



**Council for
Children's
Rights**

2010 Legislative Agenda

*The 2010 Legislative Agenda frames advocacy efforts by **The Larry King Center for Building Children's Futures** to secure legislation and resources that strengthen the health, safety and education of children in Charlotte-Mecklenburg.*

I look forward to reporting positive progress on the items in this agenda to area organizations, institutions, leaders and media during The Larry King Center's inaugural N.C. legislative update this Fall. Please feel free to contact me with any questions as we continue to work for children today and tomorrow.

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The Larry King Center for Building Children's Futures supports strategic approaches to meet the long-term needs of Charlotte-Mecklenburg's children. The Larry King Center is a part of the Council for Children's Rights and is named for the late Larry King, a tireless champion for children in North Carolina.

Health & Human Services

Support Funding for Children's Developmental Service Agencies

Children's Developmental Service Agencies are the local lead agencies for the North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program, under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. These agencies provide early screening and intervention for children with mental illness and developmental disabilities.

Fully Fund Child Advocacy Centers

Child Advocacy Centers exist to provide a more sensitive environment to respond to children who have been the victims of abuse. Often children who have been abused have to re-live the trauma through multiple redundant interviews by multiple agencies. The Child Advocacy Centers protect the child from these redundant interviews.

Fully Fund Infant Mortality Programs and Services

Mecklenburg County had an infant mortality rate of 6.6 deaths per 1,000 births in 2008. Expansions in Medicaid coverage, enhancements in the perinatal care service system and implementation of evidence based programs such as Nurse Family Partnership is shown to help to reduce the infant mortality rate and improve birth outcomes. However, continuous budget cuts and elimination of services will negatively impact the impact of the infant mortality rate.

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Fully Fund N.C. Health Choice and Raise the Health Choice Enrollment Cap

North Carolina Health Choice for Children is a comprehensive health care program for children whose family income is too high to qualify them for Medicaid but too low for them to afford rising health insurance premiums. Raising the enrollment cap will allow more children to access affordable quality health care.

Support Case Management for Children with Special Needs

It is critical that children at-risk for developmental disabilities and chronic illnesses be identified early and that their families receive the support services necessary to maximize health and developmental outcomes.

Require the Child Care Commission and the Division of Child Development of the Department of Health & Human Services to Develop Improved Standards for Child Care Facilities and to Recommend Guidelines for Increased Levels of Physical Activity in Child Care Facilities

The Commission shall adopt rules for child care facilities to ensure that all children receive nutritious food and beverages according to their developmental needs.

The nutrition standards shall include all of the following:

- A prohibition against serving sugar sweetened beverages to children of any age
- A requirement to serve reduced fat milk to children older than two years of age
- A prohibition against serving more than four to six ounces of juice per day to children over one year of age

Each child care facility shall have a rest period for each child in care and arrange for each child in care to be out-of-doors each day if weather conditions permit.

Early Care & Public Education

Adequately Fund Smart Start and More at Four

It is important to invest in high-quality programs targeted at young children. North Carolina should continue to support young children who might be at risk of academic failure and prepare them for success in school. Supporting these programs will allow more children to enroll in early care and education programs.

Expand the State Child Care Subsidy Program

There are 6800 children in Mecklenburg County waiting to receive child care subsidy. It is important to ensure that working parents have the support they need to provide quality child care to their children. We should also continue to fund temporary subsidies for parents who are searching for work during the hard economic times.



Eliminate Reduced Price School Meals/Funds

This bill would appropriate funds to the Department of Public Instruction to eliminate reduced price lunches for school children who qualify for reduced price meals. There is appropriated the sum of five million two hundred thousand dollars (\$5,200,000) for the Child Nutrition Program for the 2010-2011 fiscal year.

Prevent Kindergarten through Grade 3 Class Sizes from Increasing

Smaller class sizes for young children in grades K-3 is valuable in providing quality education.

Ban Corporal Punishment for Children with Disabilities in the Public Schools

North Carolina law still allows local school boards to permit corporal punishment. Research has shown that corporal punishment does not improve educational outcomes. Instead corporal punishment studies show a negative affect on the social, psychological and educational development of children. Several state psychiatric hospitals serving children with the most severe mental health needs have banned prone restraint but it is currently not banned in all North Carolina public schools.

Consolidated Report/Early Care & Education

This bill requires The Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Public Instruction, and the North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc., to submit a consolidated report each year to the General Assembly that includes:

- A description of programs and significant services and initiatives
- The number of children served by type of service
- The number of individuals who applied and qualified for programs who have never been served
- The number of individuals who applied but did not receive services due to budget constraints
- The ages of children on program waiting lists
- A cost analysis of the program, including the cost per child served by the program
- A detailed explanation of expenditures related to quality enhancement activities
- A history of the funding and the previous fiscal year's expenditures
- The results of the previous year's evaluations of the initiatives or related programs and services.
- A description of significant policy and program changes
- A report of any private funds received



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Consolidate Payments/Early Care & Education Provider

In an effort to implement a more efficient system regarding payments made to early care and education providers, the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Public Instruction shall require all agencies involved with funding early child care and education and receiving State funds to participate in the consolidated payment function system.

Require School Systems to Collect Diagnostic Information on Students and Use it to Improve Student Achievement

The principal of each school, representatives of assistant principals, instructional personnel, and parents of children enrolled in the school shall constitute a school improvement team to develop a plan to improve student performance. School improvement teams shall use the Education Value Added Assessment System (EVAAS) or a compatible system, to analyze student data to identify root causes for problems and to determine actions to address them.

Fully fund the North Carolina Legal Assistance Fund Program

This program grants loan forgiveness relief to attorneys that choose to give back to the community by working for children in the public sector.

Juvenile Justice

Raise the Age of Juvenile Court Jurisdiction

Continue to support the implementation of a comprehensive plan to phase 16 and 17 year-olds into the juvenile justice system with adequate resources so they can access a developmentally appropriate, research-based continuum of services. North Carolina is one of only two states in the nation that continue to prosecute all 16 and 17 year-olds accused of a crime in the adult criminal justice system, regardless of the severity of the alleged crimes.

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