



## **State Partners FY19**

### **Alabama Partnership for Children**

**Primary Contact:** Gail Piggott

---

The Alabama Partnership for Children (APC) is a non-profit organization that develops, designs and implements a unified approach for improving outcomes of children from birth to age five. They are guided by prominent business leaders committed to enhancing the quality of life and quality of learning for children birth to five years. The APC coordinates the work of several advisory groups that identify and prioritize needs for young children and their families, and facilitates collective action in all areas of healthy development.

### **Children's Action Alliance (AZ)**

**Primary Contact:** Kelley Murphy

---

Children's Action Alliance (CAA) seeks to influence policies and decisions affecting the lives of Arizona children and their families through research, publications, media campaigns, and advocacy. They work for a future where all children have health insurance, a place to call home, and enter school ready to learn and succeed; and where no child is raised in poverty, hungry, or abused or neglected.

### **Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families**

**Primary Contact:** Rich Huddleston

---

Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families (AACF) works to ensure all children and their families have the resources and opportunities to lead healthy and productive lives and to realize their full potential. They do this by serving as a voice for children at the state Capitol and with their congressional delegation, using data to support public policy, and organizing coalitions of diverse groups to drive change.

Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families (AACF) is exploring tax credits for early childhood educators and leading the Invest Early Coalition's public awareness and advocacy campaign on workforce issues, including compensation, career ladders, and a TEACH scholarship program. They are considering creating a c4 and growing their grassroots capacity. In 2016 they joined forces with ForwARd Arkansas to create the Partnership for Pre-K Improvement. These two advocacy organizations are working on a common policy agenda that includes a range of early childhood priorities for children ages 0-5 and to develop an early childhood legislative caucus. Arkansas is one of the states participating in the NGA's policy academy on workforce policies.

## **ForwARd Arkansas**

Primary Contact: Cory Biggs

---

The goal of ForwARd Arkansas (ForwARd) is to make Arkansas a leading state in education and close the achievement gap within a generation. They identified this ambitious goal with recommendations for realizing it with thousands of people across the state.

ForwARd is the leading state advocacy organization on issues related to data systems and use and preK funding strategies. In 2016, they joined forces with Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families to create the Partnership for Pre-K Improvement. These two advocacy organizations are working on a common policy agenda that includes a range of early childhood priorities for children ages 0-5 and to develop an early childhood legislative caucus. Arkansas is participating in NGA's policy academy on workforce policies.

## **Advancement Project California**

Primary Contact: Karla Pleitez Howell

---

The Advancement Project California (AP) expands educational opportunities for low-income children from birth through high school graduation.

AP is supporting child care through rigorous research and partnership building to expose the critical need for facilities infrastructure in the state, especially for infants and toddlers. Despite gains in state funding for early care and education in recent years, their research shows that California lacks the physical spaces necessary to serve all children who need it. AP will produce a policy report and online web portal that shares recommendations about how to improve facilities infrastructure. They will present it to members of the California State Legislature and the Assembly's Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Education.

## **Children Now (CA)**

Primary Contact: Stacy Lee

---

Children Now (CN) serves as the hub for key children's issues, supporting and connecting thousands of groups in California to create an unprecedented power base for kids. They are dedicated to improving the lives of children from before birth through age 26. CN employs research, policy, communications, and advocacy strategies to advance a range of children's issues: early childhood, education reform, children's health, foster care and juvenile justice.

California will have a new governor this year. CN will develop and take the first steps toward a long-term, visionary and sustainable early childhood system with the new Administration. They will continue behind-the-scenes leadership on state budget, legislative and administrative advocacy efforts to achieve increased investments in early childhood programs.

## **Clayton Early Learning (CO)**

Primary Contact: Christina Walker

---

Clayton Early Learning (Clayton) prepares young children for school through family-centered classrooms and home-based practices, research/program evaluation, and professional development. Clayton partners closely with The Colorado Children's Campaign (CCC), which provides research, organizes an extensive statewide network of child advocates and serves as the leading voice for kids at the State Capitol.

