

2017

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 2017:

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 restoring funding for Early Childhood Iowa to at least the 2008 level.
- **Expand high-quality, full-day preschool for low-income 4-year-olds** (those in households at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level) by increasing per-pupil funding for the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program from 0.5 to 1.0.
- **Promote policies that help schools and communities reduce chronic absence** in the early grades, following recommendations of the Iowa Chronic Absenteeism Workgroup.



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, establishing a healthy trajectory for children that sets them on the path to a secure adulthood.

- **Adopt strategies focused on preventing and mitigating childhood adversity**, taking into account the recommendations of the Children’s Mental Health and Well-Being Workgroup.
- **Develop and expand programs that improve child health** through preventive and developmental practices, including the 1st Five initiative.
- **Ensure continued access to high-quality and early-intervention services** in Iowa’s implementation of Medicaid managed care, the State Innovation Model (SIM) design grant and other health care delivery system reforms.

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

Family economic success

The ability of families 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.

- **Expand access to the state’s child care assistance program** by raising the family eligibility level and increasing the reimbursement rates paid to providers. This includes implementation and adequate funding for the Child Care Development Fund reauthorization mandates.
- **Promote fiscal policies that strengthen the ability of working families to improve their economic well-being**, including increasing the earned income tax credit (EITC) and minimum wage.

To learn more about policies promoting family economic success, contact Sheila Hansen (shansen@cfpciowa.org or 515-778-8259).

Child welfare

Trauma in childhood 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.

- **Create and fund a subsidized guardianship program** to help foster youth achieve “normalcy” and maintain relationships with caring adults in their lives by having a relative assume permanent legal responsibility when adoption or return to parents is not feasible.

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

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.

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



Iowans’ values are reflected in the state budgeting process.