

Legislative and Advocacy From the States

March 2020

Alabama

Voices for Alabama's
Children have released
their [2020 Policy
Priorities](#)



2020 POLICY PRIORITIES

Find out how we are prioritizing
children in 2020.




Alabama Kids Count Rally

KIDS COUNT RALLY
SAVE
APRIL
1,
2020
MONTGOMERY, AL
THE
DATE



On April 1, 2020, students and advocates will come together to remind Alabama's decision-makers and leaders of the value of prioritizing the well-being of all children in Alabama. Participating students will have an opportunity to interact directly with their state lawmakers on this and other issues. VOICES will provide lunches for attendees, so everyone needs to register in advance!

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/7th-annual-kids-count-rally-tickets-92112489937>



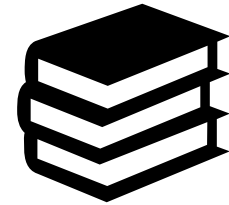
Alaska – Prop 13



- Prop. 13 means dedicated funding to ensure Anchorage's children and families thrive. Issues like homelessness, alcohol misuse and domestic violence are all directly related to increased rates of child abuse and neglect.
- Learn more at:
<https://www.alaskachildrenstrust.org/prop-13>

Arizona

- Students across Arizona could be allowed to have excused absences due to mental or behavioral health, if a bill is passed in the state legislature.
- [SB 1444](#), which is sponsored by State Sen. Sean Bowie and co-sponsored by 14 other state lawmakers, will allow the state's Department of Education to identify an "absence due to the mental or behavioral health of a pupil" as an excused absence, and will also allow the department to adopt guidelines to determine what constitutes a mental or behavioral health break for students.



Arkansas

Focusing on State's Youngest Children

A group of lawmakers from both sides of the political aisle agree Arkansas needs to invest more in its youngest residents. They've formed a caucus focused on creating evidence-based policies for the 2021 General Assembly

The Early Childhood Well-Being Caucus will hear presentations from early-childhood experts every other month.

Of the state's 190,000 children younger than age 5, more than 1 in 4 lives in poverty, and among children of color, the number is 1 in 3.



ARKANSAS ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES



- Health coverage under the Arkansas Works program can continue without the work-reporting requirement, at least for now.
- A three-judge panel unanimously upheld the District Court's previous decision in the matter.
<https://bit.ly/2u2HksC>

California



The California Children's Report Card by [Children Now](#) grades the state on its ability to support better outcomes for kids, from prenatal to age 26. Each grade is based on the state's progress on passing and implementing state-level policies and making investments in the supports and services needed for all kids to reach their full potential. The Pro-Kid Agenda provides recommendations to the state's leaders on how to improve outcomes for kids in each section.



LEGISLATIVE *PRIORITIES* 2020



COLORADO CHILDREN'S CAMPAIGN
Every Chance for Every Child



Our 2020 Legislative Priorities

As the 2020 session of the Colorado General Assembly begins, we're dedicated to advancing policies that support the well-being of Colorado kids and families.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Colorado

Colorado Children's Campaign has set its 2020 priorities

Colorado



House Bill 20-1006, a bill to officially establish an Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation program, passed out of the House Public Health Care & Human Services Committee.

Childhood Mental Health Consultation This bill would bolster the state-managed early childhood mental health consultation (ECMHC) program by establishing program infrastructure, quality metrics, and evaluation requirements. It would help ensure sustainable funding, define and enhance program structure and design, maintain and support a qualified ECMHC workforce, and ensure quality services in the state-managed ECMHC program. Read more about the bill and its progress through the legislature [here](#).

Excused Absences for Mental Health Day This bill would require school districts to include excused absences for behavioral health concerns in their written attendance policies. This bill would help reduce stigma for youth and families around behavioral health and would give students an opportunity to address behavioral health concerns and mitigate crises before they occur. Read more about the bill and its progress through the legislature [here](#)

Florida – SB 1644

Since 2010, there have been **20,932** incidents of seclusion and **80,669** incidents of restraint on students with disabilities in Florida's public schools.

A bill that would eliminate the use of seclusion and put strong parameters on the restraint of students with disabilities, **SB 1644**, is in its final committee.

Georgia

- HB 813 Expands Medicaid to persons who live up to 150% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), and provides health insurance subsidies for people living at 150%-500% of FPL up to 5% of the individual's income. STATUS: House Special Committee on Access to Quality Health Care.
- HB 440 Raises the age of juvenile court jurisdiction to include 17-year-olds. STATUS: House Juvenile Justice Committee.
- HB 855 Allows children in foster care to be placed in special education classes or related services if it's found that trauma impacts their education or classroom behavior. The Department of Education is to provide guidance on how evaluation will be initiated and determining eligibility. All children in foster care entering a new school system shall be immediately evaluated for eligibility for special education or related services. STATUS: House Education Committee.

