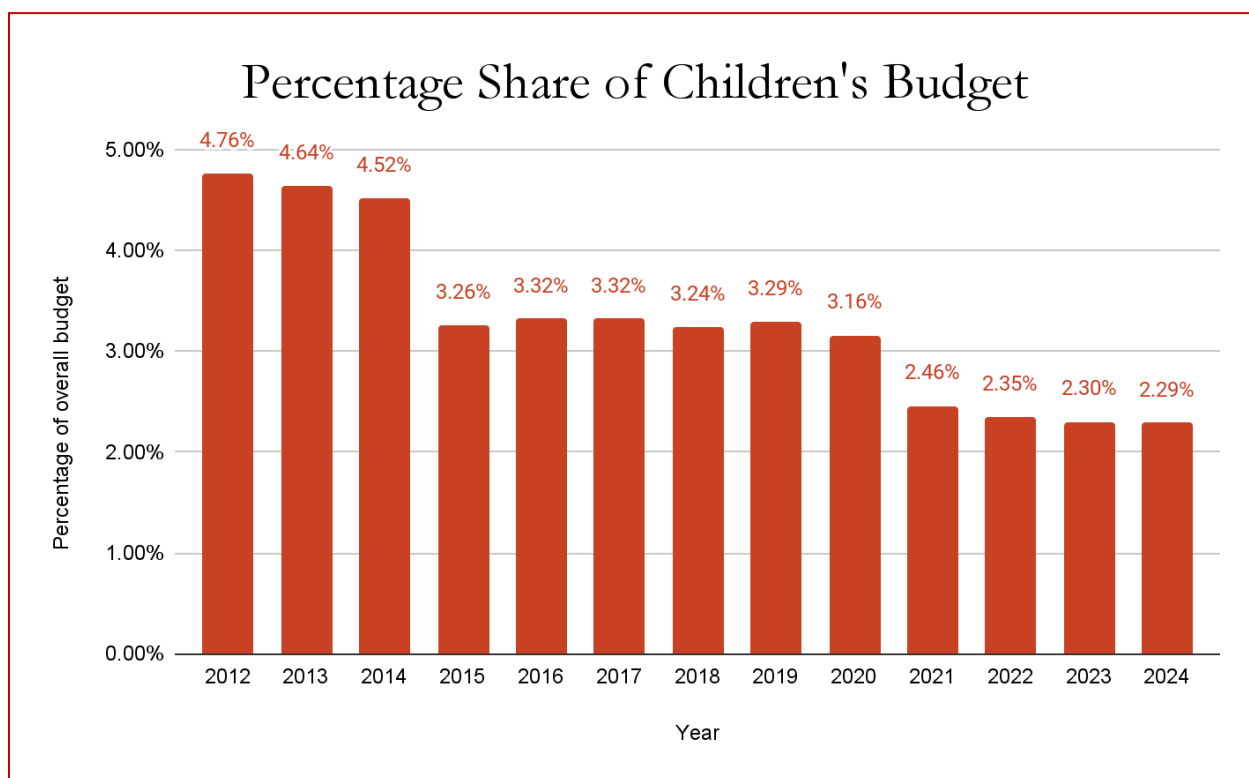


QUICK FACTSHEET | UNION INTERIM BUDGET - 2024 | BUDGET FOR CHILDREN

Total Budget Estimate (BE 2024-25): Rs. 47,65,768 Crore and Allocation for Welfare of Children (BE 2023-24): Rs. 1,09,493 Crore. So the share of children's budget is 2.29% of the total expenditure. This is the **lowest allocation (percentage-wise) for child welfare in 13 years**. It is important to note here that **in absolute terms, the children's welfare budget saw an increase of Rs. 5,702.38 Crore whereas last year this increase was almost double at Rs. 11,054.20 crore.**



Ministry wise allocation of child welfare budget

Ministry/ Department	2023-24 (BE) (In Crore)	2024-25 (BE) (In Crore)	%age increase or decrease
Ministry of Women and Child Development	19336.98	19989.34	3.3%
Ministry of Minority Affairs	1582.10	1517.34	4.1%
Ministry of Tribal Affairs	6338.94	6835.14	7%
Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports	22	22	-
Ministry of Ayush	3.52	13.92	295%
Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change	53.35	54.13	1.4%
Department of School Education and Literacy	67290.34	71523.07	6.2%
Department of Health and Family Welfare	3490.50	3906.43	10%
Department of Science and Technology	73	66	9.5%
Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities	76.50	97.50	27.45%
Department of Social Justice and Empowerment	4153.03	4212.04	1.42%
Ministry of Housing and Urban Development	230	0	100%
Ministry of Labour and Employment	20	0	100%

Despite the lowest share of the children's budget in more than a decade, most ministries majorly concerned with child welfare saw an increase in allocation in absolute numbers. But as per RBI, the Inflation rate for the financial year 2023-24 stands at [5.4% instead of 5.1%](#) as projected earlier. Hence if this inflation rate continues, there will be no real term gain for any ministry or department for which the child welfare budget has been increased by less than 5.4%.

