

# Be a True Champion for New Jersey's Children



## ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN OF NEW JERSEY'S 2017 ELECTION GUIDE

**NOW** is the time to raise your voice on behalf of kids. The 2017 November election will decide the next governor and legislature, who will set the agenda for the next four years. What happens in this election will determine outcomes for the nearly two million children who call New Jersey home.

ACNJ's 2017 Election Guide highlights six key issues that center on the biggest challenges facing children today and the action steps needed to make meaningful change.

We all benefit when our children can reach their full potential as contributing members of society.

#NJVOTES4KIDS 

Giving Every Child A Chance®

## New Jersey has a shortage of quality child care for our babies.

MORE THAN  
**207,000 BABIES**

LIVE IN FAMILIES WHERE ALL PARENTS WORK.



THERE IS ONLY SPACE FOR  
**1 IN EVERY 4**

OF THESE CHILDREN IN  
LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTERS.

FOR LOW-INCOME WORKING FAMILIES WHO RELY ON STATE SUBSIDIES TO HELP PAY FOR CHILD CARE, FINDING QUALITY CARE IS EVEN HARDER.



The state legislature has not approved a subsidy rate increase since 2008.

At just \$4.00/hour per infant, the current rate is not enough to cover the true cost of caring for babies.

As a result, fewer providers can afford to accept such young children, limiting options for families.

New Jersey lawmakers must raise the state child care subsidy rate for infants.

## Thousands of New Jersey children are waiting for preschool.

MORE THAN  
**35,000**  
3- AND 4-YEAR-OLDS

LIVE IN LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES WITHOUT  
ACCESS TO QUALITY, FULL-DAY PRESCHOOL.

Under the 2008 School Funding Reform Act, all low-income 3- and 4-year-olds would have access to quality, full-day preschool, regardless of where they live.

BUT FULL FUNDING HAS NEVER BEEN PROVIDED. AS A RESULT, THOUSANDS OF KIDS CONTINUE TO MISS OUT ON THIS VALUABLE LEARNING EXPERIENCE.

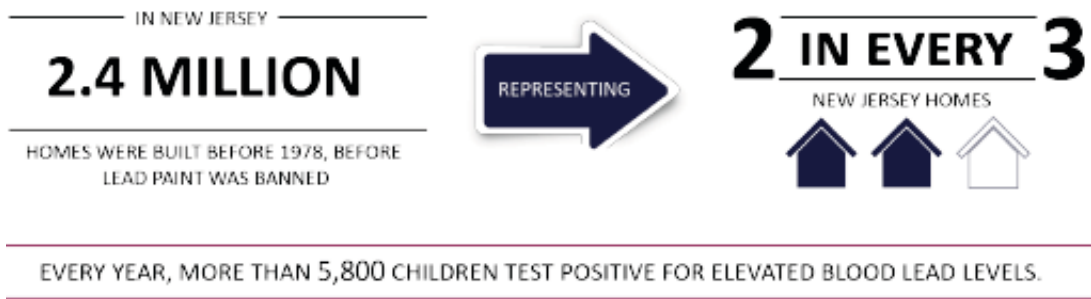


### KIDS WHO ATTEND HIGH-QUALITY PRESCHOOL:

- ✓ are better prepared for kindergarten
- ✓ develop stronger social and emotional skills
- ✓ are more likely to read on target by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade
- ✓ are less likely to need special education services

New Jersey lawmakers must fully fund preschool in the school funding formula.

## New Jersey children are still exposed to unsafe levels of lead.



And 25% of all tested children have some detectable level of lead in their blood.



Every \$1 spent on lead removal in homes yields a return of \$17 in reduced costs associated with childhood lead exposure.

New Jersey lawmakers must commit to getting lead out of homes and children.

## Too many New Jersey children start the day hungry.



WHEN KIDS ARE HUNGRY, THEY CAN'T FOCUS.



It's not a question of funding.

New Jersey loses federal funds every year for not serving more children.

The solution is simple - serve breakfast after the morning bell, rather than before school, to reach more hungry students.

New Jersey lawmakers should support Breakfast after the Bell in high-poverty districts.

# Abused and neglected children in New Jersey must be protected.



Since 2004, New Jersey has been under a federal court order to reform its child welfare system, leading to an increase in the child protection workforce, better trainings and more services.

That effort has resulted in:

- ✓ smaller caseloads for child protection workers
- ✓ more children living with family members
- ✓ an increase in adoptions



New Jersey is on track to nearing the end of federal oversight.

Maintaining sufficient funding has been a critical component to the state's success.

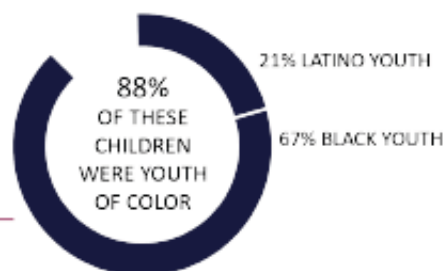
New Jersey lawmakers must maintain funding to protect abused & neglected children.

# Too many New Jersey youth of color are in the juvenile justice system.

IN 2015, NEARLY

**2,800**

JUVENILES WERE ADMITTED TO DETENTION



NJ's Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative succeeded in reducing the detention population by more than 60 percent, without risk to public safety, yet racial disparities remain.



Too many NJ youth of color who could be receiving effective treatment in their communities are still locked up.

Community alternatives work.

Rehabilitation and prevention yield far better results, reducing recidivism, controlling costs and promoting safety.

New Jersey lawmakers must invest in prevention and rehabilitation for young offenders.

The 2017 state elections represent a critical opportunity for you to be a true champion for children.

Join the [#NJVotes4Kids](#) Campaign by raising awareness of children's issues and help shape the focus and priorities of the next governor and legislature.

- ✓ Use the election guide to become better informed on the state of children in New Jersey.
- ✓ Challenge the 2017 political hopefuls to bring children's issues to the forefront during forums, town halls and local events.
- ✓ Use [#NJVotes4Kids](#) on social media to join the conversation on making children's issues a priority in the state elections.
- ✓ Encourage your friends, family and colleagues to join the #NJVotes4Kids Campaign by visiting [NJVotes4Kids.org](#).

ACNJ is calling for state leaders to:

- ✓ Raise the state child care subsidy rate to cover the true cost of caring for infants.
- ✓ Expand public preschool to more economically disadvantaged children.
- ✓ Commit to getting lead out of homes and children.
- ✓ Support measures to increase participation in school breakfast.
- ✓ Maintain funding to protect abused and neglected children.
- ✓ Invest in prevention and rehabilitation for youth in the juvenile justice system.

Investments in our children reap results. Not for just one child, but for thousands of children across New Jersey.

Together, we can elevate the voices of children!

Visit [NJVotes4Kids.org](#) to get the latest updates and activities.

A cornerstone of ACNJ's success is its independence.

We are strictly non-partisan and neither support nor oppose any candidate or political party but instead aim to bolster your efforts as champions for kids.



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Use [#NJVotes4Kids](https://twitter.com/hashtag/NJVotes4Kids) to join the discussion on children's issues in the 2017 state elections.

Visit [NJVotes4Kids.org](http://NJVotes4Kids.org) to get the latest updates and activities.

Advocates for Children of New Jersey is the trusted, independent voice putting children's needs first for more than 35 years. Our work results in better laws and policies, more effective funding and stronger services for children and families. And it means that more children are given the chance to grow up safe, healthy, and educated.

**Giving Every Child A Chance®**