

CHILD POLICY THEMES AND GOALS:

PARTNERSHIP FOR AMERICA'S CHILDREN CHILD VISION/POLICY

The Partnership for America's Children represents a network of over fifty multi-issue, child advocacy organizations in more than forty states and communities. These organizations established a vision for America's children based upon achieving success for children across five themes: Equity and Diversity, Health, School Readiness, School Success, Safety, and Economic Security. 20/20 Vision for Children has used this framework in its work, including its *Securing America's Future* publication. These five themes also have been embraced, in somewhat different language, by First Focus and the Children's Defense Fund, two leading child advocacy voices at the national level.

By starting from a vision for child success across these themes, 20/20 Vision for Children believes that discourse and action can bring people together around common goals and better ensure a bright future for the next and succeeding generations.

EQUITY AND DIVERSITY: All children achieve their full potential in a society that closes opportunity gaps and recognizes and values diversity. The Partnership supports:

- Explicit and concerted efforts to address child health, education, justice, and other disparities by race, ethnicity, national origin, language, sexual orientation, disability, and income
- Multi-cultural approaches to policy design and implementation
- Policies regarding immigrant and refugee children that meet their health, safety, education, and developmental needs
- Workforce strategies that develop culturally diverse and competent professionals in systems serving children and families

HEALTH: All children are born healthy, stay healthy, are surrounded by healthy adults and receive affordable, comprehensive, high quality health care that meets their social, emotional, physical, and dental health needs. The Partnership supports:

- Health insurance coverage regardless of where children live or their economic circumstance
- Comprehensive prenatal and postpartum care
- Mental, dental, vision, and nutrition services as part of that comprehensive coverage

- Primary, preventive, and developmental health care services
- Comprehensive family planning services
- A continuing and regular source of primary care (medical home) that knows the child and family and provides information and guidance to parents and responds to social, emotional, and developmental needs
- Effective coordination with and referrals to other services needed to address children's identified developmental and social as well as medical concerns
- Public health programs that support children's healthy development

SCHOOL READINESS: All children and their families receive the services and supports to enable them to start school prepared for success. The Partnership supports:

- Parent education and family support programs designed to improve the confidence and competency of all parents and support them in their role as their children's first and most important teachers.
- Dedicated supports for programs serving infants and toddlers designed to best meet their developmental needs
- Access to high quality, affordable child care for all children
- High quality pre-kindergarten for all three and four-year olds
- A highly qualified and appropriately compensated early childhood workforce
- Family and medical leave
- Early intervention (Part C) services that identify and address developmental delays that allow for continued educational development
- Programs, services and aligned standards to ensure smooth transitions into kindergarten

SCHOOL SUCCESS: All children have an equal opportunity to attend an adequately and equitably financed public school that offers comprehensive educational and related services to prepare them for success in higher education and in the 21st century workforce. The Partnership supports:

- Adequate and equitable financing for all public schools
- Highly qualified teachers prepared and motivated to teach all children regardless of their ability and background
- Individualized educational opportunities to meet children's special education needs
- Attendance at schools that utilize research based strategies such as full-day kindergarten and small class size to improve student achievement
- Early detection and remediation for struggling students to prevent school failure and reduce school dropouts
- Strong education and career guidance
- Schools that are part of their communities and take a whole child focus meeting not only children's cognitive needs but their physical, behavioral, and emotional development
- After school and youth development programs that meet youth needs and provide them with an opportunity to explore careers and participate in work based learning opportunities

- Re-engagement strategies for out-of-school youth to help them take the steps necessary to complete their high school education

SAFETY: All children are safe in their homes and communities from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation or violence, avoid risky behaviors, and contribute to community well-being. The Partnership supports:

- Strength-based child and family services focused on prevention
- Child welfare services that preserve families, where possible, and address children’s social, developmental, educational, and safety needs
- High quality foster care and other placement services that address the needs of foster children (including children’s mental health and developmental needs that are the consequence of maltreatment), reunify children where possible, and establish and sustain bonds with caring adults and other mentors
- Adoption services that provide permanent homes for children and continue to meet their special needs through post-adoption services
- Transition plans and services that meet the needs of youth as they grow into adulthood and “age out” of child welfare and juvenile justice systems
- Commitments within all child-serving systems to ensuring that the needs of children for permanent relationships with caring adults are fostered and maintained
- Youth development programs and opportunities that build resiliency, strengthen community involvement, and prepare youth for adulthood
- Juvenile justice approaches with a restorative community justice emphasis
- Substance abuse and mental health treatments that are based upon effective models positively impacting children, youth, and families
- Comprehensive gun safety laws

FAMILY ECONOMIC SECURITY: All children live in families that can provide for their needs and invest in their future. The Partnership supports:

- Tax and economic policies that enable working families to have sufficient income to raise their children (EITC, minimum wage, and other income policies)
- Initiatives that enable families to invest in themselves and their children’s development (IDAs, children’s trust funds, affordable higher education, and post-secondary training opportunities)
- Family support policies that allow families to meet basic health and living needs (health care, child care subsidies, affordable housing, TANF, SSI, Food Stamps, WIC)
- Family and community strengthening services and supports which foster resiliency, build social ties and connections, and build community