

Foster Families Speak Out on Child Welfare System

LANSING, Mich. – It's welcome news for some of the state's most vulnerable residents, as advocates for foster children believe the political climate is favorable for making improvements to the child welfare system.

Michele Corey, vice president with the independent policy organization [Michigan's Children](#), says some members of the Legislature have been foster parents, or adopted children from the child welfare system. The organization has arranged for a day of testimony at the Capitol today about what the state is doing to support foster families.

"We're talking about foster parents, adoptive parents, guardians in some circumstances and even the birth parents," says Corey. "A large number of kids that enter into the foster care system actually end up being reunified with their birth parents."

At any given time, the state has roughly 13,000 children in the foster care system.

Corey says one of the most common frustrations expressed by foster youth and parents is a lack of stability, as many children are uprooted and moved several times. She says targeted investments from the state could help.

"That clearly has a lot to do with how foster parents are recruited, and how guardians are supported, she says. "How we're really doing as a state, in terms of finding more permanent situations for these kids."

Since many foster children are vulnerable – having already suffered trauma, abuse or neglect – Corey says the policies and choices the state makes can speak volumes.

"They are more at the whim of how we're investing, how we're making decisions, than other children," she says. "We need to learn from their experiences, and learn from the experiences of their caregivers."

Testimony is scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. in the Speaker's Library at the Capitol.