Colorado stakeholders came together in 2018 to prioritize long-term goals for the early childhood field, and develop advocacy tools to advance a shared agenda in the coming years. With the shifting political climate due to the 2018 elections, they will educate the incoming administration and legislators on early childhood and the priorities they have set, with a focus on: ensuring all children get a healthy start, increasing access to quality early care and learning, advancing priorities to support the early childhood workforce, and engaging advocates and partners in advocacy to elevate the profile of early childhood issues.

## **DC Action for Children**

Primary Contact: Shana Bartley

---

DC Action for Children (DC Action) provides data-based analysis and policy leadership on critical issues facing children and youth in the District of Columbia. They promote policies and actions that optimize child and family well-being.

The DC City Council passed landmark *Birth-to-Three for All* legislation in June, promising \$250M in new funding to increase the salary scale for teachers, expand child care subsidy and align rates with the cost of providing the care, expand home visiting and early intervention programs, and strengthen the infrastructure for a comprehensive early childhood system. DC Action will collaborate with stakeholders across systems to support implementation of the legislation. This will include researching innovative financing strategies for child care and coordination of multiple quality improvement efforts. DC Action will also continue to lead the DC Home Visiting Council.

## **Florida Children's Council**

Primary Contact: Brittany Birken

---

The Florida Children's Council (FCC) is a non-profit organization with a mission of leading businesses, agencies, and other key stakeholders in efforts that support Florida's children, youth, and families. It serves as the umbrella organization for the state's Children's Services Councils. By leveraging and enhancing the collective strengths of community impact, FCC promotes statewide policies and systems for Florida's children and families.

## **GEEARS: Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students**

Primary Contact: Mindy Binderman

---

The Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students (GEEARS) is a statewide advocacy organization that bridges the gap between Georgia's families, business community, and policy leaders to promote school readiness. GEEARS works closely with state agencies to implement policy change, advocates for early learning in the General Assembly, and engages civic leaders.

## **Ounce of Prevention Fund (IL)**

Primary Contact: Ireta Gasner

---

The Ounce of Prevention Fund gives children in poverty the best chance for success in school and in life by advocating for and providing the highest quality care and education from birth to age five. They promote healthy child development through three complementary approaches: creating and supporting direct programs; educating and coaching practitioners to provide more children with high-quality early education; and advocating for systemic change and significant investment.

## **Child and Family Policy Center (IA)**

Primary Contact: Sheila Hansen

---

The Child and Family Policy (CPFC) has a long history of collaborative work in Iowa and throughout the U.S. on many facets of child policy and advocacy. They are a regular presence in the state capitol. CPFC evaluates health and child and family systems, conducts research to advance programs and policies, and provides technical assistance in the areas of policy development, research and analysis, and processes for discussion/facilitation.

## **Kansas Action for Children**

Primary Contact: Annie McKay

---

Kansas Action for Children (KAC) shapes health, education and economic policy on behalf of all children in Kansas. Their advocacy strategy includes research and analysis, communications and outreach, and public policy advancement. KAC prioritizes opportunities that contribute to mitigating, preventing, or reducing childhood poverty in children from birth through eight years of age.

KAC has 4 policy priorities this year: elevating the public dialogue around healthy brain development as an election year platform issue, promoting better systems alignment and collaboration of early education governance, restoring funding for the Children's Initiatives Fund (CIF) that supports all early childhood programs, and increasing access to anti-poverty programs being limited by legislation and administrative practices.

## **Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence**

Primary Contact: Brigitte Blom Ramsey

---

The Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization founded in 1983 to harness citizen voices to advocate for vastly improved schools across the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Today, they focus on informing the public and policymakers, studying priority issues, and engaging business leaders, families, students, and other citizens to demand educational excellence and equity from the earliest years through postsecondary education.

