2021 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH | EQUITY FOR ALL KIDS
Advocates for Children and Youth believes that Maryland’s children are the greatest gift it can give to the future. For this reason, our mission is to build a strong Maryland by advancing policies and programs to ensure children of every race, ethnicity, and place of birth achieve their full potential.

We gather and analyze data to understand the scope of inequities that our children, youth, and families face. Since the pandemic, these disparities have gotten worse. Therefore, our advocacy continues to address this reality. We introduce and support policies that ensure that every young person in the State has equitable access to resources and opportunities they need to thrive. Our approach is to ensure that there is **Equity for All Kids**.

Our work focuses on three areas:

- **Fair, Unbiased Treatment**--We will push for equitable treatment of all children and provide them with an opportunity to rebound.

- ** Academically-Prepared Youth**--We will advocate to ensure that all young people get the resources, education and supports they need to thrive.

- **Positive Life Experiences Within Healthy Families, and Communities**--We will push for policy and programs that support healthy and safe living, learning and working environments in all communities.
COALITION PARTNERS

2021 LEGISLATIVE FOCUS | EQUITY FOR ALL KIDS

Academically-Prepared Youth
Access to Higher Education Coalition
Baltimore Digital Equity Coalition
Blueprint Coalition
Coalition to Reform School Discipline
Maryland Education Coalition (MEC)

Fair, Unbiased Treatment
Children's Behavioral Health Coalition
Fair Funding Coalition
Fetal Information Mortality Review Team
Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI)
Maryland Youth Justice Coalition (MYJC)
Medicaid Parity
People's Commission
Prenatal and Postpartum Behavioral Health Network

Positive Life Experiences in Healthy Families and Community
Baltimore City Early Childhood Advisory Council
Baltimore City Mayor's Office for Children and Family Success
Baltimore Homeless Youth Initiative
Coalition to Protect Maryland's Children
Early Childhood Mental Health Steering Committee
Ending Youth Homelessness Coalition
Essentials for Childhood
Fetal Infant Mortality Review Team
Maryland Violence Prevention Coalition (MVPC)
Marylanders Against Poverty
Prenatal and Postpartum Behavioral Health Network
State Council on Child Abuse and Neglect

EQUITY FOR ALL KIDS
OVER RIDING THE VETO

2021 LEGISLATIVE FOCUS | EQUITY FOR ALL KIDS | FIRST THINGS FIRST

1. **BLUEPRINT FOR MARYLAND'S FUTURE**
   Maryland's schools are severely underfunded and lack critical resources. The Blueprint for Maryland's Future addressed these issues and was passed overwhelmingly in the Legislature but Gov. Hogan vetoed the bill. We will support all efforts to override the veto to ensure education is funded adequately and equitably for kids to receive a world-class education so school is a place where children want to be.

2. **SUPPORT FOR HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES (HBCUS)**
   Maryland must provide an adequate and dedicated funding stream for historically Black colleges and universities.

3. **CONFIDENTIALITY FOR MINORS**
   The internet is forever. When a young person's Department of Juvenile Services case information is made public, all privacy is gone. We want personal information to remain private until a judge determines if the young person will be tried as an adult or a child.
First, do no harm. As we strive for racial equity and inclusion, we must ensure that the recommended bills, if passed, do not create or exacerbate disparate outcomes among people of different races or ethnicities. Advocates for Children and Youth is in support of all bills including a racial impact analysis to ensure we do no harm.

**Racial Impact Statements**

**Disaggregated Data Reporting**

We need to close all disparities. The only way we can do so is to have access to timely disaggregated data by county, age, gender, race, and ethnicity to track areas of improvement and target interventions in all environments where children, youth and young adults are present.
Create a statewide inventory of youth diversion programs throughout Maryland to promote a more effective, efficient, and equitable use of resources for all youth regardless of race, ethnicity, gender or sex.

**DATABASE OF DIVERSION PROGRAMS**

Formalize the process of allowing judges, prosecutors, and defense attorneys to have more flexibility in sentencing. This process, known as informal adjustment, allows for the fair and appropriate treatment of all youth.

**LET THE JUDGES DECIDE**

End the unrealistic practice of assigning unlimited probation terms for youth in the justice system.

**END UNLIMITED PROBATION**
FAIR, UNBIASED TREATMENT
EQUITY FOR ALL KIDS | 2021 LEGISLATIVE FOCUS | YOUTH JUSTICE

1. THERE IS MORE TO A CASE THAN MEETS THE EYE
Stop charging youth automatically as adults. In Baltimore City, 80% of the cases in adult court are sent back to juvenile court and it is not because judges are soft on crime. When the entire case is heard, the transfer to juvenile court is not only fair but also appropriate.

2. THERE IS NO PLACE LIKE HOME
End the practice-of-out of home placement for youth who are arrested for misdemeanor crimes.

EQUITY FOR ALL KIDS
ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH
FOLLOWING THE MONEY
Monitoring the general fund for Pre-K – 12 educational investments to make sure no significant cuts are made and that investments address the impact of COVID-19 on children’s education.

ACCESSING EDUCATION
Education is way out of poverty and college-ready youth who are experiencing homelessness need a way out more than ever. We are working to expand access to Maryland’s tuition waiver and create a grievance process for those students who are denied.
KEEPING CHILDREN HEALTHY

Keep telehealth options in place beyond the pandemic to help ensure families with children can more easily access physical and behavioral health services.
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