

Gallition members are acutely aware of the projected national and state economic factors impacting Michigan citizens and state and local government. We know this year will not be easy for many families impacted by layoffs, increased costs of health care and declining public revenues to meet essential needs. Despite economic pressures, we can't afford to remove the foundation and infrastructure we have begun to build to service many of Michigan's families with children most in need of health, mental health and social support services. MCCF also calls upon our state elected officials to protect the infrastructure in future budgets. Current tax-cuts, we believe, will not improve the well-being of the majority of Michigan's children and families, and the structural deficit that has been created within the state budget will have adverse effects on essential services if it is not addressed. Additional revenues, if directed consistently with our recommendations, will protect children now and prevent more costly services in future years.

MCCF urges the Legislature to take the following steps:

- Conduct a thorough review of the structural problems in the state budget, and propose solutions to those problems. Suspend the tax reductions in the personal income tax and single business tax until the structural problems are resolved.
- Suspend or modify the Merit Scholarship Program and use the Tobacco Tax Settlement Funds for children's preventive health, mental health and school readiness programs.

MCCF urges the Legislature to take the following steps:

MCCF actively promotes a legislative agenda for prevention—advocating for programs that avoid problems by ensuring that health, shelter, social, emotional and intellectual needs are met for children and families.

MCCF Guiding Principles of Prevention

1. Children grow best in families.
2. Effective actions are respectful of racial/cultural/economic diversity.
3. Effective actions focus on strengths of children and families, rather than weaknesses.
4. Effective actions must view the child in the context of their families and their communities.
5. Investment today ensures that more children will grow up to become healthy, productive adults.
6. Investment today saves taxpayer's money tomorrow.
7. Effective actions are often community based.
8. Research and evaluation must become standard practice.

MCCF holds the following assumptions:

- A healthy family is the best environment for children.
- Children are a nonpartisan concern — a responsible government places their well-being at highest priority.
- Children represent our future.

The Michigan Coalition for Children and Families (MCCF) is a statewide network of more than 50 organizations representing hundreds of thousands of individuals sharing the common goal of improving the quality of life for Michigan's children and families.

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2002 MCCF Membership Roster

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| Allegan County 0-5 Services Network | Michigan Council for Maternal and Child Health |
| Allegan County ISD | Michigan Council on Crime and Delinquency |
| Assoc. for Children's Mental Health | Michigan County Social Services Assoc. |
| B-H-K Child Development Board—TAG | Michigan Education Assoc. |
| Boys and Girls Republic | Michigan Environmental Council |
| Camp Fire Boys and Girls — West Michigan Council | Michigan Federation of Private Child and Family Agencies |
| Catholic Charities of Genesee/Shiawassee | Michigan Head Start Assoc. |
| Catholic Social Services of Grand Rapids | Michigan League for Human Services |
| Child Abuse Prevention Services | Michigan Protection and Advocacy Services |
| Child and Family Services, Capitol Area | Michigan Public Health Assoc. |
| Child and Family Services of Saginaw County | Michigan State University Extension |
| Children's Charter of the Courts of Michigan | Michigan's Children |
| Children's Resource Network | Muskegon Family Care |
| Children's Trust Fund | National Assoc. of Social Workers—Michigan |
| Citizen's Alliance to Uphold Special Education (CAUSE) | Planned Parenthood Affiliates of Michigan |
| Community Assessment, Referral and Education | Prevention Network |
| Comprehensive School Health Coordinators Assoc. | Priority Children |
| Covenant House Michigan | St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Skillman Center for Children |
| Eagle Village | Student Advocacy Center |
| Early Childhood Services of Eaton County | Telamon Corporation |
| Fight Crime: Invest in Kids—Michigan | Wedgwood Christian Youth and Family Services |
| Greater Thumb Area 4C | Whaley Children's Center |
| Hackley Community Care Center | |
| Institute for Children, Youth and Families, Michigan State University | Norma Eppinger |
| Kent Regional 4C | Meredith Mentzer |
| Lutheran Social Services of Michigan | Donald Olendorf |
| Michigan 4C Assoc. | Carol Parker Lee |
| Michigan Assoc. for Infant Mental Health | Kay Randolph-Back |
| Michigan Assoc. for the Education of Young Children | Michele Strasz |
| Michigan Assoc. of School Administrators | Diane Strickler |
| Michigan Assoc. of School Boards | Claudia Vescolani |
| Michigan Catholic Conference | |