## **Louisiana Policy Institute for Children**

Primary Contact: Melanie Bronfin

---

The Louisiana Policy Institute for Children (LPIC) is a source of non-partisan, independent information on issues concerning children (birth through four). They develop policy proposals informed by data, research, best practices, and the experiences of other states for improving the outcomes of Louisiana's young children. LPIC provides educational and outreach activities around these recommended policy solutions to put Louisiana's youngest citizens on the path to success in school and in life.

Louisiana is embarking on a master planning process through its Early Childhood Care and Education Commission to establish a shared vision and strategies that improve access to, and quality of, early care and education. LPIC will provide the Commission with policy research on cost models, best practices, systems building, and local governance structures. They will develop recommendations for the Commission, advocate for policy change based on this work. They will conduct research and craft a platform to educate candidates for the more than 25% of state offices open in 2019.

## **Maine Children's Alliance**

Primary Contact: Rita Furlow

---

The Maine Children's Alliance (MCA) provides non-partisan leadership by promoting and advocating for sound public policies that benefit Maine's children. A resource for other partners and policy-makers, MCA provides comprehensive data and information about the status and well being of Maine's children. They contribute to positive change by collaborating with partners at the state, regional, and national level on behalf of Maine's youngest children.

MCA is focusing on their gubernatorial election to ensure that the new governor will make early childhood education a top priority and are identifying 3 key issues that a statewide coalition can work on during the transition and first hundred days of the new administration. MCA's policy priorities include: social emotional development, child care, and the early intervention system. MCA will train providers at their Children's Convention, educate and inform legislators through the Children's Caucus, and increase the advocacy skills of home

visitors so they can better educate and inform policy makers about the benefits to children and parents who participate in the program.

## **Maryland Family Network**

Primary Contact: Clinton Macsherry

---

Maryland Family Network (MFN) is a voice in Annapolis and Washington, D.C. making sure that the needs of young children and their families are a priority with lawmakers. They also administer the state's network of Family Support Centers and Child Care Resource Centers.

MFN will lead a campaign of election-related advocacy. They will engage gubernatorial nominees to secure commitments to advance early childhood education. MFN's strategies will include: polling Maryland voters, media outreach based on poll results, development of a new "Early Childhood 101" publication for candidates statewide, intensive outreach to each gubernatorial campaign, two public events to which the gubernatorial candidates would be invited separately, special outreach to encourage participation in the candidate events and voting, use of MFN's new "Counting our Losses" report to engage business leaders in MFN's candidate events, and encourage them to include child care issues in other forums.

## **Strategies for Children, Inc. (MA)**

Primary Contact: Amy O'Leary

---

Strategies for Children (SFC) works to ensure that Massachusetts' children have the support they need in the early childhood years to be ready to succeed in school and life. They engage in policy advocacy, research, communications, and constituency building at both the local and state levels to ensure all children have access to high-quality early education, enter elementary schools ready to succeed, and are proficient readers by the end of third grade.

SFC will build on their success to secure new funding for preK, especially in communities that have federal Preschool Expansion Grants and have developed implementation plans. They will also continue to advance workforce policies and compensation. SFC plans to accomplish these goals by leveraging strong relationships they have built with elected officials, business leaders, practitioners, community leaders, and policymakers.

## **The Center for Michigan**

Primary Contact: John Bebow

---

The objective of the Center for Michigan (CFM) is to make Michigan a better place by encouraging greater understanding and involvement in policy issues among the state's citizens, and making sure their voices are regularly heard. They do this by calling forth citizen views, amplifying those views, and projecting them into the halls of power. CFM created the Children's Leadership Council of Michigan (CLCM), a group of prominent business leaders in Michigan committed to wise investment in early childhood initiatives. CFM partners with Public Sector Consultants to staff the CLCM.