Hawaii

Erin's Law: Sexual abuse prevention education in public schools

[HB2044](#); [SB2343](#)

- Mandate sexual abuse prevention education in public schools, known as “Erin’s Law.” Hawaii’s schools lack consistent implementation of sexual abuse prevention education and has limited resources for training and education. In addition, many teachers and staff do not receive sufficient training on talking to students about child sexual abuse prevention, the effects of child sexual abuse on children, handling sexual abuse disclosures, and mandated reporting.



Hawai'i
Children's
Action
Network

Building a unified voice for Hawai'i's children

Idaho Behavioral Health Council Created

- Governor Brad Little, all five Idaho Supreme Court Justices, and legislators signed documents establishing and supporting the Idaho Behavioral Health Council, a new three-branch approach to improve care for Idahoans with mental health and substance use disorders.
- The signing of the governor's executive order, the Supreme Court Proclamation and Order, and the legislative Concurrent Resolution creates a 13-member council that will work collaboratively with local government, educators, and community partners to develop a statewide strategic plan with action-oriented, time-bound recommendations that improve access to care. The Idaho Behavioral Health Council will include representatives from all three branches of state government.
- The strategic plan will identify silos in Idaho's behavioral health system and create a more coordinated model of care to improve lives and offer a better return on the investment of public resources.
- The strategic plan will be reported back to legislative leadership, the governor, and the Idaho Supreme Court by October 31, 2020.



- It is a budget that proposes additional funding for pre-school, K-12, higher education and childcare. However, it also holds \$1.4 billion in program funding in reserve.
- Read Voices for Illinois Children's analysis of the governor's proposed fiscal year 2021 budget.
<http://bit.ly/37Kmtbg>

State of Illinois

State Budget | Fiscal Year 2021 | JB Pritzker, Governor



Indiana

- Senate Bill 449, would expedite waiver/transfer to adult court for children, and expand juvenile waiver to include 12 and 13-year-olds for attempted murder, and it would add “attempted offenses” to offenses already listed under Indiana’s direct file statute.
- Over 40 organizations and concerned individuals testified in person or in writing when SB 449 was heard in the Senate Corrections and Criminal Code Committee.

Kansas Bi-Partisan Medicaid Expansion

- With the recent announcement of a bipartisan plan to expand KanCare this session, the governor's recommendation includes \$17.5 million to expand Medicaid. Expanding eligibility for the program will allow 150,000 low-income Kansans access to critical health care coverage.
- The [Medicaid compromise bill \(SB 252\)](#), Important aspects of the bill include:
 - Full expansion with eligibility up to 138% of the Federal Poverty Line.
 - Premiums are included- there are no lockouts, and a hardship exemption is included, which mitigate the impact of premiums for some individuals and families.

2020 Kentucky General Assembly Bill Tracker



Kentucky **youth** Advocates

- **House Bill 22**, seeking to eliminate the use of corporal punishment in schools, was overwhelmingly supported by the House Education Committee.
- A bill that would prevent youth from being automatically tried as adults won broad bipartisan support in the Kentucky Senate this week. **Senate Bill 87** seeks to expand court discretion by eliminating the mandatory transfer of youth to adult court for certain offenses.
- **Establish a Minimum Age of Jurisdiction**
- House Bill 203 would establish a minimum age that a child can be charged with an offense and connecting the child to family-focused services to prevent children from entering the maze of the juvenile justice system.

Louisiana Releases Roadmap



**A Roadmap
to Improve
Child Well-Being
in Louisiana**

Maine – Legislation to Watch



LD 2016, An Act Regarding School Discipline for Maine's Youngest Students, would limit the use of out-of-school suspension and expulsion for elementary students



LD115 - An Act to Appropriate Funds for Home Visiting Services to Provide Child Development Education and Skills Development for New Parents



LD 633 - An Act To Create a Kinship Care Navigator Program within the Department of Health and Human Services



LD418 - An Act To Address Maine's Shortage of Behavioral Health Services for Minors

Massachusetts

An **Act**
Addressing
Barriers to
Care for
Mental Health



Massachusetts State Senate released S.2519: An Act Addressing Barriers to Care for Mental Health

This bill reinforces mental health parity, seeks to diversify the behavioral workforce in a meaningful way, and increases access to behavioral health care.

Massachusetts Attorney
General Announces
Agreements To Expand
Access To Behavioral
Health Services

From National Council on Behavioral Health

Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey announced an agreement between five health insurance companies and two companies that manage behavioral health coverage for insurers that will provide improved access to behavioral health services for more than one million residents in the state and modify how reimbursement rates are determined. These long-overdue changes will ensure parity in reimbursement rates for the behavioral health services, medical and surgical services offered by providers.

