

EARLY CHILDHOOD

- Ensure that all Hoosier children have access to quality child care and pre-school programs regardless of income or geographic location.
- Require kindergarten attendance and continue to fully fund full-day kindergarten statewide.
- Provide greater access to developmental and mental health assessments for children ages birth to five and increase training for mental and behavioral health professionals in treatment modalities that reflect best practices for this age group.

EARLY INTERVENTION & PREVENTION

- Ensure that prevention and early intervention programs are available and accessible to youth, individuals, and families who require them before they are in crisis.
- Require surveys of all mental and behavioral health professionals that gather information about practice areas and specialties, geographic areas of service, use of telemedicine, etc. to better determine areas of shortages and accessibility issues.
- Monitor the progress of the Commission on Improving the Status of Children to ensure the well-being of and access to opportunities for success for every Hoosier child.
- Ensure that pregnant mothers, including mothers with substance use disorder (SUD), have access to services for the treatment and prevention of medical conditions that could have serious consequences for their infant's health and well-being.

EDUCATION

- Embrace a comprehensive evidence-based approach to prevent all forms of peer aggression and disruptive behavior, including bullying, gangs, dating violence, and suicide. This includes providing resources and training to all school personnel that foster positive and safe school environments and promote positive social skill development.
- Eliminate zero tolerance discipline policies at the school and state level in favor of graduated codes of discipline aimed at maintaining the student's academic progress and addressing the root causes of disruptive and aggressive behaviors.
- Provide all students access to educational and counseling options that guide them to college and career readiness and provide adequate funding to career and technical education opportunities.
- Establish a point-of-contact within the Indiana Department of Education to monitor prevention programs and policies, provide technical assistance to school corporations in developing policies, and assist with tracking data related to instances of peer aggression and disruptive behaviors.

WELL-BEING & SAFETY

- Reduce and prevent youth suicide and substance abuse by expanding training in evidence-based prevention and awareness for all youth-serving professionals, expand the mental health and substance abuse workforce, particularly in rural areas, and improve access to both inpatient and outpatient behavioral health programs.
- Ensure that policies affecting issues of youth safety such as violence, suicide, gangs, and bullying are data-driven and reflect a comprehensive, holistic approach to understanding and addressing the root causes of the issues within families, communities, and schools.
- Protect youth who are being trafficked by curbing demand through increased criminal penalties for adults and increased intervention services for victims.
- Support increased usage of the Community Eligibility Provision for schools who have at least 40% of students who qualify for free and reduced lunches, remove the ban on drug felons' access to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and support efforts to reduce food deserts in Indiana.



Fast Facts – Hoosier Youth

1,575,452 children
under age 18 (2016)

Health and Well-Being

Indiana ranked 30th in overall child
well-being (2017)

1 in 5 children lived in poverty
(2015)

15,276 funded Head Start and Early
Head Start slots for children under
age 5 (2015)

Roughly 62% of youth in grades 9-
12 have tried alcohol

23% of youth in grades 9-12 were
offered, sold, or given illegal drugs
on school property

Public Education

89.1% of youth graduated from high
school on time (2016)

4.6% of youth 16-19 years old were
not in school and not high school
graduates (2015)

48% of youth received free and
reduced-price lunches (2016)

61% of 3&4 year olds were not
enrolled in nursery school or pre-
school (2015)



Fast Facts – Hoosier Youth

Safety

35,561 cases of child physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse & human trafficking were substantiated by Child Protective Services (2016)

18,428 juvenile cases filed for delinquency and status offenses (2015)

In 2015:

7% of youth did not go to school in past 30 days for fear of their safety at school or going to and from school

19% of students had been bullied at school during past 12 months

16% of students had been bullied electronically during past 12 months

Suicide was the 2nd leading cause of death and homicide was the 3rd leading cause of death among youth ages 15-24

Sources:

2017 Indiana Kids Count Data Book
2015 Youth Risk Behavior Survey
Indiana Department of Education



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State and local child advocates working
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United Way
of Central Indiana



Guiding Policy Goals and Recommendations

EARLY INTERVENTION & PREVENTION

All youth should be safe, nurtured and free from abuse, neglect and delinquency through comprehensive community efforts that coordinate, build capacity and advocate for high-quality early intervention and prevention services.

Recommendations:

- ✓ Direct resources toward prevention and early intervention efforts to prevent child abuse, neglect, and delinquency
- ✓ Legislative policies allocate and maintain resources to create and sustain prevention and early intervention programs
- ✓ Prevention and early intervention services are accessible and available to all community members who need them

QUALITY YOUTH PROGRAMS

All youth programs should adhere to quality and best practice standards to best serve the youth in Indiana.

Recommendations:

- ✓ Assess youth-serving programs for their quality and responsiveness to the needs of the youth they serve
- ✓ Provide needed resources and support to youth-serving programs for a supportive learning and recreational environment
- ✓ Legislative policies reflect the importance of quality programs as a key to positive youth development

STUDENT SUCCESS

All youth in Indiana have the right to receive a quality education, graduate, and succeed.

Recommendations:

- ✓ Engage parents and students as partners in educational decisions and as advocates for quality educational options
- ✓ Provide schools with relevant information on issues affecting the families that they serve and feedback from parents and students about their experiences
- ✓ School and legislative policies reflect equal opportunities for all students to receive high quality education

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

All youth should have opportunities for employment that help them build their work and life skills for successful careers as adults.

Recommendations:

- ✓ Expand private and public sectors jobs for youth that pay at least minimum wage and offer training and assistance in building life skills such as communication, attendance, work-appropriate attire, etc.
- ✓ Create more opportunities that are accessible for youth with limited transportation options

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

All youth can be empowered to voice their opinions about and be part of the decisions that affect them.

Recommendations:

- ✓ Youth provide legislative testimony and meet with legislators in issues that affect them
- ✓ Encourage youth voice through forums, events, and focus groups to solicit their feedback and mobilize action
- ✓ Engage youth in planning events revolving around youth issues

YOUTH WORKER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

All professionals working with youth should have opportunities for continuing education and professional development programs with quality standards and credentialing.

Recommendations:

- ✓ 2 and 4-year colleges and universities implement degree and/or certification programs for individuals wanting to choose youth work as their career
- ✓ Youth development professionals are viewed as on par with other professionals in terms of credentials and qualifications

MCCOY is a non-partisan and independent non-profit organization that champions the positive development of youth through leadership on key issues and support of the youth worker community. MCCOY is also the Indiana affiliate of the Partnership for America's Children (4foramericaschildren.org), a network of state- and community-based nonpartisan child policy advocacy organizations in 42 states and the District of Columbia.