The Children's Leadership Council of Michigan will focus on 3 areas: improving the delivery of child care including securing the investment of public funds, maintaining and building support for the Great Start Readiness Program (preK), and developing a deeper bench of effective early childhood advocates. Michigan will have a new governor, new legislative leadership, and new leaders in several key early childhood organizations. The CLCM will work with partners to increase the awareness of early childhood issues and build support for new investments.

### **West Central Initiative (MN)**

Primary Contact: Laura LaCroix-Dalluhn

---

Originally formed to help west central Minnesota thrive, West Central Initiative now works to advance state policy through local, regional and state projects, by being a part of advisory committees, working with state agencies, chairing the Governor's Early Learning Council, and testifying at the legislature.

West Central Initiative and LaCroix-Dalluhn Consulting, convener of the Minnesota Targeted Home Visiting Coalition, are partnering to create a unified coalition in Minnesota focused on cross cutting policies to support infants, toddlers, and their families. Through this planning process they will develop a shared vision and policy plan, and identify priority advocacy strategies for 2019.

### **Mississippi First**

Primary Contact: Rachel Canter

---

Mississippi First (MSF) works to champion transformative policy solutions ensuring educational excellence for every child. They are the lead advocates for the Early Learning Collaborative Act of 2013, Mississippi's state-funded preK law. They conduct research, and support advocacy and implementation efforts for the state preK program, including supporting the Mississippi Department of Education, funded preK programs, and applicant communities.

MSF seeks to build and sustain support for early childhood investments by hosting small group dinners for legislative leaders from both parties, and launching an Early Childhood Education Caucus. Mississippi will elect a new Governor, Lt. Governor, and Attorney General in 2019, so MSF also will host candidate briefings to educate future decision-makers about the preK program and to build champions. During the FY19 legislative session, MSF will conduct a campaign to raise the preK program's per-pupil funding rate by relying on recent research modeling the cost of meeting the program's quality standards.

### **First Five Nebraska**

Primary Contact: Becky Veak

---

The vision of Nebraska First Five is that all children begin kindergarten with the experience they need to become successful students and productive citizens. They work with state

partners in the legislature and government agencies to create effective early childhood policies that promote accountable early childhood investments to eliminate the achievement gap for Nebraska's youngest learners.

### **Advocates for Children of New Jersey**

Primary Contact: Cecilia Zalkind

---

Advocates for Children of New Jersey (ACNJ) works for a future where all children grow up healthy, safe and educated. ACNJ works to improve policies and programs for children and families by educating, informing, and engaging leaders and the public on children's needs. They conduct independent research and policy analysis and work with local and state groups to promoting high-quality early education from infancy to age 8.

ACNJ will work to strengthen New Jersey's comprehensive early learning system by addressing access to high quality preschool for more 3- and 4-year olds, developing and strengthening a quality and affordable child care system, and attendance in early learning programs. ACNJ co-facilitates the Alliance State and Federal Policy Group with Rhode Island KIDS COUNT.

### **Center for Children's Initiatives (NY)**

Primary Contact: Betty Holcomb

---

The Center for Children's Initiatives (CCI) works to assure every child in New York starts life with a foundation of health, care and learning to succeed in life. CCI plays a leadership role in state and local coalitions to secure funding, resources and policies from prenatal to third grade. They do this in partnership with the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy (Schuyler), which engages elected officials in Albany to secure policies that benefit people living in poverty, especially children and families; and Advocates for Quality Education (AQE), which mobilizes communities across the state to keep New York true to its promise of ensuring a high-quality public education to all students regardless of zip code.

CCI will partner with Schuyler, AQE, and others to launch *Pre-K 2020*, a campaign to ensure continued expansion of full-day, statewide preK and the financing structure necessary to sustain quality preK in diverse settings. They will address equitable compensation for preK teachers in all settings, enhance supports for all children including dual language learners and children with disabilities, and elevate the needs of younger children. CCI will support Schuyler's work on the implementation of New York's First 1,000 Days initiative on Medicaid reform, which strives to ensure that K-12 and early childhood perspectives are incorporated into the implementation of the First 1,000 Days recommendations, including screenings, family navigators, and cross-sector data system and use.

