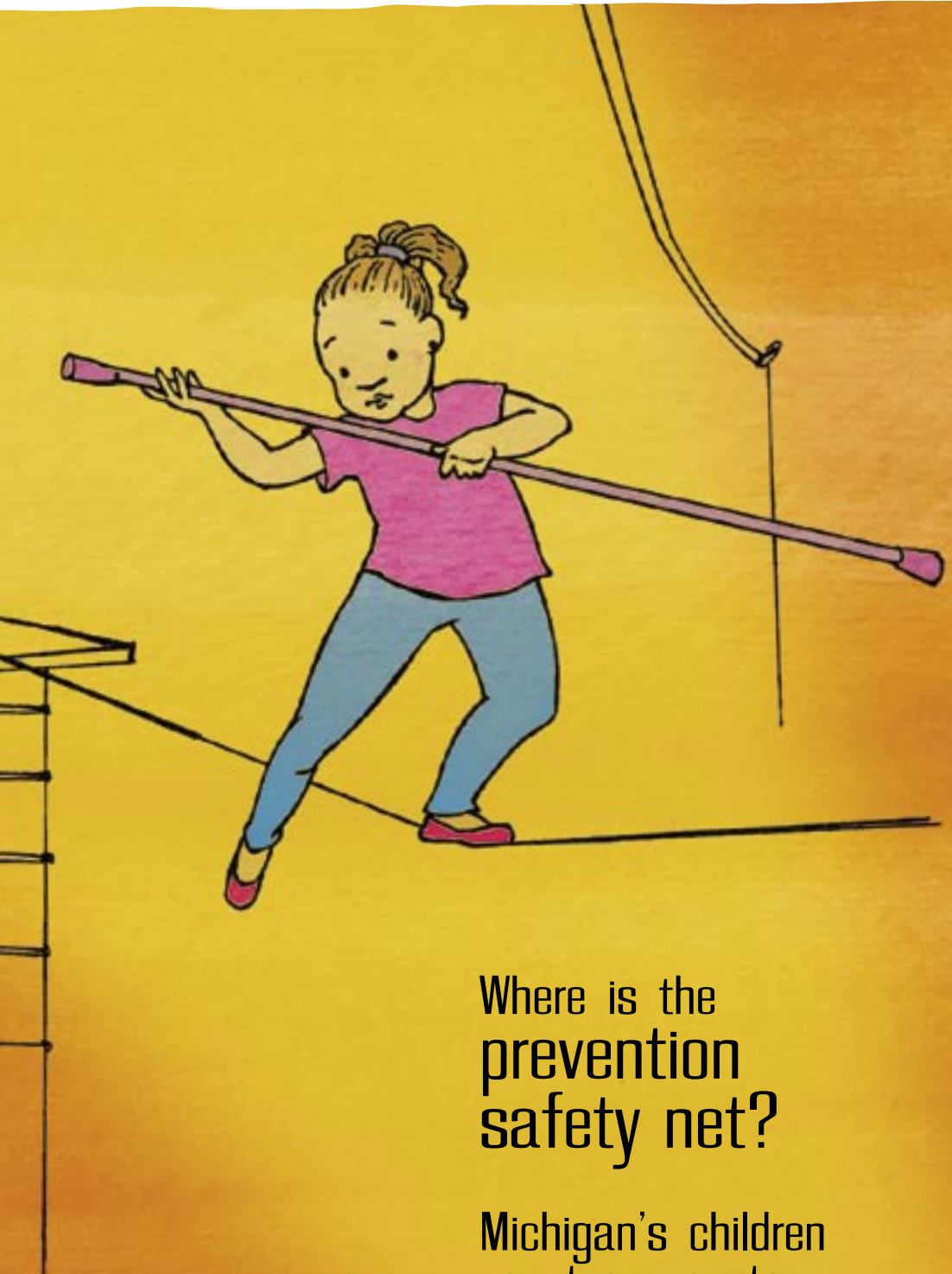




Michigan Coalition for
Children and Families

Children's Agenda 2005



Where is the
prevention
safety net?

