



State Budget Season Underway

February 10, 2017 - The budget season is officially underway in Lansing as Michigan Governor Rick Snyder presented his fiscal year 2018 (FY 18) budget proposal to a joint meeting of the Senate and House Appropriations Committees on Wednesday. The Governor's blueprint for state spending for next year contains several positive increases in critical programs that serve Michigan's families and target effective supports. Three areas of investment identified by Governor Snyder that Michigan's Children has consistently pushed for are: a \$29.4 million increase to the Child Development and Care Program which provides child care subsidies to Michigan's lowest-income working families; a 40 percent or \$150 million increase to At-Risk funding which provides additional funding for school districts to educate students deemed at risk of school failure; and expanding the Michigan Youth Opportunity Initiative, a program that provides services to assist with the transition from foster care to independence. There are other items we support in the Governor's budget proposal. For more details on Governor Snyder's FY 18 budget proposal, check out our [Quick Glance Budget Basics](#).

The battle to make these proposed investments a reality now turns to the Legislature. House and Senate Appropriations sub-committees will begin hearings next week to deliberate on the details of the Governor's budget. The process will move quickly as they race toward a self-imposed June 30th deadline to finalize their work and send a full FY 18 budget bill to the Governor for signature. The Legislature will certainly have their own priorities and it will take a concerted effort from child advocates across the state to let their legislators know they support the positive aspects of the Governor's budget and want to see them remain in the final product. In addition, there are [priorities of Michigan's Children](#) that did not see increased investments in the Governor's proposal, and we turn our attention to the Legislature to push for those missing items as well.

One priority that has already emerged from a number of legislators is a desire to permanently cut and eventually eliminate the personal income tax. This is an extremely dangerous proposal that would result in a dramatic reduction of available state funds every year. Governor Snyder strongly rebuked this idea in his budget presentation on Wednesday, but House and Senate members continue to publically state their support for the notion. The Governor's FY 18 budget proposal is a good first step toward seeing some real improvement for Michigan's most challenged children and families in coming years, but people throughout the state who care about kids [need to make sure](#) their legislators follow through on this promising start to the budget season and keep these and other critical provisions in the final budget that is presented to the Governor a few short months from now.

Keep track of the state budget and other critical policy issues by [subscribing to Michigan's Children's e-bulletin](#). Be sure to [keep us posted](#) on your priorities and how we can help you move those concerns into action.

Matt Gillard is the President & CEO of Michigan's Children, the only statewide independent voice working to ensure that public policies are made in the best interest of children from cradle to career and their families.