



# ADVOCACY

## POLICY PRIORITIES 2017

*Membership-driven • Solution-focused*



[www.michfed.org](http://www.michfed.org)

*Advocating on behalf of vulnerable children and families since 1969*

Michigan Federation for Children and Families' member involvement directs the establishment of this organization's advocacy priorities—both new initiatives and continued focus on areas critical to serving the needs of Michigan's vulnerable children and families.

# ADV POLICY



# GACY PRIORITIES 2017

## Strong Partnership

**PRINCIPLE:** The spirit of collaboration among the State of Michigan, nonprofit community, and all child welfare and juvenile justice stakeholders is critical to promote and ensure all children impacted by our systems of care receive the highest level of service. Children who cannot safely live at home deserve the best care while awaiting permanency. We must work together as a cohesive community to strengthen the supports and services available to families so all children are safe and able to thrive.

- In collaboration, private agencies and DHHS local offices will develop robust options for placements and services in order to best meet the needs of vulnerable children and families.
- Contractual relationships inherently shape the interaction between DHHS and private agencies. Private agencies will continue partnering with DHHS on contract reform, including: how contracts are awarded, implemented, and monitored; how changes in policy affect contracts; and the role of accreditation in contract monitoring.
- Federation member agencies are eager to be active participants in shaping the "MDHHS Systems Transformation" discussions through a strong collaboration with DHHS, private providers, behavioral/mental health clinicians, and national experts, to develop a system of behavioral health care for children in foster care that assures high quality, trauma-informed, therapeutic intervention in the least restrictive environment, while maintaining strong family connections and progress to permanency.

## Effective Programming

**PRINCIPLE:** Until every child has a safe, loving and permanent family, we must ensure effective services for this particularly vulnerable population. Private agencies provide the range of services from prevention to permanency while supporting children and families in their communities.

- Implement a case referral system in all counties that is fair and equitable for all stakeholders.
- Be a partner in improving coordination between child welfare services and mental and behavioral health services.
- Continue development of a Performance Based Child Welfare System in Michigan, incorporating outcome measures that will hold service providers accountable for service provided, incentivize successful performance, and develop efficiencies to allow for reinvestment and innovation in services.
- Expand on the success of family preservation programs such as Family Reunification, Wraparound, and Families First that demonstrate high rates of success in keeping families unified and reduce the need for out-of-home-care.

## Robust Data

**PRINCIPLE:** A robust, reliable, and comprehensive data system will equip agencies with the tools to measure baseline data, monitor program effectiveness through outcomes data, and guide the direction of financial resources to best serve vulnerable children and families.

- Increase private agency access to data through MiSACWIS. The system should be utilized statewide to export accurate data and produce the reports necessary to monitor and improve outcomes.
- Collaborate closely with DHHS to ensure integrity and accuracy of the data collected and reported from MiSACWIS.
- Utilize data that illustrates outcomes of the services provided to children and families by private agencies.

## Appropriate Rates and Efficient Funding Mechanisms

**PRINCIPLE:** On average, 20% of foster care case management costs of private agencies are not reimbursed.

**PRINCIPLE:** The Federation and several key child welfare stakeholders are deeply invested in developing a Performance Based Funding model in Michigan. Development of this new model is scheduled to take several years at a minimum, making it critical that provider per diem rates be addressed before implementation of a new model.

- Implement an annual actuarial rate study process to assess the actual cost of providing all necessary services to children and families as required by contract, in accordance with requirements of the Implementation, Sustainability and Exit Plan (ISEP), federal guidelines, and local court mandates.
- Continue pursuit of a single-payer child welfare payments system whereby DHHS is the single and first payer, where chargeback and invoicing for county Child Care Fund contributions occur administratively between the central office of DHHS and respective counties, creating greater consistency for private agencies in management of reimbursement and the timeframes in which agencies can anticipate payment.
- Seek greater parity in the resources and reimbursement made available to DHHS direct services staff and private agencies to ensure all families in the system have equal access to resources.
- Transition toward an electronic payment system in which all processes are uniform throughout the state and duplicative paper efforts are eliminated.