



# CHILDREN'S AGENDA

*Priority Legislative Issues for Children and Families  
25th Release*



**MICHIGAN COALITION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES  
ANNUAL MEETING • MARCH 18, 2008**

[www.miccf.org](http://www.miccf.org)

# Children's Agenda 2008



*2008 marks the 25th anniversary of the Michigan Coalition for Children and Families (MCCF) Children's Agenda. The Children's Agenda has changed dramatically over its 25-year history. Yet throughout its history the mission and vision of the Coalition have remained constant—to improve the well-being of children by investing in Michigan families and communities.*

Throughout its 25 years, MCCF has worked with tremendous bi-partisan champions. The members of the MCCF are grateful to Michigan's Governors, Legislators, and Public and Non-Profit servants for their leadership, partnership, and support to advance the policy and legislative goals of the Children's Agenda.

MCCF has advocated for children across two generations. At this juncture the members of the Coalition rededicate themselves to strengthening the foundation of health, education, and human services that strengthen families and prepare children to take their places as the leaders, employees, citizens, and parents of the next generation.

The state's economic stability is tied to family economic stability and children's well-being. It is good news that Michigan is not facing the deficits of the magnitude we faced in Fiscal Years 2007 and 2008. MCCF is grateful that the legislature maintained revenues for children's services this year and adopted the Earned Income Tax Credit and previously raised the state minimum wage to promote economic security in families. We also applaud the decision to enact revenues to begin to address the state's structural deficit rather than continue to make costly cuts to programs and services.

However, many programs and services for children and families have been cut since 2001 as funding has not kept pace with inflation even as family needs and state caseloads have increased. This pressure annually compounds the structural deficit. As the economy falters, Michigan families face layoffs and corporations reduced benefits, more families must rely on the state's safety net to assist them with housing, health care, food assistance, and economic security. With Michigan's fluctuating tax revenue, schools and municipalities have had to make difficult choices regarding the services and supports that maintain schools and healthy communities. Furthermore, federal cuts in health and human services have increased pressure on state revenues to keep up with rising caseloads.

In recent years, MCCF has used the Children's Agenda to promote policies that will acknowledge and support the important role that children and families have in driving our economic engine. Investments in early childhood development and care, child health, parenting support, education, and family economic support have lasting economic benefits for families and for Michigan. Economic development does begin at birth!

The Children's Agenda developed by MCCF in 2007 is still relevant as this legislature continues its term. Last year MCCF recommended solutions that require a combination of state fiscal and tax policies along with administrative and legislative solutions. The Coalition is pleased to see that the proposed budget from the Governor includes long overdue increases in the child care subsidy and the cash assistance grant. MCCF supports state and community partnerships that emphasize creative and collaborative strategies that are measurable and efficient.

***MCCF will continue to focus its efforts in 2008 on policies to continue strides on the 2007 recommendations that:***

- Invest in adequate, quality staffing of child and family programs to improve service outcomes.
- Invest in outreach and accessibility of child and family programs at the community level.
- Invest in full implementation of the policy recommendations made by the legislature and state appointed commissions and reports to improve services and outcomes for children, including:
  - The Mental Health Commission*
  - The Lead Commission*
  - The Early Childhood Investment Corporation*
  - The Juvenile Justice Task Force*
  - Earned Income Tax Credit*
  - State Task Force on Permanency and Transition for Foster Yc*



Just as Michigan plans to invest in jobs and diversifying its economy, it must also invest and innovate in health, education, safety, and economic security programs that promote opportunities, economic stability, and well-being for children. Michigan is strong when families are strong! We call upon the Governor, the legislature, and strategic partners in the corporate and non-profit sectors to seek bi-partisan, collaborative solutions to meet these challenges.

## Organizational Members

Afterschool Roundtable  
Arab American and Chaldean Council  
Association for Children's Mental Health  
Boys and Girls Club Republic  
Camp Fire USA – West MI Council  
Catholic Social Services of Grand Rapids  
Center for Civil Justice  
Child Abuse Prevention Services  
Child/Family Services, Capital Area  
Child & Family Services of N.E. Michigan  
Children's Charter of the Courts of Michigan  
Children's Trust Fund  
Citizen's Alliance on Prisons and Public Spending  
Citizen's Alliance to Uphold Special Education  
Coalition for Adoption Rights Equality  
Comp. School Health Coord. Association  
Eagle Village  
Early Success-Right From The Start  
Family Center of Grosse Pointe/Harper Woods  
Fight Crime: Invest in Kids Michigan  
High/Scope Education Research Foundation  
Holy Cross Children's Services  
Kent Regional 4C  
Learning Disabilities Association of Michigan  
Lutheran Social Services of Michigan  
Mayor's Time  
MI 4C Association  
MI Assoc. of Community/Adult Ed  
MI Assoc. of CMH Boards  
MI Assoc. for Infant Mental Health  
MI Assoc. for the Education of Young Children  
MI Assoc. of School Administrators  
MI Assoc. of School Boards  
MI Assoc. of School Nurses  
MI Assoc. of United Ways  
MI Coalition Against Domestic/Sexual Violence

MI Council for Maternal & Child Health  
MI Council on Crime and Delinquency  
MI County Social Services Association  
MI Environmental Council  
MI Federation for Children and Families  
MI Head Start Association  
MI League for Human Services  
MI Network for Youth & Families  
MI Prevention Association  
MI Primary Care Association  
MI Protection and Advocacy Services  
MI Public Health Association  
Michigan's Children  
National Association of Social Workers-Michigan  
Oakland County Child Care Council  
Prevention Network  
Priority Children  
Priority Health Services  
School-Community Health Alliance of Michigan  
St. Vincent Catholic Charities  
St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center  
United Way for S.E. Michigan  
Vista Maria  
Wedgwood Christian Services

## Individual Members

Bonnie Daligga  
Jean Doss  
Norma Eppinger  
William Long  
Susan Miller  
Kay Randolph-Back  
Mary Scoblic  
Michele Strasz  
Betty Tableman  
Dr. Joanne Riebschleger