

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. Continue to expand pre-k access for children ages 3-5.
- 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

- Monitor progress on changes to the Department of Child Services (DCS) to ensure the focus includes workforce development and retention and supportive, trauma-informed practices in the workplace.
- Ensure that prevention and early intervention programs are available and accessible to youth, individuals, and families who require them before they are in crisis.
- Monitor the progress of the Commission on Improving the Status of Children and encourage them to address 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 pre-natal care and other 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 and inclusive 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.
- Address teachers' concerns to promote the recruitment and retention of a high-quality workforce.

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 homelessness, violence, suicide, gangs, child sexual abuse, bias-motivated crimes, 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 policies that reduce food insecurity and remove food deserts in Indiana.



Fast Facts – Hoosier Youth

1,568,130 Hoosier children
under age 18 (2018)

Health and Well-Being

Indiana is ranked 29th in overall child well-being (2019)

About 109,000 children (6.6%) in Indiana are living without health insurance- this is the 6th highest rate of uninsured children in the country. (2018)

1 in 5 Indiana high school students (19.8%) considered attempting suicide in the past year. Youth who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual are 5 times more likely to attempt suicide than their peers.

Indiana high school students (21.7%) are more than twice as likely to have used electronic vapor products in the past month than their national peers (10.5%) (2018)

1 in 5 children (18.4%) live in poverty. Black Hoosier children are nearly three times more likely to live in poverty (40.0%) than their white peers (14.6%) and more likely than their Hispanic peers (28.3%). (2018)

Public Education

88.1% of youth graduated from high school on time (2018)

In 2018, the Indiana high school drop out rate was 5.2%. Black students (8.9%) are twice as likely to drop out of high school as their white peers (4.4%).

47.3% of youth received free and reduced-price lunches (2018)

With 14,353 funded Head Start and Early Head Start (EHS) slots for children under age 5 (2017), only 5% of eligible Hoosier children ages 0-3 had access to EHS and only 36% of eligible Hoosier children ages 3-5 had access to Head Start.



Fast Facts – Hoosier Youth

Safety

In 2017, there were 33,979 substantiated cases of child abuse or neglect in Indiana. The child abuse and neglect rate has nearly doubled in the past 10 years.

In 2018, 25.9% of Hoosier high school students did not feel safe at school. Black high school students (33.4%) feel less safe at school than their Hispanic (29.2%) and white peers (24.5%).

In 2016-2017, 2 in 10 Hoosier children ages 6-17 were bullied by other children (20.8%)

In 2016-2017, 2 in 10 Hoosier children ages 6-17 were bullied by other children.

In 2015, 15.7% of Indiana high school students were electronically bullied.

Suicide was the 2nd leading cause of death and homicide was the 3rd leading cause of death among youth ages 15-24. The homicide rate for black youth ages 15-24 is more than 12 times higher than their white peers. (2017)

69.1% of Hoosier parents report their child lives in a safe neighborhood. Black Hoosier parents are the least likely to report their child lives in a safe neighborhood (54.7%)

Source:
2019 Indiana Kids Count Data Book
Georgetown University Center for Children and Families



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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 data-driven 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, including after-school and summer programs, for a supportive learning and recreational environment
- ✓ Legislative policies reflect the importance of quality data-driven programs as a key to positive youth development

STUDENT SUCCESS

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

Recommendations:

- ✓ Engage caregivers 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 caregivers and students about their experiences
- ✓ Ensure that school and legislative policies reflect equal opportunities for all students to receive high quality education that includes financial literacy courses

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

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

Recommendations:

- ✓ Expand private and public sector jobs for youth that pay at least minimum wage and offer training and assistance in building life and critical thinking skills such as communication, processing information, 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:

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

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 equally 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 (foramericaschildren.org), a network of state- and community-based nonpartisan child policy advocacy organizations in 42 states and the District of Columbia.