



Public policy in the best interest of children

Date: February 15, 2018
To: Legislative Directors of the Michigan Congressional Delegation
From: Matt Gillard, President & CEO
matt@michiganschildren.org or (517) 485-3500

Re: Michigan's Child and Family Programs and the Federal Budget

As you move your legislative priorities forward in the federal budget, I write on behalf of Michigan's children and families, whose interests are uniquely tied to the future of the federal budget. A host of vital, effective Michigan policies and programs rely considerably on federal funds. In addition, due to state budget constraints for the foreseeable future, you are in the strongest position of any elected official at any level of government to make investments that could make a tremendous material impact both on the lives of Michigan children and their families whom you represent and on the future of our great state.

The following programs in Michigan, all of which are essential to the daily lives of thousands of Michiganders, rely on federal funds for their essential operations and have seen little to no state investment in recent years:

Child Care

Michigan's growing workforce needs positive early learning environments and their parents need peace of mind knowing their children are safe while they work. While Michigan has made improvements in recent years, it still only funds child care programs at the bare minimum required to receive full federal support and no more. The value of Michigan's child care subsidy would collapse without federal support through the Child Care and Development Fund and, without expansion, thousands of working families will continue to negotiate impossible child care access and affordability problems.

Early On (IDEA Part C)

Children with developmental delays, together with their families, go to *Early On* for strategies and services to overcome whatever obstacles may lie between them and reaching their fullest potential. Early developmental screening and services through *Early On*, which is proven to reduce the need for costly K-12 special education supports, rely on federal investment as well through IDEA and Medicaid reimbursement. Michigan lags the entire Midwest with its modest appropriations for *Early On*, which are quite inequitably distributed across counties, and less accessible to those of lower socioeconomic status.

Child Welfare and Foster Care

The Michigan Department of Health & Human Services receives three of every four dollars from Washington. More than half of births are Medicaid-supported. Federal funds also support critical safety net programs like income support, WIC, SNAP, Medicaid and TANF programs. And, virtually all of the state's efforts to prevent child maltreatment and care for children and youth who have been removed from their families are funded through federal sources.

Home Visiting

Evidence-based home visiting programs are proven to strengthen families and improve social and economic outcomes for traditionally underserved families because they take an individualized, attentive, and collaborative approach to supporting families in need. The vast majority of funding for Michigan's evidence-based home visiting programs come from the Maternal, Infant, and Child Home Visiting Program and Medicaid reimbursement.

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Afterschool

Afterschool programs in Michigan contribute to improved student learning and developmental outcomes and serve a critical child support function for families in our state. Michigan currently allocates no state funds for afterschool programs, which receive nearly the entirety of their support from the 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant program and, to a lesser extent, through child care reimbursement funds.

During these federal budget negotiations, we recognize there are many opportunities to make a dramatic and positive impact in the lives of children and families:

- **Hold the line on Medicaid, WIC, SNAP, TANF, Social Security, and the Social Services Block Grant**, which provide the most essential life supports for children and families
- **Double CCDBG Funding**, allowing Michigan to expand child care access to working families who need the support most
- **Reauthorize MIECHV** to prevent the lapse of federal funds for home visiting, which this summer would force Michigan providers to lay off staff and delay programming
- **Reauthorize CAPTA** with increased investment to support Michigan's locally-rooted network of child abuse and neglect prevention

I hope you will consider the future of these and other essential programs for children and families when making any federal spending decisions. The youth and families of Michigan rely upon these life-changing supports that can only be provided at scale by the federal government, and you can make sure these programs last for the long haul. We are thankful for your leadership, and we thank you for considering the best interests kids and families.

Sincerely,

Matthew Gillard
President & CEO, Michigan's Children

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