

A PRO-KID AGENDA: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Kids Count in Michigan

We envision a future where all of Michigan's kids and families thrive.

These 12 evidence-based policy proposals aim to lift up families as they work to provide opportunities for their children, and support young people as they strive to make the transition into adulthood.

FOR THE NEXT GENERATION (Ages Birth through 5)

★ Fully fund the true cost of care

Invest in a strong early care and education workforce.

WHY? The median hourly wage for a child care worker is just \$14.08 in Michigan.

Ensure access and affordability for child care.

WHY? Just 16% of kids ages 0-5 in families with low incomes are receiving a child care scholarship.

★ Offer continuous Medicaid coverage for young children

WHY? 18,974 kids under age 6 in Michigan are uninsured.

FOR THE FUTURE GRADUATES (Ages 6-17)

★ Fully fund the Opportunity Index

WHY? Approximately half of students in Michigan schools are disadvantaged, and some schools face particularly high levels of concentrated poverty.

★ Increase access to mental health services in public schools

WHY? Over half of children age 13-17 who received or needed mental health care had difficulty obtaining care.

★ Reduce teen smoking

WHY? In 2025, Michigan is spending just 4.2% of CDC recommended spending on tobacco prevention and cessation, putting us in the bottom 10 states.

FOR THE APPRENTICES (Ages 18-24)

Expand the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

WHY? Young adults under 25 are currently left out of the state's EITC, despite facing the highest poverty rate of any age group.

Adopt universal free community college

WHY? Fewer than half of young adults in Michigan are enrolled in or have completed college.

End life without parole for emerging adults

WHY? Although research on brain development shows emerging adults share much in common with children, approximately half of adults sentenced to life without parole in Michigan were under 26 when sentenced.

FOR THE LEGACY (Families)

Adopt a Michigan Child Tax Credit (CTC)

WHY? One in 4 children are left out of the federal CTC because their parents earn too little.

Enact paid family and medical leave

WHY? Two in 3 children under age 6 have all parents in the labor force, but the majority of Michigan workers are ineligible for or unable to afford 12 weeks of unpaid leave.

Increase access to the Family Independence Program

WHY? Michigan's Family Independence Program reached an all-time low of just 21,730 kids in 2023 due to policy barriers and a low payment standard.

Invest in affordable rental housing

WHY? One in 4 kids lives in a family burdened by the high cost of housing.