NATIONAL COUNCIL
FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH



Michigan Budget

- Governor Gretchen Whitmer's budget includes \$60 million in additional funding for special education
- An additional \$60 million to support academically at-risk and economically disadvantaged students
- This was the largest funding increase for classrooms in nearly 20 years, according to State Budget Office data.

Budget Basics

- The governor's proposal includes significant increases for per-pupil grants based on student need and increases funding for supports that strengthen families including childcare, health coverage for mothers and infants, and home-based services for families facing instability. The budget proposal provides a strong foundation in some areas upon which we can expand proven plays that meet critical needs for children, youth, and families.
- For commentary from Michigan's Children on the FY'21 state budget, check out the video from Matt Gillard [here](#).
- For analysis on how the proposal stacks up, click [here](#).

Michigan's
Children

Mississippi State Legislature



- [House Bill 488](#) adds this language to the current state law about formal state complaints in the education system: *"If the local school district sends a complaint response to the State Department of Education, a copy of such response shall be simultaneously provided to the child's parents, along with any correspondence and response by the State Department of Education to the public agency."*
- [Senate Bill 2610](#) opens up the state code about the mental health system. That means changes to how the mental health system is set up and operates can be made.

Nebraska – Legislation to Watch



- **Fixing the “cliff effect” in childcare and food assistance programs.** The [“cliff effect”](#) is when low-income families lose more in public assistance than they gain from increases in wages.
 - [LB 329](#) would ensure that once a family becomes eligible for child care subsidies, they can [work toward a living wage without losing assistance](#).
 - [LB 1049](#) would increase initial eligibility for childcare assistance, which is among the lowest in the entire country.
 - [LB 255](#) would allow more low-income families with high household expenses to be [eligible for food assistance](#) in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

- **Protecting youth at the front-and back-ends of our child welfare system**

More than half the children in our child welfare system are in “non-court” cases, where families receive assistance, supports, and oversight to maintain safety through voluntary processes.

- [LB 1061](#) would build and strengthen a statutory framework to account for the way our system has shifted over the years, ensuring children are safe and parents know their rights while allowing our department to continue working with families to avoid the traumatic harm of removal whenever possible.
- [LB 849](#) would close a gap in eligibility for our Bridge to Independence program that helps young people aging out of child welfare navigate to adulthood, ensuring youth aging out of tribal proceedings are not lost between their sovereign age of majority and the current age of eligibility for the Bridge program.

- **Supporting healthy schools and students**

- [LB 1039](#) would provide free breakfast and lunch to all public school students during the school day, regardless of income.
- [LB 1116](#) improves [access to water for students](#) during the school day by ensuring that new buildings have drinking fountains.

- **Ensuring that our juvenile justice system sets young people up for success**

- [LB 230](#) would [limit the use of solitary confinement](#) on youth in our state-run facilities.
- [LB 231](#) would ensure that every child has [meaningful access to their constitutional right to legal counsel](#), no matter where they live. LB 231 is stalled on General File and just one vote shy of moving forward this session.
- [LB 132](#) ensures that judges can tailor sentences for youth based on their unique needs by [removing mandatory minimum penalties](#) for youth charged with certain felonies.
- [LB 1117](#) tailors criminal sentencing to account for young people’s capacity for change, growth, and rehabilitation even in the most serious of cases.



New Jersey to Conduct Statewide Mental Health First Aid Trainings for School Personnel



- New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy this week announced initiatives to support youth mental health across the state in schools and institutions of higher education.
- The initiative includes hosting statewide Mental Health First Aid training for school personnel to learn the risk factors and warning signs of youth mental health and substance use concerns, allowing them to connect students to appropriate resources and supports in their communities.
- “We are committed to ensuring that our residents have access to the resources they need to thrive and succeed in life,” said Gov. Murphy.

New Mexico – Budget Impacts

- A brand new trust fund was created for the new Early Childhood Education and Care Department and endowed with \$320 million.
- The Legislature added several million dollars to the state budget to fund home visits, childcare, and pre-K programs.
- More than \$70 million was added to the state budget for health care for children, New Mexicans with disabilities, and adults earning low incomes.
- The state eliminated co-pays for school children who are eligible for reduced-price meals.

New York

- New York has been awarded a \$40.2 million federal grant to coordinate and strengthen the state's early childhood system.
- The Preschool Development Birth Through Five grant will help support and continue the progress made to enhance the early childhood workforce and expand access to high-quality early care and education programs by sharing best practices and engaging parents as leaders.
- The funding - \$13.4 million annually over three years - from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration of Children and Families will be administered by the New York State Council on Children and Families.