The Ministry of Women and Child Development

The Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD), being the nodal ministry in child welfare, saw a [2.52% increase in funding](#) compared to 2023 (last year). Mission Vatsalya under MoWCD saw no increase or decrease in budget, with allocation being Rs. 1472.17 crore, similar to 2023 & 2022. Saksham Anganwadi and POSHAN 2.0 is an Integrated Nutrition Support Programme. The scheme is targeted at tackling malnutrition challenges among children, adolescent girls, pregnant women, and lactating mothers. This scheme saw a slight increase in the budget (for the welfare of children) from Rs. 17,471.16 crore in 2022 to Rs. 18,020.00 crore in 2024, reflecting an increase of 3.14%. "Upgradation of Anganwadi centres under Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 will be expedited for improved nutrition delivery, early childhood care and development," said FM Sitharaman in her budget speech.

The Ministry of Ayush

The Ministry of Ayush saw a whopping [increase in funding by 295%](#). This increase came majorly on the back of [increased funding for the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Science i.e. by 282%](#).

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs saw an increase of 7% in its funding. A majority of child welfare funding in the Tribal ministry comes from the Eklavya Model Residential School. The 'Eklavya Model' witnessed a 7.88% increase from Rs. 5927.31 crores in 2023 to Rs. 6394.78 crores. This comes on the back of a 196% increase last year from Rs. 2000/- crore in 2022 to Rs. 5927.31 crore in 2023. Last year, only Rs. 2467.59 crore was utilised from the 'Eklavya Model' fund

despite the high allocation. Nevertheless, this year has witnessed a 7.88% increment. This reflects upon the government's push towards using this model for the educational needs of scheduled tribe students.

Department of School Education and Literacy

Department of School Education and Literacy saw an **increase of 6.2% in its funding**, with most of the important schemes under it witnessing a minor bump:

- Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan - 11.2% increase
- National Means Cum Merit Scholarship Scheme - 3.5% increase
- Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti - 5.7%
- Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN) - 7.4% increase
- Samaghra Shiksha - 0.1% increase. It is important to note here that the 'National Child Labour Project' (NCPL) under the Ministry of Labour and Employment has been [submerged with the Samaghra Shiksha scheme](#). NCPL was a flagship central government scheme for the rehabilitation of child laborers. Despite this important convergence, the funding allocation to Samaghra Shiksha saw almost no change.

On 5th September 2022, on the occasion of Teacher's Day, PM School for Rising India (PM SHRI) Yojana was launched. Under this yojana, 14500 schools across the country will be selected and upgraded. These schools will become model schools and are expected to encapsulate the full spirit of the New Education Policy 2020. **A budget allocation of Rs. 6050 crore has been made to implement the PM SHRI program. This amounts to a 51.2% increase from last year.**

The Interim Union Budget 2024-25 is the fourth budget after the rollout of the NEP 2020, where the **education sector has received Rs 1,20,628 crore**. This is equivalent to 0.37 per cent of the country's GDP. During the first year of NEP implementation, the share was 0.43 per cent. In the NEP document, it was desired that education be allotted 6% of national GDP. But this declining share of the Ministry of Education (MoE)'s budget raises questions as to when the 6% target will be reached.

The Ministry of Minority Affairs

The Ministry of Minority Affairs saw a cut of 4% in its budget allocation. This ministry already had a major cut of child welfare funding last year i.e. 38%. A few of the schemes run by the ministry which saw a substantial reduction in funding were:

- Education Scheme for Madarsa and Minority: 80% reduction (In 2023 it was reduced by 93%)
- Merit cum Means Based Scholarship: 23.1% reduction (In 2023 it was reduced by 87%)
- Pre-Matric Scholarship for Minorities: 24.6% reduction (In 2023 it was reduced by 69%)

Conclusion

Though this is an interim budget, the trendlines do form the reflection of the government's direction of investment. Like last year, the Minority Ministry witnessed continued major cuts in the budget for child welfare schemes, whereas the Tribal Ministry continues to get the required support for the programmes.

Mission Vatsalya, which is the umbrella scheme for child welfare and protection (as it subsumed the Integrated Child Protection Scheme) saw **no increase in its budget**, despite the need on account of [rising child abuse cases](#) as per the [Crimes in India Report](#) by NCRB.

In a welcome move, health cover under the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana will be extended to all Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) and Anganwadi workers and helpers, said the Finance Minister. "It will address the challenges faced by Anganwadi workers in regions with limited healthcare access." [said an Anganwadi worker from Karnataka](#). This noteworthy decision is anticipated to provide health coverage to approximately 10 lakh ASHA workers, 13,29,000 Anganwadi workers and 11,79,000 helpers in India, offering financial assistance of up to Rs 5 lakh per family annually for secondary and tertiary hospitalization. It is important to note that while anganwadi workers get a monthly sum of Rs 4,500 (Centre) and Rs 3,600 (state), helpers receive Rs 2,500 (Centre) and Rs 1,800 (state).

Despite the limited mentions of children in the budget speech, there are various interpretations to consider. However, it's important to await the final budget release in July 2024 for a

comprehensive analysis. While trends may remain consistent, specialists must inform the government about the necessary measures for complete child welfare in the country.