



Date: March 26, 2019
To: Michigan's Congressional Delegation Legislative Directors
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 programs and services for Michigan's children, youth, and families 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 on both the lives of children and their families whom you represent and on the future of our great state.

The following programs are essential to thousands of Michiganders, yet they rely on federal funds for 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.

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. 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 including the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, the Social Services Block Grant, and Titles IV-B and IV-E of Social Security. Federal funds also provide the vast majority of support for many critical safety net programs including income support, WIC, SNAP, and TANF programs.

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.

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. 21CCLC programs in Michigan have received positive evaluations from Michigan State University researchers. Unfortunately, about half of qualified applicants for funding in Michigan are turned away due to lack of available resources.

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 attentive, individualized, and collaborative approach to supporting families in need. The funding for Michigan's evidence-based home visiting programs comes primarily from the Maternal, Infant, and Child Home Visiting Program, Early Head Start, and Medicaid reimbursement.

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, MIECH-V, and the Social Services Block Grant**, which provide the most essential life supports for children and families.
- **Increase CCDBG Funding by \$5 billion**, allowing Michigan to expand child care access to working families who need the support most.
- **Reauthorize CAPTA, increasing investment in Titles I and II by \$500 million each** to support Michigan's community-based child abuse and neglect prevention programs.
- **Increase funding for 21st Century Community Learning Centers by \$100 million** to expand access to afterschool programs for all struggling students in Michigan.
- **Increase funding for IDEA Part C** to ensure that families in lower-income areas have full access to services for their infants and toddlers.

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