### **North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation**

Primary Contact: Tracy Zimmerman

---

The North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation cultivates early childhood champions and leads and supports collaborations to advance policies that build a foundation of opportunity and success for every child by the end of third grade.

## **Groundwork Ohio**

Primary Contact: Shannon Jones

---

Groundwork Ohio is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy organization that advances quality early learning and development to improve school outcomes, increase the life-long success of Ohio's children, and lay a strong foundation for economic prosperity.

## **Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness**

Primary Contact: Debra Andersen

---

Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness seeks to provide better opportunities to the children and families in the state by engaging businesses and the public in supporting and investing in early childhood. They work to coordinate an early childhood system focused on strengthening families and school readiness for all children.

## **Children's Institute (OR)**

Primary Contact: Dana Hepper

---

Children's Institute works to move from research to action by promoting cost-effective public and private investments in young children birth through third grade. Their goal is to increase the number of Oregon's children developmentally on track, arriving at kindergarten prepared for success and meeting third grade benchmarks. They advocate for an education system that aligns and integrates early learning, family engagement and health with the primary grades.

CI is focusing on the lack of access to the high-quality early care and education necessary for success in kindergarten. To encourage policymakers to prioritize the needs of low-income children and their families, CI is building a movement in partnership with the Early Learning Division, other advocacy partners, the Oregon Business Council, school leaders, service providers, and parents. Their policy priorities for the 2019 legislative session include: targeted investments in both access to and quality of prenatal to age 5 early learning services as part of a coherent early childhood system, a well-prepared and diverse early learning workforce, and connecting early care and education to health care and K-12 systems. They are developing a cost model of a comprehensive system and working with the business community on a revenue strategy. Children's Institute is part of the Gates-funded Partnership for Pre-K Improvement project.

## **Rhode Island KIDS COUNT**

Primary Contact: Elizabeth Burke Bryant

---

The mission of Rhode Island KIDS COUNT (RIKC) is to improve the health, safety, education, economic well being, and development of Rhode Island's children. They do this by providing independent, credible, comprehensive information on Rhode Island's children and

bring together individuals and organizations to change or influence public policies and programs to improve children's lives.

RIKC will coordinate the Rhode Island Early Learning Council and lead advocacy efforts on: access to preK and Head Start, high-quality child care, developmental screening and early childhood IDEA services, evidence-based home visiting, paid family leave, and access to high-quality health and mental health care for young children and their families.

## **Tennesseans for Quality Early Education**

Primary Contact: Mike Carpenter

---

Tennesseans for Quality Early Education (TQEE) works to advance high-quality early care and education through policy development and advocacy. They do this by leading a statewide coalition and promoting a robust policy agenda that reflects the importance of the birth through third grade continuum in preparing children for future academic success.

Operating with Memphis Tomorrow as their fiscal agent, TQEE is building a strong foundation with key legislative victories, a research-based policy framework, recognition among policymakers and media, relationships with new partners, and an organizational structure with statewide representation. The state has competitive 2018 races for governor and key legislators. We are supporting them to educate, inform, and cultivate support from new leadership in the governor's office, agencies, and legislature. They will promote an early learning agenda during the political leadership transition and the 2019 session to advance policies and investments in pre-k, child care, K-3 quality, and home visiting. TQEE is part of the Gates-funded Partnership for Pre-K Improvement.

## **Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children**

Primary Contact: Joan Benso

---

Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children (PPC) is a strong, effective, and trusted voice to improve the health, education, and well being of the Commonwealth's children. Their core strategies include research and analysis, strategic communications, mobilization, and government affairs. PPC focuses on 4 core areas: child abuse and neglect, early learning, health, and K-12 education.

