



Date: June 9, 2020
To: Michigan Joint Select Committee on the COVID-19 Pandemic
From: Matt Gillard, President & CEO
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RE: Addressing Learning Loss and Family Instability

As our state prepares to re-open, and as you work to address the issues wrought by the crisis in this bi-partisan, bi-cameral committee and your other assignments, our organization would like discuss how your leadership can impact the dual crises of household instability and learning loss that children, youth, and their families, especially those who faced significant challenges even prior to the crisis, are experiencing.

If left unaddressed, the stress and instability that many are facing at home, and the learning loss that many children and youth are experiencing, will impact our state's health, economy, and workforce far into the future. Contributing factors worthy of your committee's review include:

- Access to child care for struggling families.
- Access to basic needs services like health care, cash assistance and housing.
- Access to additional services that help maintain family stability including mental health services, substance misuse prevention and intervention, domestic violence prevention services, and other caregiver supports.
- A child welfare system that struggles to prevent abuse and neglect, utilize relatives and other kinship caregivers, or reunify families in a timely way.
- Access to statewide support for parenting skills, infant mental health needs and early developmental delays.
- Access to out-of-school programming to help shrink the learning gap for traditional students and students with disabilities.
- Access to family literacy and parent skill-building to be able to support their families financially and otherwise.
- Access to K-12, postsecondary and workforce pathways that build success for the most challenged young people.

Michigan's Children is an independent nonprofit dedicated to advocating for public policies in the best interests of children, youth and families. We determine our priorities based on the lived experiences of children, youth, families, and those who serve them, as well as research, data, and policy analysis. Despite our physical office doors being closed during the past few months, Michigan's Children has remained dialed in with children, youth, and families like your constituents. We have compiled specific recommendations about maximizing federal funding and based on what we have learned that you can access on our [COVID-19 Advocacy Action](#) page, and on our [Budget Basics](#) page.

Thank you in advance for your consideration in these matters that we know will serve the best interests of our state's most vulnerable children, youth and families. We look forward to working with you to make public policy decisions in the best interests of children, youth, and families at this important moment.

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