Oklahoma

SAVE THE DATE

APRIL 2, 2020

AUTISM DAY AT THE CAPITOL



Oregon

The Oregon Legislature passed Senate Bill 526.

This directs Oregon Health Authority to design, implement and maintain a voluntary statewide program to provide universal nurse home visiting services to all families with newborns living in the state.

Tennessee

“Tennessee can lead the nation in delivering mental health support to our students and teachers. This year, we’re proposing the K-12 Mental Health Trust Fund & growing our school-based behavioral health liaison program from 36 counties to all 95 counties.”

Governor Bill Lee

- Gov. Lee’s second budget proposal is a \$250 million trust fund for K-12 mental health.
- On top of this, he’s proposing close to \$33 million in new funding for the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.



K-12 Mental Health Trust Fund

\$250 million in one-time funds to support the growth and placement of mental health services for students in a system wide, evidence-based, whole child approach



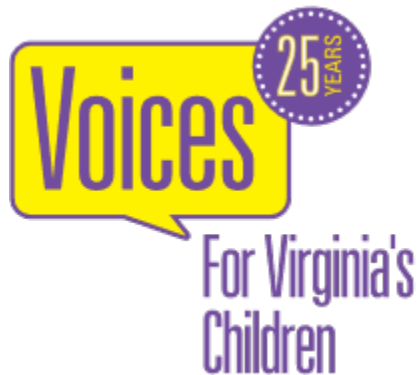
Utah

HB 118 Retail Tobacco Amendments - This bill will limit where flavored tobacco or e-cigarette products are sold; flavored products are often used to specifically target kids. HB 118 also gives cities more support to try and address teen vaping.

SB 135 Dentist Practice Amendments passed out of committee, which advances important efforts in tele-dentistry and can help more kids access preventive dental care in rural or underserved areas.

SB 74 Family Planning Services Amendments also passed out of committee, which will help more low-income individuals access family planning services.

Virginia



VICTORY!

BILL PASSED

FOSTERING FUTURES

HB400 / SB156

THE BILL TO PERMANENTLY ESTABLISH FOSTERING
FUTURES – EXTENDING FOSTER CARE TO 21 HAS PASSED!
THIS WILL SUPPORT THE NEARLY 500 YOUTH WHO AGE
OUT OF VIRGINIA'S FOSTER CARE SYSTEM EACH YEAR.





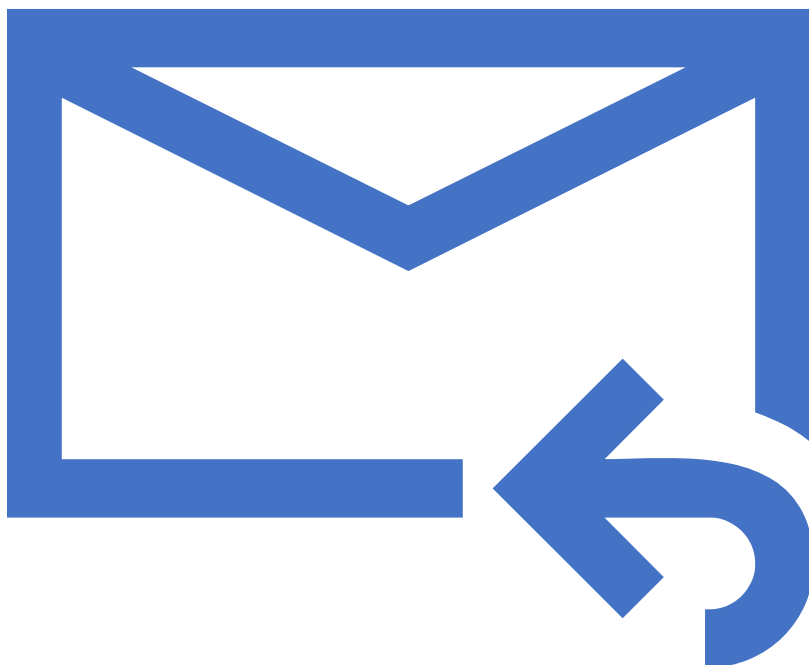
The Wisconsin Assembly passed SB 527, which amends Act 125, Wisconsin's seclusion & restraint law.

- Highlights include:
 - Requiring school districts to provide incidence data to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (not just to school boards)
 - Requiring schools to provide written incident reports to parents (not just notifying them that the report exists)
 - Outlawing prone restraints

Keep up with the latest on the National Federation of Families Legislative and Advocacy Facebook Page



**Welcome to the National Federation's Facebook Group
for Legislation, Policy, Advocacy and Funding**



Have Legislative News from Your State?

Please share it with us.

Send your Legislative and Advocacy Updates to:

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