Michigan's children
count on you to
restore balance!

An Open Letter...

To Governor Granholm, Senate Majority Leader Sikkema, Senate Minority Leader Emerson, House Speaker DeRoche, House Minority Leader Byrum, Senator Johnson, Representative Hummel, and Members of the Michigan Legislature:

You have an awesome task confronting you with Michigan's budget shortfall. You have been entrusted by Michigan citizens to determine how to spend state tax dollars in ways that serve the public good. Fortunately, Michigan's Constitution provides you with the framework for policy and budget decisions by stating Government's role and responsibility in protecting and promoting the health, welfare and safety of the people.

Our current structural deficit provides an opportunity to reshape government by establishing priorities and demanding positive outcomes. It is your task through this year's appropriation process to determine the priorities of government and to fund those priorities sufficiently in this budget year and for the future benefit of the citizens of Michigan.

The Michigan Coalition for Children and Families (MCCF) calls upon you to use this opportunity through the Constitutional framework to invest tax dollars in evidence-based services that promote healthy, safe, emotionally, and educationally competent children. The well-being of children is a prerequisite to Michigan's economic development. A healthy, economically stable family is the best environment for children to develop.

Outcomes taxpayers and policy-makers should strive to prevent.

- **Poverty**
- **Abuse and neglect of children**
- **Termination of parental rights**
- **High school dropouts**
- **Unintended pregnancy**
- **Juvenile delinquency and crime**
- **Placement of children and youth in out-of-home care**
- **Lead poisoning and other preventable diseases**
- **Substance use and abuse of tobacco, alcohol, and other harmful substances by children and youth.**

The Michigan Constitution States:

All political power is inherent in the people. Government is instituted for their equal benefit, security and protection. (Art. 1, sec.1)

The public health and general welfare of the people of the state are hereby declared to be matters of primary concern. The legislature shall pass suitable laws for the protection and promotion of the public health. (Art. IV, sec. 51)

The legislature shall impose taxes sufficient with other resources to pay the expenses of state government. (Art. IX, sec. 1)

Early public investments in children have an on-going economic impact for society as well as for individual children and families. For example, quality preschool for three- and four-year-olds at risk because of poverty or other family circumstances pays off at the rate of \$17 for every \$1 invested! Children who participated in the Perry Preschool Program conducted here in Ypsilanti, Michigan 40 years ago experienced a need for less special education, fewer dropouts, substantially less delinquent and criminal behavior and enjoy greater earning power as adults in on-going studies by the High/Scope Foundation. Michigan taxpayers and state government reaped savings in reduced costs for education, corrections, welfare, and costs to victims of crime, and benefited from increased taxes on earned income.

It is appropriate, prudent, realistic, and reasonable to spend tax revenues in support of children and families. Will your legacy as leaders leave Michigan in the bottom half of the 50 states where its children are concerned?

MCCF calls upon you to support this public investment plan to achieve positive results for children. Investing in Prevention programs and a strong safety net for children puts the state's priorities back in balance!

Investment in Early Years

- Home visitation with professional staff for families with children 0-3 years
- Quality early childhood education and care for children age 0-5 years

Investment in Basic Health Services

- Early prenatal care
- Access to community and school-based primary preventive health care
- Reduction in unintended pregnancy
- Prevention of lead poisoning in homes and child care settings
- Early intervention services for children with mental health needs
- Special health care services and respite care for children with special needs
- Enrollment in public and private health insurance and care for pregnant women and children up to age 18

Investment in Family Preservation Services

- Prevention of domestic violence
- Prevention of abuse and neglect
- Available respite care for families with children with special needs
- Prevention of out-of-home placement through better use of Families First, Kinship care, and Family to Family strategies

Investment in School-based and School-aged Services

- Quality education based upon a child's needs
- Comprehensive school health programs and curriculum
- Before- and after-school activities in quality, supervised settings

