



State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Commission on Children



Smart Investments in Hard Times

Policy Direction for Children, Youth, and Families

2009 Legislative Session

By Elizabeth C. Brown
Legislative Director, Connecticut Commission on Children

Connecticut policymakers face tough budget choices this year, yet they can be made while maintaining the gains made for children and families in recent years. The Commission on Children proposes the following legislation to reduce unnecessary expenditures, streamline procedures, and improve basic services for children and their families in these increasingly difficult times.

I. An Act Concerning Investment in Prevention and Reduction in Crisis Financing for Children

The Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management shall identify long-term cost savings from prevention services for children, as presented in the Governor's prevention budget pursuant to Section 4-67v of the General Statutes. The Secretary shall determine how to reallocate expenditures to achieve the state goal of allocating at least 10 percent of the state budget to prevention services for children and youth.

II. An Act Concerning Child Poverty and a State Emergency Response for Families and Children

The Department of Social Services shall establish an Emergency Response Protocol to ensure basic needs of families and children are met during the 2009-2010 recession. The Department shall work with community social service agencies, community action agencies, and other organizations that serve families to establish the Emergency Response. The Department shall work in conjunction with the State Child Poverty and Prevention Council to develop the Protocol.

III. An Act Establishing An Early Childhood Prevention and Early Intervention System for Vulnerable Children and Families

The Department of Children and Families, in conjunction with the Department of Social Services, Department of Public Health, Department of Education, Children's Trust Fund, and the Commission on Children, shall implement an integrated early-intervention program to increase parenting competencies and decrease the incidence of serious emotional disturbance, developmental and learning problems, abuse, and neglect among high-risk children, youth, and families. The program shall establish a continuum of family and children services to support optimal development and early identification of developmental and behavioral concerns.

IV. An Act Concerning Maximization of Medicaid Funding to Address Maternal and Child Health and Reduce the Cost of Preventable Hospitalizations

The Department of Social Services shall include as part of Medicaid's Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) services in the state HUSKY insurance program a comprehensive approach to maternal and child health to address health disparities in minority populations. HUSKY shall maximize Medicaid expenditures for outreach to pregnant women, including: access to pre-natal care; attention to maternal depression, smoking, and other at-risk conditions; care coordination and case findings; and collaboration with related programs, including Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

V. An Act Concerning Fatherhood and the Department of Social Services

The Department of Social Services shall increase participation in the arrears-adjustment program by streamlining the application and approval process and increasing the number of participating programs.

VI. An Act Concerning the Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund

The Office of the Health Advocate will administer a Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund to assist families with expenses that are necessary for the health and well being of their children but beyond the income of the family and not covered by public or private insurance. The Fund shall seek to ensure the optimal health of the child, keep the child at home, and support the family in its time of hardship.

VIII. An Act Concerning Simplifying Procedures for Early Care and Education

The departments of Social Services, Education, and Public Health shall review procedures and requirements for anything that impedes program delivery for young children through redundancy

and unnecessary cost. These findings shall be presented to committees of cognizance in the legislature for approval.

IX. An Act Concerning Reduction of Health and Hospitalization Costs Through Measures to Prevent Childhood Obesity

The Department of Public Health, in conjunction with the departments of Consumer Protection, Education, and Social Services, shall implement measures to inform the public on the importance of nutrition to health and well being; prohibit the use of trans fats in Connecticut food service establishments; require chain restaurants to post calorie counts; and encourage school food service, child care centers, and other institutions to adopt nutrition standards for meals and snacks.

X. An Act Concerning Connecticut Jobs Stimulus

The Office of Policy and Management shall allocate a percentage of the state share of the federal stimulus infrastructure grant to sustain and expand the Jobs Funnels programs, in order to train and support low-income workers for construction jobs or other workforce needs. The state shall require that at least 30 percent of workers hired as a result of the grant be low-income residents. OPM shall establish a system of oversight and accountability to ensure compliance of this provision.

Revised 1/23/09