



## **Budgetary & Legislative Priorities 2024**

### **Health**

- Adopt continuous Medicaid coverage for children under age 6.\*
- Address child mental health crisis: Increase access to mental health support in schools. Provide reimbursement to schools so they can hire and retain school social workers and psychologists. Provide funding to sustain Mobile Response Stabilization Services.

### **Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice**

- Provide financial support to youth aging out of foster care: Increase funding for the higher education incentive grant and establish a tuition waiver program.
- Stop charging parents for costs associated with their child being in foster care.
- Protect the rights of youth: Prohibit any questioning of a juvenile who is suspected of delinquent or criminal behavior unless the parent or guardian is present.
- Prohibit the incarceration of children under the age of 14 for any offense other than murder, first degree sexual assault, or an attempt to commit such offenses.

### **Education**

- Support Multilingual Learners: Increase the amount and predictability of funding for Multilingual Learners included in the school funding formula and create a dual language program fund to be administered by RIDE.

### **Economic Well-Being**

- End deep child poverty: Improve the RI Works Program by updating the cash assistance benefit annually to ensure children do not live in deep poverty, repealing the full family sanction, and restoring eligibility to legal permanent residents.\*

### **Early Childhood Development\***

- Solve the early educator staffing crisis.
- Expand and strengthen the RI Childcare Assistance Program.
- Expand RI Pre-K equitable in Birth-Five context.
- Sustain and strengthen Early Head Start and Head Start.
- End waiting lists for Early Intervention and establish an Early Childhood IDEA B-5 Task Force.
- Update infant and early childhood mental health services.
- Save First Connections newborn home visiting.
- Improve paid family leave/address inequitable access.
- Increase the State Earned Income Tax Credit for working families.
- Raise more state general revenues for child care/early learning.

### **Rhode Island KIDS COUNT also strongly supports:**

- Healthy School Meals for All
- Commonsense gun safety laws, including an assault weapon ban and safe storage laws
- Increasing access to affordable high-quality Out-Of-School Time programs.
- Increasing the percentage of Educators of Color
- Increasing equitable access to college and career readiness opportunities
- Amend the Rhode Island Constitution so all Rhode Islanders must be provided with an education that is adequate and that this right is judicially enforceable.
- Eliminating payday lending
- Equity Impact Statements