

2010 ADVOCACY AGENDA

I. State Budget and Resources

- Continue Families First's leadership role in a coalition campaign to prevent budget cuts in critical services affecting Georgia children and families by advocating for a balanced approach that includes sufficient revenue.
- Support legislation requiring a "Tax Expenditure Budget" that identifies where tax breaks go and the subsequent return to the state.

II. Child Welfare

- Encourage adequate state funding to maximize opportunities for federal funding for child welfare services in Georgia.
 - Work in coalition with the Office of the Child Advocate and other organizations to monitor Georgia's implementation of the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008.
 - Support funding for Independent Living Program services and benefits for youth beyond age 18 who are exiting foster care.
 - Monitor adoption legislation and policy, including proposed changes to the definition of a Special Needs Child for the purpose of eligibility for Adoption Assistance in Georgia.

III. Health Care

- Peachcare and Medicaid
 - Maintain PeachCare and Medicaid eligibility guidelines at current levels.
 - Maintain open enrollment for all eligible children.
 - Prevent imposition of premiums for children ages 1 to 5.
 - Work to address administrative barriers that have contributed to slow enrollment, and promote policies that improve systems.
 - Protect and improve service coverage.
 - Support provider reimbursement increases to improve access.
 - Support PeachCare for All Kids, a plan to extend health insurance to all Georgia children by taking advantage of federal matching dollars under Medicaid and the State Child Health Insurance Program (SCHIP).
 - Expand Medicaid health coverage to low-income parents with incomes at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level.

- Health Insurance
 - Protect current insurance requirements for preventive care, especially for women and children.
 - Support mental health parity.
 - Monitor and work to promote families' interests in state-level health reform considerations.

IV. Affordable Housing

- Support changes in laws to help families restructure mortgages and keep their homes or have time to relocate.
- Advocate for increased development of affordable housing in Atlanta and outlying areas.

V. Juvenile Justice

- Support adoption of the revised Juvenile Code as proposed by JUST Georgia out of concern over the poor outcomes for children who enter the juvenile justice system, recognition that current laws governing treatment of children do not reflect modern research on child and adolescent brain development, and the need to make the laws easier to understand and apply.

VI. Program Accountability

- Assure public resources and programs appropriately serve families and children by requiring public access to information on how programs operate and where resources are spent, as well as opportunities for the public to participate in decisions about them.
- Support legislation requiring public agencies to give notice, and an opportunity for public comment, on proposed rules for benefits programs.