



Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana

Strategic Plan, 2020-2022

Mission: To improve the status of children in Indiana through systemic collaboration

Vision: Every child in Indiana will have a safe and nurturing environment and be afforded opportunities to reach their full potential and live a healthy and productive life.

Overarching Principles:

- **Two generations.** Parents are children's first teachers and role models. Efforts to support the safety, health, wellbeing, and education of children and youth are more effective when those efforts also support the role of parents and extended family members in the child's development.
- **Do no harm.** The state should only intervene in the life of a child or family if the intervention can reasonably be expected to improve the status of the child and/or family.
- **Trauma-informed.** An understanding of the impact of trauma and trauma-informed practice increases the effectiveness of all work with vulnerable children and families.
- **Youth and family voice.** All solutions are more effective if those who are expected to benefit from them participate in the process of developing them.
- **Equity.** Historical inequities cannot be corrected by ignoring them. For statewide solutions to be effective, marginalized voices must be included, data must be disaggregated (by race, geography, gender and other relevant variables) and policies and programs must be responsive to the particular needs and strengths of each community and group of children in Indiana.

How the Commission Does Its Work:

Based on the Commission's enabling legislation, and in an effort to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the state's response to vulnerable youth and families, the Commission works in the following ways:

- Fostering collaboration between and among the three branches and various agencies of state government
- Promoting appropriate data- and information-sharing across agencies at the state and local levels for the benefit of vulnerable youth and families
- Examining disaggregated data to shed light on persistent challenges, disparate outcomes, and potential solutions
- Identifying gaps and researching solutions that have worked in specific Indiana localities and in other states
- Consulting with national organizations with subject matter expertise
- Consulting with youth, families, and direct service practitioners with practical expertise
- Recommending laws, policies, and procedures for adoption by the state
- Promoting evidence-based practices for use by both public and private agencies serving vulnerable youth and families

Strategic Goal 1:

Improve the health and safety of vulnerable children and youth

As measured by:

- Infant Mortality
- Rate of substantiated abuse and neglect
- Number of children experiencing ACES
- Teen sexual victimization

Objectives:

1. Increase access to and use of community-based collaborative efforts that reduce infant mortality, especially in Black communities
2. Reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect in Indiana (primary prevention)
3. Reduce the number of substantiated reports of abuse of children in state care
4. Identify and encourage adoption of effective and promising models for reducing the sexual victimization of adolescents
5. Identify and encourage adoption of effective and promising ways to support families with vulnerable children

Other statewide efforts/groups with which to coordinate efforts¹:

Indiana Perinatal Quality Improvement Collaborative (ISDH)

Strategic Goal 2:

Increase access to quality mental health and addiction services for children and their families

As measured by:

- Ratio of licensed mental health and addiction providers to population
- Level of unmet mental health and addiction treatment needs
- Level of youth suicidality

Objectives:

1. Increase the use of evidence-based practices in mental health care and addiction treatment for youth and families
2. Increase the number of mental health and addiction care providers entering and remaining in the field and in the state
3. Increase access to treatment by recommending ways to ensure parity of mental health care with medical care.
4. Identify and encourage adoption of effective and promising innovations in service delivery models that increase effectiveness and/or access while reducing medium- to long-term costs
5. Identify and encourage adoption of effective and promising ways to promote mental health and prevent addictions in youth, especially those whose families experience mental health and addiction problems.
6. Increase access to interventions that reduce youth suicide.

¹ All groups listed are collaborative (cross-agency) and statewide in scope. The lead agency is listed in parentheses after the name of the collaborative group or initiative.

Other statewide efforts/groups with which to coordinate efforts:

Governor's Commission to Combat Drug Abuse (Governor's Office)

Governor's Health Workforce Council (Governor's Office)

Indiana Suicide Prevention Network Advisory Council (DMHA or MHA?)

Strategic Goal 3:

Improve educational outcomes of vulnerable youth

As measured by:

- Enrollment in high quality early care and education
- Grade-level promotion vs. retention
- Use of exclusionary discipline
- High school graduation rate

Objectives:

1. Improve access to early care and education for vulnerable youth
2. Increase use of positive discipline practices and reduce time out of class and out of school
3. Identify and encourage adoption of effective and promising school-community collaborations that improve outcomes for vulnerable youth
4. Identify and encourage adoption of effective and promising models for reducing and smoothing transitions for vulnerable youth who transfer between schools and districts
5. Identify and encourage adoption of effective and promising practices to promote access to postsecondary education and workforce readiness for vulnerable youth

Other statewide efforts/groups with which to coordinate efforts:

Indiana Birth to Five Strategic Plan (FSSA)

Foster Youth Education Stakeholder Group (IDOE)

Homeless Youth Education Stakeholder Group (IDOE)

Governor's Workforce Cabinet (Governor's Office)

Strategic Goal 4:

Improve safety and outcomes of youth who come into contact with the juvenile justice system

As measured by:

- Number of counties regularly holding Dual Status Assessment Team meetings
- Repeat delinquent behavior
- High school graduation or equivalency attainment by justice-involved youth (can't get this now, could work towards it)

Objectives:

1. Strengthen collaboration between juvenile probation, mental health, and the Department of Child Services at the county level, across the state
2. Identify and encourage adoption of effective and promising practices for providing safe shelter and appropriate services to victims of commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC), as well as youth classified as runaways

3. Identify and encourage adoption of effective and promising practices for preventing and diverting youth from entering the juvenile justice system
4. Identify and encourage adoption of effective and promising programs to engage justice-involved youth and parents in effective treatment, services, and community connections
5. Identify and encourage adoption of effective and promising practices to support youth transitioning back to their families and communities from secure detention and residential programs

Other statewide efforts/groups with which to coordinate efforts:

Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (Indiana Supreme Court)

The Indiana Protection for Abused and Trafficked Humans Taskforce (ICESA)

Indiana Dual Status Implementation Work Group (IOCS)

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