

POLICY WINS AND TARGETS

LET'S KEEP KIDS MOVING FORWARD



Programs alone won't improve outcomes for Michigan children who experience unequal access or benefits from opportunities because of their race, place or family income. On the following pages you'll find policy decisions from the last few years that have moved children's well-being forward, as well as short- and long-term policy goals that can continue that momentum. We must make policy decisions to protect Michigan's children, keep them moving forward and protect our future as a state.

SPECIAL FOCUS: ENSURE CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND WORKERS RECOVER FROM COVID-19

Too many families struggled to make ends meet before the public health and economic crisis caused by COVID-19. The pandemic required major shifts in state funding and there will be continued shifts in legislative and budget priorities. We must support children, families and workers' recovery from this crisis at every opportunity and ensure residents' basic needs are met. See the Michigan League for Public Policy's [COVID-19 policy recommendations](#) that will help support families with child care, food access, housing and more.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY: STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY TO SUPPORT YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Wins

Families with children who received free and reduced lunch were able to use those funds to feed their children while they were home and learning remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic

In 2019, "Raise the Age" made it so 17-year-olds would not automatically be charged as adults for any offense

Targets

Invest in child abuse and neglect prevention programs and ensure robust data collection so we can better understand sources of abuse and disparities

Continue and expand home visiting and community health programs that support new mothers

Stop teenage mistakes from creating life-long barriers to employment, education and housing by making expungement of juvenile crimes more accessible and affordable



HEALTH AND SAFETY: ACCESS AND QUALITY FOR A HEALTHY START AND A HEALTHY FINISH

Win

A new law that would have required people who receive Medicaid to report work hours in order to receive healthcare was struck down by a federal court, allowing as many as 100,000 Michiganders to keep access to critical care

Targets

70% of Michigan children are in families in which all parents work. Expand earned paid leave to more workers so that they can better address their health and personal needs, prevent infecting others when sick and avoid financial disaster because of missed work

Ensure all children have access to healthcare by expanding Medicaid coverage for children and pregnant women who are lawful permanent residents ("green card" holders) by waiving the optional 5-year Medicaid wait period

Increase access to trauma-informed mental services in schools and communities, and integrate physicians into this system by allowing them to refer patients to community mental health services

EDUCATION: MEET STUDENTS' LEARNING NEEDS



Win

Michigan's zero tolerance policies were some of the toughest in the country until they were eliminated in 2017

Targets

Support parents' involvement in their child's education by restoring driver's licenses for all Michigan residents—including undocumented immigrants—to allow parents to travel safely and freely

Fund the 10 Cents a Meal program that helps schools purchase healthy foods for kids while supporting local farmers. Maximizing the nutritional value of school meals is more important than ever and this program can be used during the summer as well as the school year

Adequately support schools with higher needs through a weighted funding formula. In this way, districts that require more resources to serve students (who, for example, live with poverty, are English language learners or are in foster care) would receive larger budgets

ECONOMIC SECURITY: REMOVING BARRIERS TO HELP PARENTS HELP CHILDREN

Wins

In 2019, the asset test limit for food assistance and other programs was raised from \$5,000 to \$15,000. This allowed families to receive services and prepare for the future

A change in child care subsidy eligibility raised it from 120% to 130% of the federal poverty level in 2018 and made it so small pay increases would not stop someone from receiving benefits

Targets

Extend Family Independence Program (cash assistance) benefits past the 60-month limit to those families with children and pregnant women who need continued assistance by using the federal hardship exemption

Make it so that Michigan doesn't have one of the lowest child care subsidy rates in the nation by increasing eligibility to 180% of the federal poverty level and make care more affordable for working parents

Restore the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) back to 20% from the current rate of 6% to help low- and moderate-income workers pay for family necessities and inject more money into the local economy



ABOUT THE KIDS COUNT IN MICHIGAN PROJECT

Kids Count in Michigan is part of a national effort to improve children's outcomes. We provide child advocates, agencies, public officials and legislators with the best available data, nonpartisan policy recommendations and tools to advance policies that benefit children.

A child's well-being should not be determined by their race, place or income, but data shows that this is the reality. That's why we use a racial equity lens and two generational approach when researching issues and offering policy recommendations.

Michigan is home to over 3 million kids and young adults who are curious, vibrant and ready to take on the world. We've made progress in the last decade. Let's continue to build a stronger Michigan and keep kids moving forward.