



2021 Legislative Priorities

OVERVIEW:

The Florida Children's Council serves as the member organization of the state's Children Services Councils (CSCs) and Children's Trusts. Within Florida these organizations serve over 1/3rd of the state's birth to 18 population by funding evidence-based programs, innovative services, and community resources that improve the lives of children and families. This comprehensive service approach allows CSCs to make data-driven decisions, maximize local resources, and ensure accountability of funded programs. Through these CSC investments, data is collected, and services are aligned that produce efficiencies, replicable positive child and family outcomes, and long-term collective impact. It is through this laser-focused approach that scalable system development opportunities and recognition of public policy needs emerge. The following legislative priorities have been identified for the 2021 legislative session.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

-  Maintain the ability for local communities to determine the best use of resources to develop, implement, and administer programs that address the needs of children and families.
-  Support evidence-based policies and programs to ensure healthy, academically successful children, secure families, and safe and supportive communities.
-  Ensure adequate, equitable funding and access for programs that affect children and families and account for regional economic differences.
-  Support programming that encourages and facilitate family engagement.
-  Support legislation that uses a racial equity lens, processes, and values to create just and fair outcomes and conditions for our state and community while recognizing and addressing historical injustices and harms.
-  Ensure health, safety, and well-being of children in all publicly funded programs.
-  Support programs that promote the ability for families to continue toward economic self-sufficiency without losing access to services that support children's development.
-  Maximize all available revenue streams for strategies that support child development and economic security.
-  Support State appropriations that benefit Florida's children and families.

TWO-GENERATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES:

Support the development more effective equitable policies for families with young children in poverty by aligning targeted social services that support children's development with workforce development services to increase family economic self-sufficiency.

EARLY LEARNING:

Contribute to the establishment of an equitable comprehensive system of early learning that supports parental choice, timely child outcome results, and an aligned progress monitoring that allows the state and communities to provide timely interventions.

OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME PROGRAMS:

Support child safety and well-being by working with the legislature to provide the Florida Department of Children and Families the authority to be able to fine or file an injunction for summer camps that are in violation of the summer camp background screening requirements and continuing to support summer camp registration.



florida children's council

Making a lasting impression

HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT:

Expand funding and access for all children to ensure the healthy development of Florida's children through targeted programs that support mental health, infant mortality and disparities in birth outcomes, and access to health care.

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES:

Maximize the impact of intervention services by managing caseloads, adequately serving infants and toddlers with significant delays, prohibiting the use of seclusion and restraint rooms in school settings, implementing universal developmental screenings, and streamlining transitions between state programs.

CHILD PROTECTION:

Develop a network of comprehensive child welfare services that implement trauma-informed practices, ensure children in safe and stable homes, reduce the length of time that children are in the welfare system, and supports young adults leaving foster care and transitioning into independence.

JUVENILE JUSTICE:

Support programs and strategies that produce evidenced based results that mitigate recidivism, do not disproportionately affect youth based on color or background, and allow for state attorney discretion on filing charges against juveniles who receive concurrent civil citations.