

2017 Legislative Accomplishments

Protection of the Children First Trust Fund

We oversaw the passage of this vital trust fund (CFTF) of almost \$40 million dollars which is dedicated solely for the needs of children. It has become the backbone of support that allows many state agencies to provide programs and services to over 150,000 of Alabama's children.

Advocated for Sufficient Funding for Agencies that Serve Children

The twelve state agencies that benefit from the Children First Trust Fund are also funded by either the General Fund or the Education Trust Fund. As budgets in Alabama become tighter, it is important to continue to educate lawmakers on what proposed cuts could do to the well-being of Alabama's children. Children First played a vital role in insuring that the agencies that serve children received level funding from the previous year.

Continued the Nationally Recognized #IamMedicaid Campaign

As the healthcare debate continues nationally and in our state, we saw a need to educate the public about the Medicaid program in Alabama. There are many misconceptions about what Medicaid is, who it serves and why it is needed. By developing and promoting the #IamMedicaid campaign, we helped change the conversation in the state about how to properly fund the program – this is important for all Alabamians but especially its children. Over 56% of the child population in Alabama receive Medicaid benefits.

Assisted with the Passage of Tougher Child Abuse Laws

Two bills were passed that impose tougher penalties on people who abuse children. One was named Ava's Law after a young girl who was beaten to death in Lee County. The other dealt with penalties related to Aggravated child abuse. It changed the offense from a Class B felony to a Class A felony if the crime is committed to a child under the age of six. Aggravated child abuse is defined as when a person tortures, willfully abuses, cruelly beats, or otherwise willfully maltreats a child.

Worked with Legislators Regarding Juvenile Justice Issues

We worked with policymakers to find ways to give judges more discretion with regards to the trying of children as adults and also on the expungement of their records. A joint

coalition, of which we are a part, was formed to study these issues more closely. Worked on enabling Pew Charitable Trusts to come to Alabama to examine our system, worked to make secure \$2.8 million dollars Juvenile Probation Officers have the funding they need to continue their work.

Gather information from the state agencies and other non-profits that offer services to children and families in Alabama. Currently we have partnerships with all the following state agencies who receive money through the Children First Trust Fund. These include: The Department of Early Childhood Education, The Department of Human Resources, The Department of Mental Health, The Department of Youth Services, The Department of Public Health (ADPH), Child Death Review (a division of ADPH), Multiple Needs Child Office, The Department of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention, The Department of Education, The Department of Forensic Sciences, The Administrative Office of Courts, Medicaid and The Alcohol Beverage Control Board.

We also work with other non-profits from which we gather information to help shape our positions on public policy. They include: VOICES for Alabama's Children, Alabama Partnership for Children, Alabama Arise, Alabama Academy of Pediatrics, HIPPY Alabama, Alabama School Readiness Alliance, Alabama Children's Policy Council, American Heart Association, American Cancer Society, National Lung Association and many other non-profits who are concerned about children's issues.

Monitored 72 Bills that Would Have Impacted Children