

2018

POLICY PRIORITIES

The Child and Family Policy Center advocates each year for policies and practices leading to one overarching goal: healthy children supported by strong families in safe, prosperous communities.

A stable, secure childhood sets children on a path to productive, healthy adulthood, and, in turn, allows them to contribute to Iowa's future prosperity.

Iowans share strong values: we want the best for every child. To make Iowa the best place to grow up, the Child and Family Policy Center will promote policies in the following areas in 2018:

Early Learning

The earliest years—long before a child enters kindergarten—are the time of most rapid brain development, setting the foundation for future well-being. Regular attendance in preschool and elementary school is critical to achieving reading proficiency, and in turn, high school graduation.

- Support a comprehensive and integrated early care, health and education system for the youngest Iowans by supporting adequate funding for Early Childhood Iowa
- Strengthen the availability of evidence-based preschool for low-income children
- Promote policies to address chronic absence starting in preschool and throughout the early-elementary years
- Promote and support early-literacy initiatives, with adequate funding to implement them



A stable, secure childhood sets Iowa children on a path to a productive, healthy adulthood.

To learn more about policies to promote early learning, contact policy director Sheila Hansen (shansen@cfpciowa.org or 515-778-8259).

Child Health

The health of Iowa kids is best achieved by a comprehensive system of care that addresses physical and mental health, setting them on the path to a secure adulthood.

- Build a comprehensive system of care that prevents or mitigates childhood adversity and promotes healthy mental development
- Continue to develop and expand programs that improve child health through preventive and developmental practices, such as the 1st Five Healthy Mental Development Initiative administered by the Iowa Department of Public Health
- Improve the health and well-being of children by ensuring continued access to high-quality early-intervention services through Medicaid, hawk-i and other health-care delivery systems.

To learn more about policies promoting child health, contact policy associate Mary Nelle Trefz at mnt@cfpciowa.org or 515-280-9027 ext. 112.

Child Welfare

Childhood trauma is associated with lifelong adverse physical and mental outcomes. Iowa's child welfare policies should emphasize prevention and early intervention, and when children and youth can't remain with their parents, help them maintain strong connections to caring adults.

- Ensure the well-being of children in the foster-care system and those adopted out of the system by supporting legislation that addresses issues of safety in the home, including subsidized adoption.
- Support a more comprehensive mandated reporter training that includes information on identifying sexual abuse and prevention as one category of abuse.

To learn more about policies promoting child welfare, contact policy associate Angelica Cardenas at acardenas@cfpciowa.org or 515-280-9027 ext. 111.

Family Economic Success

Families's ability to meet their children's basic needs—including supports to enter and remain in the workforce—is a basic and critical component of child well-being.

- Increase access to the child care assistance program by raising the eligibility level for working families to 185 percent of the federal poverty level.
- Address the infant/toddler child care crisis and child care deserts by increasing the provider reimbursement rates to the current market rate.
- Continue to promote tax policies and initiatives, such as the earned income tax credit (EITC) and child tax credit, that support working families and promote efforts and incentives to strengthen the ability of parents to contribute to economic well-being.

State Budget

The state budget is a reflection of our shared priorities and how we collectively plan for the future. Iowa needs innovative budget approaches that meet not only immediate needs, but embrace stewardship for the future, much like previous generations did for us by investing in the education, health and safety of our residents—investments that yield long-term returns for all Iowans.



Iowans' values are reflected in the state budgeting process.

To learn more about family economic success and assuring adequate revenue, contact Sheila Hansen at shansen@cfpciowa.org or 515-778-8259.