



2023 Policy Priorities & Platform

Childhood Care & Education

Outcome Statement

Increasing access to high quality child care and education, early intervention, health and family support services for all children in Missouri to ensure school readiness and strong life-long outcomes.

Policy Priorities & Platform

- **Create and implement a 5-year advocacy approach to increase support for families and children in services for home visitation, pre-K, and child care.**
 - Work with stakeholders to determine policies and platform
 - Develop and implement a strategic campaign to strengthen childhood care and education investments and policies
 - Strategic report from OOC in October
 - Work with Children's Trust Fund, Steering Committee, and consultants to develop a strategy by January
 - Partner with parents, providers, and business and community leaders to strengthen our grassroots advocacy efforts and support our advocacy approach
 - Coordinate the ECE Initiative

- **Engage stakeholders, policymakers and administrators on the continued improvement of childhood governance, services, and programs**
 - Support parents, provider, and businesses (stakeholders) as they advocate to policymakers and administrators
 - Develop relationships and provide advocacy opportunities with stakeholders through the ECE Initiative
 - Child Care Advisory Group advances priorities in the road map
 - Each workgroup identifies no more than 3 priorities to advance
 - Monitor spending plans for child care subsidy traditional funds
 - Monitor child care subsidy program fund utilization through Department of Social Services monthly management reports and Federal Forms 696
 - Seek to implement equity-based recommendations from Zero to Three report
 - Work on legislation to eliminate suspension and expulsion for preK-3rd grade
 - Create statutory authority that enables the creation of comprehensive early childhood education services in underserved communities/populations with identified gaps in achievement (i.e. infant

mortality rates, literacy rates, school readiness, and low access/childcare deserts)

- Resource– Maryland’s Judy Centers
 - o Create better alignment of teacher certification within the spaces of Pre-K programs contracted with charter or public schools and Pre-K programs in the child care setting.
 - Support ongoing work by stakeholders who are leading this effort
- **Recommend, support, and communicate pandemic relief opportunities within childhood care and education**
 - o Review the use of CARES Act Child Care Plan Resources
 - Verify with DESE that CARES Act funds have been spent
 - o Review the use of CRRSA Child Care relief
 - Determine what has been over-budget, under budget, timing of programs, what they will do to keep money moving
 - Note the federal liquidation timeframes
 - o Continue to be a voice to legislators, the governor’s office, and the Office of Childhood on the usage of ARPA child care and ESSER Funds
 - o Increase child care subsidy rates and continue to encourage transition to a contracted payment system for the child care subsidy program
 - Continued conversations with policy makers and facilitate conversations between providers and policy makers
 - Monitor the implementation of the CCDF State Plan which calls for a pilot program for contracted rates for foster children
 - Move away from a market rate system to a true cost of quality care
 - o Analyze data on demographics of providers accessing relief funds, work to ensure assistance is provided to ensure equitable access of the funds
 - Make sure providers are aware that there is support in filling out the required paperwork to access relief funds
- **Convene, learn, and work toward a common advocacy agenda with home visiting programs**
 - o Homevisiting Workgroup meets monthly
 - Identifies policy priorities and a common vision as it moves forward
 - Create learning opportunities to develop unified understanding of work across models, programs, and communities
 - Develop an advocacy agenda for home visiting programs
 - o Support and learn from regional collaboratives
 - o Begin a story collection bank of parent successes
 - Collect stories from parents and providers in the ECE Initiative that can be used to promote the importance of home visiting
- **Lay policy groundwork, inform, and support initiatives to expand childhood care and education opportunities for children**
 - o Inform and support implementation of professional development work plan coordinated with the PDG Workforce Initiative

- Lead in advancing the early childhood compensation and benefit components of the PDG grant
- o Explore innovative ways to expand the workforce, strengthening recruitment and retention. Promote a career pathway/pipeline including increased compensation & benefits. Partner with other organizations working on expanding the workforce.
- o Collect policy outcome data*, foster support among communities and policymakers, and make the case for policies such as:
 - Pre-K expansion for students who are free and reduced lunch eligible
 - Local tax initiatives
 - Increasing child care supply, particularly infant and toddler capacity

*Note: OOC will be providing data in the strategic planning report in October.



2023 Policy Priorities & Platform

Health & Mental Health Workgroup

Outcome Statement

Maintain and expand access to quality health care, including behavioral and mental health care, for Missouri children and families, with a lens toward social determinants of health.

Health Equity Statement

Seek to view all health policies through a lens of health equity. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation defines [health equity](#) as: “Everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible. This requires removing obstacles to health such as poverty, discrimination, and their consequences, including powerlessness and lack of access to good jobs with fair pay, quality education and housing, safe environments, and health care.”

Policy Priorities

- **Ease and simplify enrollment in and retention of public health insurance for children**
 - Work with policymakers to advance 12-month continuous eligibility of health coverage for children
 - As the Public Health Emergency concludes, work with Family Support Division to ensure families needing to re-enroll are able to do so as easy as possible
 - Advance administrative changes that support children and families in obtaining and retaining health coverage
 - Communicate and support ease of understanding eligibility as the Civilla recommendations are implemented

- **Promote innovative, patient-centric projects that will improve care and enhance outcomes for children and families.**
 - Support efforts to support 12-month postpartum coverage through the ARPA opt-in
 - Work to ensure families’ voices are represented in discussions and decisions relating to Missouri’s Medicaid program
 - Identify families willing to share their stories

Policy Platform

- **Support policy efforts to improve access to care**
 - Support efforts to continue telemedicine practices offered during the pandemic
 - Support efforts to pilot efforts to provide transportation to families with limited access
 - Support efforts and policies to start and sustain school-based health programs
 - Support efforts and policies to encourage Medicaid coverage of doulas
 - Engage with Home State Health and the child welfare system on the implementation of the Specialty Health Plan which began July 1, 2022
 - Ensure access conversations include a focus of health equity

- **Support policy efforts to focus support and awareness on mental and behavioral health care**
 - Support alternatives to suspensions and expulsions for Pre-K-3rd grade
 - Statutorial change
 - Raising pandemic-related rise in need
 - Support the recruitment of behavioral health workforce
 - Note: Gap for social workers between graduation and getting conditional licenses

- **Ensure childhood immunization policy changes are evidence-based, public health focused**
 - Participate in immunization coalition and support efforts to educate policymakers on policies intended to increase participation of childhood immunizations
 - Assist in education efforts regarding COVID-19 vaccine



2023 Policy Priorities and Platform Economic Security

Outcome Statements

1. Missouri's public policies will provide opportunities that support families in attaining and maintaining economic security & stability.
2. Missouri's revenue structure will support investments in services that help children & families to succeed and thrive.

Policy Priority

- **Educate and advocate for establishment of state Child Development Accounts (CDA)**
 - Recruit policymaker champions and work alongside them to advance the policy
 - Lead regular CDA coalition calls

Policy Platform

- **Ensure pandemic relief funds are obligated and liquidated in ways to advance children and their families**
 - Participate in American Rescue Plan Act discussions in legislative and coalition brainstorming and formation of recommendations
 - Educate policymakers on needs of families such as modernizing IT infrastructure, broadband, transportation gap pilot programs, TANF fund utilization, workforce preparedness, housing needs
- **Conduct education outreach with policymakers as necessary on family economic security issues**
 - As coalition members requests surface, support efforts on policies like:
 - Defensive efforts on proposals to cut state revenues
 - Child Tax Credits
 - Housing needs
 - Paid Leave
 - TANF modernization
 - Food security

