



ADVOCACY

POLICY PRIORITIES 2018

Membership-driven • Solution-focused



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Advocating on behalf of vulnerable children and families since 1969

The Michigan Federation for Children and Families advocates for policies and resources that improve Michigan's child welfare system and empower providers to offer highly effective and quality services.

Four priority areas for 2018
are identified.

Building Strong Youth and Families Through Quality Services

VALUE: Availability and accessibility of the full array of services will best meet the needs of vulnerable children and families so all children are safe and able to thrive.

- Provide treatment and interventions that are high quality, trauma-informed, therapeutic interventions in the least restrictive environment, while maintaining strong family and community connections to promote permanency.
- Enhance the range of community-based care, treatment foster care, and aftercare services available in order to ensure the individuals responsible for meeting the needs of children in foster care are prepared, trained, and supported to care for kids.
- Continue development of a Performance Based Child Welfare System in Michigan, incorporating outcome measures that will hold service providers accountable for service provided, incentivize successful performance, and develop efficiencies to allow for reinvestment and innovation in services.
- Extend Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care (YAVFC) to youth through age 23 in order to support young adults through college and secondary schooling.

Strengthening the System Through Innovation and Collaboration

VALUE: An exemplary system of child welfare seeks to support and invest in models of collaboration, innovation, and efficiency in the delivery of human services.

- Enhance the spirit of collaboration and partnership among the State of Michigan, nonprofit community, and all child welfare and juvenile justice stakeholders, which is critical to promote and ensure all children impacted by our systems of care receive the highest level of service.
- Provide input regarding evidenced-based practices that are selected and endorsed through state initiatives.
- Infuse effective and proven strategies throughout the field to reduce turnover of caseworkers and child welfare staff in order to increase placement stability and reduce the time needed to achieve permanency for young people.
- Transition the delivery of new worker and supervisor training to a regionally based model to better support increased frequency and closer proximity to the attendees, using resources more efficiently, and keeping staff connected to their own work environments and their families.
- Expand collaboration with Michigan colleges and universities in order to promote partnership, research in the field of child welfare, and training and education of students interested in the field.

Investing Adequate Resources

VALUE: Human service funding should fully fund the cost of providing quality services to vulnerable children, families, and individuals throughout the state.

- Evaluate adequacy and increase rates for contracts with MDHHS that have not been updated within the past three years, particularly in the areas of family preservation, behavioral health, and adoption.
- For all contracts, annually update rates through an actuarial rate setting process to reflect reimbursement levels consistent with the actual cost of providing all necessary services to children and families as required by contract, in accordance with requirements of the Implementation, Sustainability and Exit Plan (ISEP), federal guidelines, and local court mandates.
- Implement a mechanism to pay providers of foster care services a per diem administrative rate for every case on a caseworker's caseload for the duration of a case from referral acceptance to the discharge of wardship. Currently, unpaid placement types (i.e., unlicensed relatives, child caring institutions, own home) are counted on caseload ratios, but agencies do not receive reimbursement for case management.
- Increase supports and reimbursement levels to foster parents where there have been no updates to clothing allowances, determination of care rates, or the daily rate to foster parents in order to increase stability of the placements.
- Continue pursuit of a single-payer child welfare payments system whereby MDHHS is the single and first payer, and county Child Care Fund payments occur administratively between the central office of DHHS and respective counties, creating greater consistency for private agencies in management of reimbursement and the timeframes in which agencies can anticipate payment.

Developing Dynamic Data Systems

VALUE: A robust, reliable, and comprehensive data system will equip agencies with tools to measure baseline data, monitor program effectiveness through outcome data, and adapt programming to best serve vulnerable children and families.

- Develop a strategy that involves both a third-party assessment and/or evaluative process that would determine the functionality of the MiSACWIS system, while focusing on fixes within the system that would relieve caseworkers of system input requirements that create barriers to use of time with children and families in the field.
- Collaborate closely with DHHS in order to make data-driven decisions that impact outcomes for kids. Private agencies need to have the assurance of reliable, consistent data reports produced from MiSACWIS.