Investment in Adolescents Preparing for Adulthood

- Educational access for youth who are expelled
- Quality placements and transitions for vulnerable populations including abused children, teen parents, youth aging out of foster care, runaway and homeless youth, and youth leaving the juvenile justice system

Investment in Family Support and Economic Development

- Adequate wages
- Available quality child care
- Decent, affordable housing that provides stability
- Access to job training and education for parents
- Income supports for low-income families including Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)
- Opportunities to develop assets such as Individual Development Accounts (IDA)

Investment in Coordination of Systems

- Community collaborations to facilitate those connections for children
- Connections between services for young children encompassing health, social emotional development, literacy, and support for parents
- In-home, community-based services for children and families that address the developmental, emotional, and mental health needs of children

Members of our coalition, representing 70 diverse organizations ask for an open process with community dialogue to develop the priorities and solutions to address the state budget crisis. We stand ready to work with you as elected officials entrusted to uphold the public good to ensure that the well-being of Michigan's children and families is your number one priority!

Signed,
—Members of the Michigan Coalition for Children and Families



MCCF 2005 Membership

Organizational Members

Association for Children's Mental Health
Boys and Girls Republic
Branch Intermediate School District
Bridges 4 Kids
Camp Fire USA—West Michigan Council
Capital Area Youth Alliance
Catholic Charities of Genesee/Shiawassee
Catholic Social Services of Grand Rapids
Catholic Social Services of Lansing/St. Vincent Home Inc.
Child Abuse Prevention Services
Child & Family Services, Capital Area
Child and Family Services of Northeast MI 4C
4C of Detroit/Wayne Co., Inc.
Child Care Resources Kalamazoo Regional 4C
Children's Charter of the Courts of Michigan
Children's Trust Fund
Community Assessment, Referral and Education (CARE)
Comprehensive School Health Coordinators Association
Covenant House Michigan
Eagle Village
Early Success-Right From The Start
The Family Center of Grosse Pointe & Harper Woods
Fight Crime: Invest in Kids—Michigan
High/Scope Educational Research Foundation
4C Child Care Unlimited
Institute for Children, Youth and Families
Kent Regional 4C
Leelanau Children's Center
Michigan 4C Association
Michigan Association of Community/Adult Education
MI Assoc. for the Education of Young Children
Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health
Michigan Association of School Administrators
Michigan Association of School Boards
Michigan Association of United Ways
Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
Michigan Council for Maternal and Child Health
Michigan Council on Crime and Delinquency

Michigan County Social Services Association
Michigan Education Association
Michigan Environmental Council
MI Federation for Children and Families
Michigan Head Start Association
Michigan League for Human Services
Michigan Network for Youth & Families
Michigan Primary Care Association
Michigan Protection and Advocacy Services
Michigan Public Health Association
Michigan's Children
Muskegon Family Care
Oakland County Child Care Council
Prevention Network
Priority Children
School-Community Health Alliance of Michigan
Skillman Center for Children
St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center
State Alliance of Michigan YMCAs
Student Advocacy Center of Michigan
Telamon Corporation
Traverse Bay Area I.S.D.
Vista Maria
Wedgwood Christian Services
Whaley Children's Center

Individual Members

Norma Eppinger
William E. Long, Attorney
Lynne Martinez
Meredith Mentzer
Susan Miller
Kay Randolph Back
Robert L. Redmond
Nanci Swain
Ronda Rucker
Michele Strasz
Betty Tableman
Bonnie Daligga
Mary Scoblic
Anne Young
Carl Ill

For more information, call 517.485.3500 or 800.330.8674
or visit www.michiganschildren.org/page.cfm/45

"Most of the numerous projects and initiatives that state and local governments fund in the name of creating new businesses and jobs result in few public benefits. In contrast, well focused investments in early childhood development yield high public as well as economic returns."

—Art Rolnick, Senior Economist, Federal Reserve Bank in Minneapolis