PPC will continue to advance public policies to: protect the core elements and implementation of CHIP and Medicaid, expand the availability of evidence-based home visiting strategies, assure the availability of high-quality child care for low-income families, and expand the number of children enrolled in high-quality preK.

## **Texans Care for Children**

Primary Contact: Stephanie Rubin

---

Texans Care for Children (Texans Care) is a statewide, non-partisan, multi-issue children's policy organization. They develop policy solutions, produce research, and engage community leaders to educate policymakers, the media, and the public about what works to improve the well-being of Texas children and families.

Texans Care will advocate for key early childhood development and health priorities in the 2019 Texas Legislative Session to improve access to quality preK quality, early intervention, and child care. They will leverage existing momentum, fill leadership gaps in the advocacy landscape, and execute a strategic campaign to build support for early childhood programs and services. Texans Care is one of our state partners who has had some success with health policies. They will build on their work on maternal depression in the last session and use it to focus attention on early childhood mental health and early intervention. They are also considering adapting the First 1,000 Days initiative in New York.

### **Children at Risk (TX)**

Primary Contact: Mandi Kimball

---

Children at Risk (C@R) serves as a catalyst for change to improve the quality of life for children through strategic research, public policy analysis, education, collaboration and advocacy. Through its research and advocacy programs, they are a leader in understanding the health, safety and economic indicators impacting children, and educating public policy makers about their importance in improving the lives of children.

A significant barrier to delivering high quality subsidized early childhood education (ECE) in Texas is an under-educated and under-compensated workforce. This proposal grew out of the TEACH compensation project that the Alliance funded in 2017-18. C@R was part of a team from Texas considering how the Texas Workforce Commission and the local workforce investment boards could leverage their workforce development resources to support the advancement of early childhood educators. While they view the industry as having high growth potential, they invest little to improve the ECE workforce. C@R will analyze strategies and opportunities to leverage workforce improvement dollars for early childhood workers and engage the early childhood workforce and other stakeholders to develop recommendations for a path that would help improve quality.

### **Virginia Early Childhood Foundation**

Primary Contact: Kathy Glazer

---

The Virginia Early Childhood Foundation is a public-private partnership to increase efficiencies, encourage innovation, and improve policies to advance healthy development and school readiness of young children. They act as the backbone for a statewide network of Smart Beginnings partnerships that convene community leaders to build the capacity of local communities to create optimal environments for children's growth and development.

## **Children's Alliance (WA)**

Primary Contact: Allison Krutsinger

---

The Children's Alliance (CA) is a multi-issue advocacy organization working in Washington to ensure that laws, policies and programs work for kids. Their overall goal is to promote positive early learning outcomes for children through effective policy advocacy, with specific emphasis on improvements for populations of children at risk of not being school-ready. They lead a coalition of 125 organizations across the state, and collectively, they hold state leaders accountable until they secure the resources required to make all children safe and healthy.

This year CA's focus areas include: preK, workforce (especially compensation), QRIS, and child care. They will be working to secure funding to meet a state mandate for preK expansion, and ensuring that sufficient resources are dedicated to supporting quality. They will work with the Department of Children, Youth, and Families to develop recommendations for increasing workforce compensation to the legislature. They also aim to at least restore funding cuts that were made to the QRIS last year. CA is part of the Gates-funded Partnership for Pre-K Improvement Project.

## **Kids Forward (WI)**

Primary Contact: Ken Taylor

---

Kids Forward (KF) provides research, public education, and advocacy for the development and implementation of public policy that improves child and family well being in health, economic security, safety, and education. KF works to ensure every child in Wisconsin can grow up in a just and nurturing family and community by focusing on early learning, health, and family support.

KF will work on increasing access to high quality early care and education for children furthest from opportunity, with a focus on racial equity, candidate and campaign education during the upcoming election and budget cycle, and expanding their base of children's champions.