



2017 Policy Priorities:

Improving the Odds for all Children and Families in Michigan

In 2017, Michigan's Children will continue to focus on policy priorities that help close equity gaps and improve odds for all children, youth and families in Michigan. We will be taking advantage of opportunities during the budget season and the new legislative session to promote new investment and raise critical policy changes.

Starting Early

It is well-known that early childhood investments help build the foundations children need for future success while saving taxpayer dollars in the long-run. In addition to ensuring that the state's strong commitment to preschool is maintained and that we continue to strengthen our child care system, Michigan's Children will continue to lead efforts to increase available early intervention services through *Early On*. *Early On* serves families with infants and toddlers birth to age three who have a developmental delay or disability, but has no dedicated funding stream to support those services unlike the majority of other states.

Supporting Families

Michigan's Children maintains that a two-generation strategy for public investment makes the greatest impact for improving child outcomes and family prosperity. We will continue to promote voluntary parent coaching and supports through evidence-based home visiting and other essential supports for families to provide a nurturing and stable home for their children, with an explicit focus on preventing child abuse and neglect. We will also continue to push for increased investments in adult education and family literacy programming as part of statewide efforts to improve 3rd grade reading.

Addressing Trauma

More and more we're learning about the impact of trauma and toxic stress on children's development in school, at home, and into adulthood. Michigan's Children will continue efforts to help educate decision-makers about the impact of trauma and toxic stress and support efforts to promote trauma-informed practices across all sectors that touch children and families. And, we will continue to put the spotlight on renewing state investments in services that prevent trauma in the first place. As a champion on raising up the voices of children and families served by the state's child welfare system, we will work with policymakers on passing a meaningful Children's Assurance of Quality Foster Care Act and other improvements to the state's child welfare system.

Expanding Educational Services

With the multiple challenges children today face, schools alone cannot be responsible for the education success of all students. Michigan's Children will continue to define and recommend how the state can do more to support young children before they start school, help parents support the educational success of their children, and change school practice related to student and family trauma. We will work to build investments to ensure children, youth and families can access learning opportunities beyond the school day and year, reducing the achievement gap through integrated student services, expanded learning options, improved school discipline practices and different paths toward diploma for those at risk of dropping out.

Responding to Political Uncertainty

With the changes in leadership in Washington, D.C. and in the Michigan House of Representatives in Lansing as a result of the 2016 elections, we need to be more prepared than ever before to respond quickly and effectively to proposals that negatively impact programs that historically have supported children and families. Michigan's Children is uniquely suited to lead efforts to respond swiftly and effectively to maintain critical investments, while offering reliable, research-based support for those decisions. We will work collaboratively with other organizations and individuals and coordinate necessary advocacy efforts in a timely way to weigh in on these important decisions.