



## Creating Michigan's Future: Ensuring All Children Are Ready to Learn & Lead

The single best predictor of economic prosperity is a state's success in educating and preparing its workforce. Growing educated and skilled workers and leaders starts at birth and extends through young adulthood - from cradle to career. However, the long-term disparities in educational success and the subsequent economic, social and fiscal consequences are profound and unacceptable. Children, youth and families of color continue to be more challenged due to inequitable access to high quality programs that provide necessary supports to succeed in school and life. These gaps in opportunity can be traced to the earliest years of a child's life and can grow over a lifetime.

With the next workforce set to be its most diverse yet, Michigan's policies and practices must promote equity across races/ethnicities so all children can thrive in school, work and life. Michigan's policy strategy must improve equity by ensuring the most challenged children and youth have the supports they need to succeed in school and life.

### MICHIGAN'S CHILDREN'S 2014 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

All children need:

*A safe and stable home environment* that supports the most challenged families, and makes certain that child welfare and foster care systems provide the support and consistency necessary for children and youth to thrive.

*To be ready for school at kindergarten entry* with a focus on those most likely to start school underprepared. To ensure school readiness, all children need a healthy start, parents who are supported to be their first and best teachers, access to high quality early learning experiences, and smooth transitions beginning at birth into the elementary school years.

*To have opportunities that lead to college and career success* through appropriate preparation, supports and pathways to earn their high school diplomas and transition to college and careers. To improve college and career readiness, Michigan must provide expanded learning opportunities for challenged students; support integrated services across education, health, and human services; provide consistent support for K-12 for school reform efforts; and provide multiple pathways for challenged students to obtain a high school credential.

Michigan's Children is the only statewide independent voice working to ensure that public policies are made in the best interest of children from cradle to career. We focus on influencing public policies that can reduce disparities in child outcomes such as the academic achievement gap.

*Michigan's Children receives no government funding and relies solely on donations from individuals, corporations and foundations to support its work. Learn more about how you can help by visiting [www.michiganschildren.org](http://www.michiganschildren.org).*