

# About Us

## About Us

Advocates for Children of New Jersey (ACNJ) is the trusted, independent voice putting children's needs first for more than 30 years.

A cornerstone of ACNJ's success is our independence. We are non-partisan and accept no state funding for advocacy, giving us the freedom to speak up for children who have no voice and no vote.

Our work results in better laws and policies, more effective funding and stronger services for children and families. This means more children are given the chance to grow up safe, healthy and educated.

## Our Agenda

### Getting It Right From the Start

All young children need high-quality early education. It supports their healthy growth and development, putting them on a path to school success. It is a foundation for early literacy, so that they are reading on grade level by the end of third grade, a key to future school success and high school graduation.

### Supporting Family Success

The healthy growth and development of children starts with their parents. All parents must be able to provide stability and security for their children.

### Protecting Vulnerable Children and Youth

Children in the care of the child welfare and juvenile justice systems need special protections. Separated from their parents and communities, they depend on government services for their health, safety and well-being. These systems must be held accountable to make sure that children's needs are met while in state care and that they return to safe and stable families or to other permanent homes.

# Results

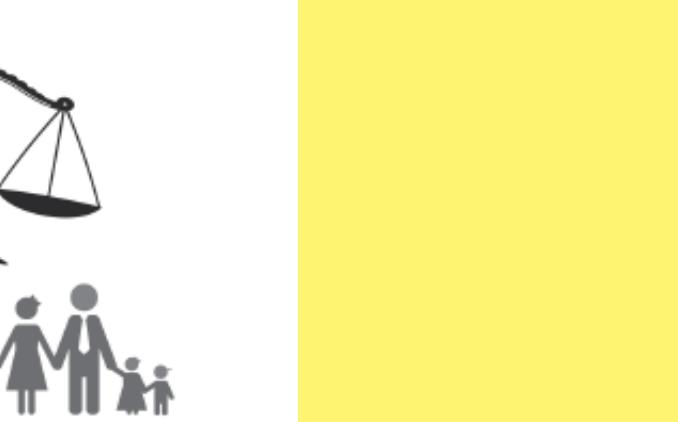


The number of eligible children that remain on the child care assistance waiting list, following ACNJ's advocacy, which secured increased state funding.

48,000



The increase in the number of eligible NJ children who now receive a healthy meal at the beginning of each school day as a result of our Food for Thought School Breakfast Campaign.



Families who received free assistance on legal issues affecting their children through our KidLaw Resource Center in 2012.



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2013

Advocates for Children of New Jersey



Giving Every Child A Chance



Dear Friends,

Our efforts this year to develop stronger policies and programs for children from infancy to age 3 is the beginning of an ambitious agenda that, when accomplished, will create a strong foundation for all young children in New Jersey.

I am proud of the role that Advocates for Children of New Jersey (ACNJ) has played in developing New Jersey's state-funded preschools, ensuring more children have access to health insurance and helping more children start their

school day with a healthy meal through our school breakfast campaign. Each day, hundreds of thousands of New Jersey children prove the importance and impact of these successes, when they start kindergarten healthy and ready to learn.

This is a moment to celebrate our "wins" and then to redouble our efforts to do more. So, join with us in celebrating these successes and making another commitment to the work ahead. Your support continues to make a difference for thousands of children across New Jersey.

Sincerely,

Cecilia Zalkind  
Executive Director



Dear Friends,

As President of the ACNJ Board of Trustees, I am proud of ACNJ's unqualified track record of working tirelessly to make New Jersey a better place for children to grow and develop. Despite the challenging economy of the last several years, that goal has helped ACNJ sustain important gains for children, from improving access to school breakfast to maintaining New Jersey's nationally-recognized, high-quality preschool.

These accomplishments would not have been possible without you — our donors, volunteers, Trustees, community partners and so many individuals dedicated to children. It is your support, in many different ways, that has enabled ACNJ to remain a strong, independent and effective voice for children.

On behalf of the ACNJ Board of Trustees, thank you for making the future a brighter one for more children. Your loyalty and commitment make a difference.

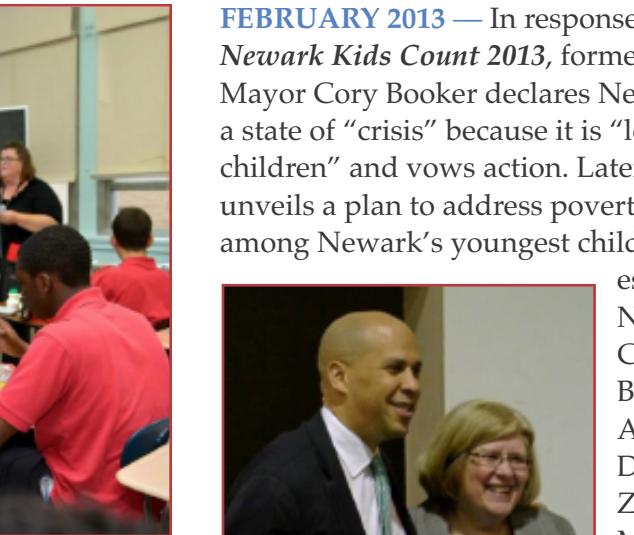
Sincerely,

Richard Trenk,  
President, Board of Trustees

# ACNJ News

**"Your support continues to make a difference for thousands of children across New Jersey."**

—Cecilia Zalkind



**FEBRUARY 2013** — In response to ACNJ's *Newark Kids Count 2013*, former Newark Mayor Cory Booker declares Newark is in a state of "crisis" because it is "losing its children" and vows action. Later, the mayor unveils a plan to address poverty, especially among Newark's youngest children and

establishes the Newark Early Childhood Policy Board. Pictured, ACNJ Executive Director Cecilia Zalkind with Mayor Booker.

Community members and decision-makers in all 21 counties create action plans to improve child well-being in their towns and cities.



**OCTOBER 2012** — ACNJ's 2<sup>nd</sup> *Annual School Breakfast Report* drew support from statewide leaders. Agriculture Secretary Douglas Fisher, pictured above, serves breakfast to Newark high school students. The report resulted in many school districts changing the way they serve breakfast, reaching more "food-insecure" children each day.



**APRIL 2013** — ACNJ presents its report, *Keeping the Promise of Preschool*, to the Joint Committee on Public Schools, and urges lawmakers to support expansion of high-quality preschool to children across New Jersey. The Legislature endorses a \$10 million down payment on the expansion and lawmakers begin talking publicly about the need for expanding access to quality early education in New Jersey.



**OCTOBER 2012** — ACNJ releases the *Special Kids Count Report: Juvenile Justice* on the successful effort to keep thousands of youth out of detention, calls for continued support of this critical initiative. Pictured above, ACNJ Board Member Margaret McLeod chats with the Honorable Glenn Grant, who leads the state's court system, and ACNJ Board President Richard Trenk.



**JUNE 2013** — ACNJ informs the media about the state's widely unnoticed attempt to limit information that can be released to the public when a child dies or nearly dies due to abuse or neglect. The news release garnered significant media attention.



**MAY 2013** — ACNJ releases the *2013 New Jersey Kids Count Report*, which measures child well-being statewide. ACNJ takes the Kids Count data on the road at regional forums

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