Michigan Coalition for Children and Families

Children's Agenda 2002

People from all regions, backgrounds and partisan affiliations agree:
Investment in Michigan's children yields valuable dividends.

The Children's Agenda lays out a plan.



Promote Stable Families

- Support the 0-3 Secondary Prevention fund to continue the state's efforts to reduce child abuse through appropriations in FIA, Community Health and Education.
- Maintain community-based early childhood services for all young children through the All Students Achieve-Parent Involvement in Education (ASAP-PIE).
- Fund infant mental health services to address the needs of children 0-3 years of age in high risk families and services for young children in child care to avoid expulsion.
- Expand to full day the quality child care in School Readiness/Headstart programs to meet the needs of low income working parents.
- Fund the \$75 per-child clothing allowance for Michigan's poorest children in families reliant on the Family Independence Program.
- Expand Unemployment Insurance (UI) eligibility to include low-wage and part-time workers and increase benefits. Use the UI trust fund to finance these reforms.

Keep Children Safe

- Increase the kinship care payment to support relatives who care for children needing out-of-home placement in lieu of foster care.
- Develop and fund before- and after-school K-12 programs that meet the intellectual, social, emotional, physical and recreational needs of each child served. A first step would be to establish the "Michigan After-School Initiative" to assess the state of after-school services and develop a plan to ensure quality programs for every school-age child in Michigan.
- Restore funding for community-based coalitions and partnerships addressing violence prevention. Eliminating the DCH Violence Prevention Section has left a void in local services.

Promote Healthy Development

- Oversee compliance with federal EPSDT requirements for health care providers, effectively strengthening the capacity of the system for maternal and child preventative health.
- Ensure accessible, timely, and quality oral health preventive and treatment services by maintaining and expanding the Medicaid Healthy Kids Dental Project from the current 37 county programs.
- Implement the objectives of the 2001 Infant Mortality Summit at the state and local levels to promote positive birth outcomes and reduce infant mortality and developmental disabilities.
- Support the At-Risk School Aid funding, used flexibly by school districts for before- and after-school programs, alternative education programs, and a variety of other instructional or other supportive services.
- Maintain current school health clinic infrastructure and expand access to school-linked community health care services that promote both physical and mental health of children and youth.

Support Children At-Risk

- Require public and charter schools expelling youth under current laws to provide a collaboratively funded alternative full day educational program for expelled students.
- Fund juvenile justice day treatment programs that effectively reduce repeat delinquency at less cost than secure confinement.
- Continue to require Dept. of Corrections quarterly reports on the safety, security and youth programs in the children's prison.
- Require the Superintendent of Public Instruction to provide an annual report detailing the number and characteristics of students expelled from school districts and the incidents causing each expulsion and require schools to report this information per Section 1310 of the School Code.

Priority Legislative Issues

For more information call (517) 485-3500 or 1-800-330-8674 or visit www.michiganschildren.org/page.cfm/45

MCCF's recommendations address initiatives from prenatal through infant, early childhood, and adolescence and focus on critical program areas that have been recently targeted for reduction or elimination. They are supported by substantial research indicating that appropriate services promoting healthy development, provided to parents, young children and adolescents, result in improved educational outcomes and significant current and future cost avoidance in our health, mental health, juvenile justice and corrections systems. While most recommendations are focused on maintaining prevention and early intervention services, we are also concerned about children who are involved with Michigan's child protection and juvenile justice systems.

Photo courtesy of:
Chevenne Herring
Ms. Chevenne's Playroom
Oxford, MI

