Rhode Island KIDS COUNT
2024 Budgetary & Legislative Priorities

Health
- Adopt continuous Medicaid coverage for children under age 6.* S2161 (Lauria); H7998 (Slater)
- Provide funding to sustain Mobile Response Stabilization Services to support mental health.

Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice
- Provide financial support to youth aging out of foster care by increasing funding for the higher education incentive grant and establishing a tuition waiver program. H7905 (Casimiro)
- Stop charging parents for costs associated with their child being in foster care. H7904 (Casimiro)
- Prohibit the questioning of a juvenile suspected of delinquent or criminal behavior unless the parent or guardian is present. H7096 (Kislak); S2116 (Kallman)
- 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. H7642 (Stewart); (Acosta)

Education
- Increase access to mental health supports in schools. H7397 (Alzate); H7545 (Shallcross Smith)
- Increase the amount and predictability of funding for Multilingual Learners in the school funding formula S2558 (Cano); H7907 (Felix) and create a dual language program fund to be administered by RIDE. H7514 (Felix); H 7594 (Morales); S-2917 (Cano)
- Reduce the use of suspensions by providing alternative programs and student support. H7869 (Morales); S2525 (Mack)
- Make the student representative on the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education a voting member. H7614 (Morales); S2287 (Lawson)

Economic Well-Being
- Improve the RI Works Program by updating the cash assistance benefit annually, repealing the full family sanction, and restoring eligibility to legal permanent residents.* H7686 (Handy); S2337 (Murray)
- Increase the State Earned Income Tax Credit.* H7589 (O'Brien); S2054 (Felag)

Early Childhood Development*
- Solve the early educator staffing crisis. H7251 (Donovan); S2038 (Cano) H7123 (Diaz); S2344 (DiMaria); H7291 (Shallcross Smith); S2142 (Cano)
- Expand and strengthen the RI Childcare Assistance Program. H7124 (Diaz); (Cano); H7122 (Diaz); S2489 (DiMaria)
- Expand RI Pre-K equitably in Birth-Five context. Governor’s Proposed Budget; Article g, S2359 (Valverde); H7334 (Cotter)
- Sustain and strengthen Early Head Start and Head Start. H7496 (McNamara)
- End waiting lists for Early Intervention. Governor’s Proposed Budget, Article g, S2359 (Valverde); H7334 (Cotter)
- Establish an Early Childhood IDEA B-5 Task Force. H7438 (Carson); S2512 (Valverde)
- Meet maternal and young children’s mental health needs. H7900 (Fogarty); S2608 (DiMaria); H7204 (Shallcross Smith); S2072 (DiMaria)
- Save First Connections newborn family home visiting. S2360 (Valverde); H7899 (Giraldo)
- Improve paid family leave. H7171 (Giraldo); S2121 (Lawson)
- Raise more state general revenue for child care/early learning. H7338 (Alzate); S2355 (Murray)

*Right from the Start priority  +Raising RI priority
Rhode Island KIDS COUNT also strongly supports:

- Healthy School Meals for All. *H7400 (Caldwell); S2320 (Cano)*
- Commonsense gun safety laws, including an assault weapon ban and safe storage laws. *H7373 (Caldwell); S2202 (Lauria) H7217 (Knight); S2653 (DiPalma)*
- Increasing access to affordable high-quality Out-Of-School Time programs. *(Cano); (Shallcross Smith)*
- Increasing the percentage of Educators of Color. *H7514 (Felix)*
- 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. *H7396 (Messier); S2147 (Picard)*
- Eliminating payday lending. *H7211 (Alzate); S2141 (Quezada)*
- Expanding the use of Equity Impact Statements in budget and legislative proposals. *S2668 (Mack)*
- Expanding the supply of safe, healthy, and affordable homes. *Governor’s Proposed Budget, Article 5*
- Eliminate barriers to voter participation by allowing same-day voting. *H7474 (Alzate); DiMario*

For more information on specific bills and priorities in our issue areas, please contact the following Rhode Island KIDS COUNT staff:

**Health**
- Kaitlyn Rabb, Policy Analyst
  - krabb@rikidscount.org

**Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice**
- Kelsey Bala, Policy Analyst
  - kbala@rikidscount.org

**Education**
- Jessica Vega-Alejandro, Senior Policy Analyst
  - jvega@rikidscount.org

**Economic Well-Being**
- Jessica Vega-Alejandro, Senior Policy Analyst
  - jvega@rikidscount.org

**Early Childhood Development**
- Leanne Barrett, Senior Policy Analyst
  - lbarrett@rikidscount.org

**The Raising RI Coalition**
- Jessica Vega-Alejandro, Senior Policy Analyst
  - jvega@rikidscount.org
  - http://www.raisingri.org

**The Right from the Start Campaign**
- Leanne Barrett, Senior Policy Analyst
  - lbarrett@rikidscount.org
  - www.rightfromthestartri.org

*Right from the Start* priority +Raising RI priority