



## **Texas Legislative Priorities 2009**

### **Health**

- Strengthen Children's Medicaid/CHIP
  - 12 months Medicaid/CHIP coverage
  - Improve eligibility system for public benefits
  - Double outreach funding for Medicaid/CHIP
  - Create buy-in for CHIP program.
  
- Increase funding to reduce wait list time for Medicaid Waiver program services.
  
- Insure implementation of school health programs.
  - Adequately fund school health specialists in public schools as requested by TEA.
  - Strengthen School Health Advisory Committees at public schools.
  
- Increase Physical Education requirements in public schools.
  - Collect data on Physical Education class sizes and Physical Education teacher certification.
  - Support daily recess.
  
- Improve access to children's mental health care services.
  - Improve funding, reimbursement rates and reduce waiting times for care.
  - Increase funding for mental health services in the juvenile justice system.
  - Strengthen the capacity of the mental health system to respond to the unique needs of infants and toddlers.

### **Education**

- Improve access to school readiness programs
  - Promote affordable, quality early care and education.
  - Expand the supply of affordable, quality childcare.
  - Fund public pre-kindergarten to expand from half to full day and reduce the teacher-to-student ratio to 1:10
  - Increase funding for Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) to improve services for children and families with complex needs.
  
- Teach independent living and marketable skills in high schools.
  
- Expand after school care for children (including children with disabilities).

## **Economic Security**

- Support efforts to ensure adequate nutrition.

## **Safety**

- Provide the safest care for children in the TDPRS system.
  - Reduce CPS staff caseloads to meet national standards.
  - Increase retention of CPS staff by providing salary increases and “hiring ahead” practices.
- Invest in proven prevention programs including in-home visitations, STAR and CYD.
- Provide more resources for kinship care.
- Improve the well being and consistency of care for children in foster care.
  - Increase foster care rates.
  - Provide nurturing placements for infants and toddlers.
  - Ensure access to health care and early childhood intervention services
  - Ensure visitation between non-custodial parents and their young children.
  - Strengthen transition services (including housing and healthcare) for youth in foster care and with disabilities to increase their success into adulthood.
- Establish a second Juvenile Court in Collin County.
- Strengthen child passenger safety laws.
- Reduce re-victimization of child abuse victims by lessening the delays of resolution of criminal cases.

## **Additional Issues**

- Affordable alternatives for primary healthcare.
- Build the capacity of our state’s early childhood workforce