



MCCOY 2023 Public Policy Agenda

GUIDING MCCOY'S ADVOCACY EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN INDIANA

MCCOY places diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice at the center of our organization's advocacy efforts.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

- Ensure that all Hoosier children have access to affordable, quality childcare and pre-school programs regardless of income or geographic location.
- Require kindergarten attendance and continue to fully fund full-day kindergarten statewide and continue to expand pre-k access for children ages 3-5.
- Provide greater access to developmental and mental health assessments for children ages 3-5 and increase training for mental and behavioral health professionals in treatment modalities that reflect best practices for this age group.
- Expand support services for the mental health needs of parents.
- Expand and distribute childcare financial aid equitably throughout the state and increase education opportunities for how to receive aid for families, in particular for ALICE families (asset limited, income constrained, employed) and families who are undocumented. Support policies to sustain expanded childcare financial aid.
- Promote the recruitment and retention of a high-quality early childhood caregiving workforce with diverse backgrounds through increased pay and high-quality benefits. Likewise, expand financial aid options for parents to ensure that they can secure childcare while staying at work.
- Renew and sustain supports for child care made through tax credits and expansion of social services.

EARLY INTERVENTION & PREVENTION

- Ensure the focus of the Department of Child Services (DCS) includes workforce development through supportive, trauma-informed, culturally competent practices in their workplace.
- Make certain that prevention and early intervention programs are available and accessible to youth, individuals, and families who require them before they are in crisis.
- Ensure that all pregnant and new mothers have equitable access to pre-natal medical care and support both at home and in the workplace.
- Provide all parents and caregivers with equitable access to resources and services they need to build safe, stable, nurturing environments and relationships for children.

YOUTH JUSTICE

- Reimagine the Indiana youth justice system into a restorative system that utilizes a culturally responsive, trauma-informed, developmental approach based on research-based policies paired with the science of brain 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, school attendance, and addressing the root causes of disruptive and aggressive behaviors.
- Reduce disparities based on race, ethnicity, gender, ability, and sexual orientation or gender identity and expression among children and emerging adults in the justice system as well as those who are victims of crime.
- Make sure youth and emerging adults in the justice system maintain supportive relationships and have appropriate guidance and counsel from legal professionals and caregivers.

Indiana's infant mortality rate is **6.6**
In 2020, Black infants were more than **2x** (13.2/1000) as likely to die before their first birthday than White infants (5.5/1000) or Latino infants (6.0/1000)

In 2019, only **5%** of eligible Hoosier children ages 0-3 had access to Early Head Start and **24%** of eligible Hoosier children ages 3-5 had access to Head Start.

Infant care in Indiana costs **39.5% (\$3,574) more per year** than in-state tuition for a four-year public college.

15.2% of Hoosier children live in poverty.

Indiana's infant mortality rate-- the number of babies who die in the first year of life per 1,000 live births-- was **6.6** for 2020. Black infants are over **2x** as likely to die before their first birthday (13.2 per 1,000) than White infants (5.5 per 1,000) and Hispanic infants (6 per 1000).

20.6% of Hoosier children have experienced two or more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Black Hoosier youth are **3.5 x** more likely to be referred to court than the average youth, **3.1 x** more likely to be placed in secure confinement, and **3.1 x** more likely to be waived to adult court.

Students who are suspended early in their educational career, such as in preschool are **10x** more likely to drop out of high school, experience academic failure, grade retention, hold negative school attitudes, and face incarceration.





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The graduation rate in Indiana for the 2020-2021 school year was **86.7%**

48.2% of Indiana students receive free or reduced-priced meals through the National School Lunch Program.

92,427 Hoosier students do not have verified broadband access at their homes.

In the 2020-2021 school year, the School Counselor to Students ratio in Indiana was **1:530**.

85% of the Hoosier population lives in a mental health shortage area.

52.4% of Hoosier children with a mental health or behavioral condition did not receive treatment or counseling in 2019 and 2020.

1 in 3 (37%) Hoosier children ages 10-17 were overweight or obese in 2019.

20.9% of Hoosier children have experienced two or more adverse childhood experiences.

In 2020, law enforcement agencies reported 189 hate crime incidents in Indiana, a **148.7%** increase from the previous year.

SOURCES:

2022 Indiana KIDS COUNT Data Book



EDUCATION

- Ensure students' basic needs are met while learning; this includes access to expanded broadband internet, digital learning tools, food, and housing support.
- Provide necessary support to parents and caregivers with additional responsibilities that are required of assisting with virtual learning.
- Provide equitable supports for children with disabilities or a compromised health condition.
- Expand new policies that address student learning loss, chronic absenteeism and its root causes, and provide added social and emotional supports for children.
- Prioritize both teacher and student wellness through social, emotional, and mental health support while recruiting and retaining mental health professionals in the school system.
- Guide students to post-secondary opportunities like higher education, career and technical education, and workforce development opportunities by providing adequate funding for financial aid opportunities, and access to educational and job training opportunities.
- Embrace a comprehensive evidence-based approach to prevent all forms of peer aggression and disruptive behavior, including bullying, gangs, dating violence, and suicide.
- Promote the recruitment and retention of a high-quality teaching workforce, school mental health professionals, and school support staff with diverse backgrounds through increased pay and quality benefits.
- Support quality Out-of-School-Time programs that ensure children have equitable access to safe, enriching environments to address learning loss and/or unsafe behaviors and provide meaningful activities that promote better outcomes and trajectories for children.
- Strengthen and support community schools to ensure that schools, families, and communities collaborate to support students' educational success, build stronger families, and improve communities.
- Prevent any attempts to remove or restrict life skills education, factual history of marginalized groups, and culturally competent teaching from the classrooms.



WELL BEING AND SAFETY

- Ensure that policies affecting issues of youth safety and well-being 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 increasing intervention services for victims and curbing trafficking demands through an elimination of the statute of limitations and increased criminal penalties for adults.
- Support policies that reduce food insecurity and eliminate food deserts in Indiana. Support healthy food distribution initiatives to provide food to children and families.
- 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 disproportionately affected areas, and improve access without limitations to both affordable and high-quality inpatient and outpatient behavioral health programs.
- Increase funding to support communities in implementing domestic violence prevention programs, and to support survivors as they work to rebuild safe and stable lives.



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