

ACNJ Policy Agenda

2015-16 Key Initiatives



Advocates for Children of New Jersey works each year to advance efforts that improve the health, safety and well-being of all New Jersey children, with the goal of giving every child the chance to grow up safe, healthy and educated. Each year, ACNJ identifies key initiatives that can be advanced to move New Jersey closer to achieving this vision.

Following is a summary of ACNJ's priority goals and initiatives for 2015.

GETTING IT RIGHT FROM THE START

Goal: All young children have access to high-quality child care and preschool to support their critical early growth and development. Quality early learning provides young students with a foundation for early language and math literacy -- key to future success in school and in life.

- Gain approval of legislation that would strengthen child care safety and provide more comprehensive information about child care providers to help parents make good choices for their children.
- Gain approval of legislation that would make it easier for parents to keep their child care assistance when they move to a different county.
- Build grass-roots support for preschool expansion as a leader of NJ's Pre-K Our Way Campaign.



These dollars help support health insurance for about 185,000 New Jersey children through NJ FamilyCare, the state's popular free and low-cost health coverage.

SUPPORTING FAMILY SUCCESS

Goal: All parents earn enough to provide their children with the necessities they need to grow up safe, healthy and educated.

- Increase the number of low-income students receiving school breakfast by 10 percent in 2015 through leadership of the NJ Food for Thought School Breakfast Campaign, including advocating in local school districts and tracking districts' progress in the 5th annual school breakfast report.
- Combat looming federal cuts to health coverage for children by ensuring that Congress approves continued funding of the Children's Health Insurance Program. That funding is due to expire in September 30, 2015.



PROTECTING VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Goal: Children in the care or custody of the child protection and juvenile justice systems receive appropriate care, services and supports while under state supervision and are returned as quickly as possible to safe, stable homes.

- Improve the well-being of 3,500 children, age 5 and younger, in foster care by providing special protections to young children in the child protection system.
- Improve conditions for youth in the custody of the New Jersey Juvenile Justice Commission through support of legislation that would severely restrict the use of isolation and provide stronger legal protections for youth involved in the juvenile justice system.

Giving Every Child A Chance