

Children First

2020 Legislative Accomplishments

With COVID-19 wreaking havoc on the legislative process and the inability to meet with a quorum present, the Alabama Legislative Session was severely cut short and many issues were not addressed in this session. Nevertheless, the CF most important issue passed: funding for the Children First Trust Fund.

Protection of the Children First Trust Fund

CF 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.

Alabama's Budgets

The \$7.2B Education Trust Fund and \$2.3B General Fund for FY2021 represent increases over 2020 spending, though less than was anticipated before COVID-19 hit. Neither budget included an anticipated pay raise for teachers or state employees. The authors of the budgets said they do not foresee proration being a problem with either one.

The biggest expenses in the General Fund budget are \$820 million for Medicaid; \$544 million for Alabama Department of Corrections; \$106 million Alabama Department of Public Health (with a significant portion of that paying for health insurance for low-income children) and \$154 million for Alabama Department of Mental Health.

Children First works on behalf of all of Alabama's Children. CF gathers information from the state agencies and other non-profits that offer services to children and families in Alabama. Currently we have partnerships with all 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 to help shape positions on public policy that best benefit children. These include: VOICES for Alabama's Children, Alabama Partnership for Children, Alabama Arise, Alabama Academy of Pediatrics, HIPPIY 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.