

Put Alabama's Children AT THE TOP

A Blueprint for Child Well-Being in Alabama



American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



Alabama Chapter

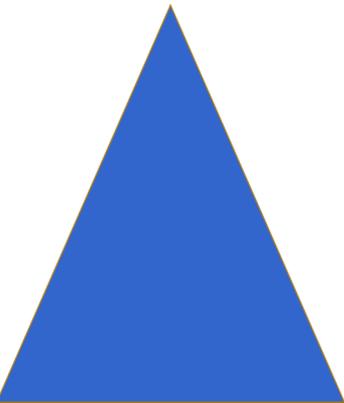
A Blueprint for Action

A child's first years of life establish the building blocks for their lifelong experiences. Groundbreaking research has shown that early childhood relationships and experiences—both positive and negative—have a significant impact on an individual's health, educational, and economic outcomes decades later, through adolescence and into adulthood. As a result, positively influencing a child's developing body and brain—rather than trying to identify and remediate more intractable problems later in life—is key to building healthy, productive adults.

In 1819, Alabama became the 22nd state to join the union. Our history is rich. Our future, however, lies in the hands of today's children—and their descendants.



In recent years, Alabama has made strides in addressing the challenges facing our children by expanding Alabama's First Class Pre-K program and ensuring funding of Medicaid thus far. Current state leaders must both preserve and BUILD UPON these successes. Children are our most enduring and vulnerable legacy. They must be at the center of state policy discussions and deliberations. A thoughtful approach to optimum child development is the single best investment in the future that the state can make. To this end, action by state government leaders is required to promote **healthy children**, support **secure families**, build **strong communities**, and ensure that Alabama **leads the United States** in supporting its children.





Healthy Children

- For all children to have affordable, high-quality health care coverage, and
- Have access to primary and subspecialty pediatricians as well as mental health specialists

What YOU can do

- Support sustainable Medicaid funding and efforts to expand healthcare coverage to all children
- Help build a foundation of wellness for families by expanding Medicaid to include more caregivers
- Build incentives and remove barriers to help recruit pediatricians and pediatric subspecialists
- Ensure that pediatricians can afford to care for Alabama's children by refusing to support physician payment cuts
- Protect the medical home as the best place for all medical care for children, as well as preserve the freedom of the doctor-patient relationship

Child health is a strong predictor of adult health. Addressing health and development during childhood—from birth through adolescence—leads to improved life outcomes in many areas. Conversely, the inability to access health care services threatens the physical, mental, and social health and well-being of children and their caregivers.



Secure Families

GOALS

Every child needs to grow up in an environment that is safe and nurturing. When a family lacks access to steady income, stable housing, adequate nutrition, and social and emotional support, it threatens the future of children and undermines the security of the nation as a whole. Our leaders must embrace a multi-generational perspective built on awareness of the fact that to promote healthy children, the state must first support secure families.

- For all families to have access to jobs that provide stable income,
- safe and secure housing,
- affordable and safe child care,
- access to healthy, nutritious foods, and
- positive parenting resources and training

What YOU can do

- Invest in programs that ensure affordable, high-quality child care for all families
- Improve public support for affordable and safe housing
- Expand programs for high-risk families such as home visitation
- Improve the child welfare system to better serve vulnerable children and families

Strong communities are the building blocks for secure families and healthy children. Our leaders must ensure that all children and families are safe in their communities and have equal opportunities regardless of their racial, ethnic or religious background, how much they earn, or where they live.

Strong Communities

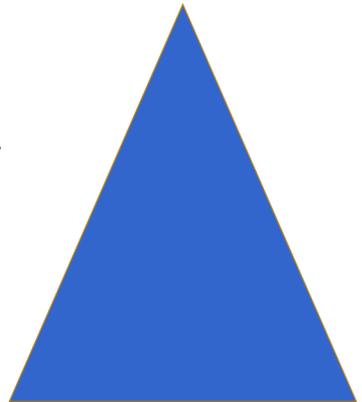


GOALS

- To create communities that are safe from violence and environmental hazards,
- Provide high-quality early education,
- Support maternal and child health through public health systems, and
- Respond effectively when public health emergencies occur

What YOU can do

- Support physicians in engaging families in discussions about safety and violence prevention
- Increase the number of children in pre-K and improve access to high-quality learning programs such as Head Start and Early Head Start
- Strengthen programs that provide resources to low-income neighborhoods to ensure that all children have access to safe opportunity for play
- Reduce the burden of preventable disease by supporting vaccination programs



The way a state spends its money is a reflection of its values and priorities. Child health and well-being must be elevated and maintained as a top priority to demonstrate Alabama's commitment to our future. The state government must invest taxpayer funds where they can have a long-term impact on the future of our state: our children. In this way, Alabama can lead the nation.

Leading the Nation

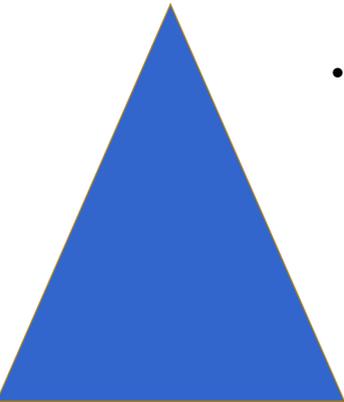
GOALS

- **To lead the nation in caring for children, Alabama can promote medical, public health and health services research, and**
- **Address factors that make some children more vulnerable than others including race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity and disability**



What YOU can do

- **Support the medical, public health and health services research at pediatric hospitals in AL**
- **Aggressively protect the rights of children and families, including children who are disproportionately affected by discrimination and lack of opportunities**





Our 2018 Legislative Agenda

Legislative Priorities

- **Improved health care for children through adequate Medicaid and CHIP funding:** Protection of funding for Medicaid and CHIP coverage for children is a permanent priority of the Alabama Chapter-AAP. Children have no voice and comprise only 25 percent of the state Medicaid budget, yet 51 percent of the total number of Medicaid recipients. The Chapter specifically advocates for sustainable and permanent revenue solutions to adequately fund Medicaid through the General Fund, and strongly urges continuation of federal funding to sustain coverage of children in both programs in Alabama.
- **Protection of the Medical Home and the practice of medicine:** With the medical home established as the best place for patients to receive primary healthcare, the Chapter opposes any legislation that threatens the medical home and supports legislative efforts to protect it. The Chapter also opposes any attempts by non-physicians to control the practice of medicine or interfere with the doctor-patient relationship, or legislation that dictates requirements for the practice of medicine that violate current American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines and recommendations for the care of children.
- **Adequate funding for birth to 5 services:** The Chapter endorses the Alabama School Readiness Alliance efforts to increase and protect funding for state-funded, voluntary, high-quality, pre-k programs, as well as protect adequate funding for early intervention services and early literacy services.
- **Safe births and newborn care:** The Chapter opposes any effort that lowers standards of childbirth and newborn care, acknowledging the hospital as the safest place for childbirth and pediatrician-led, comprehensive well-child care as the evidence-based, established standard for prevention of disease in infants.
- **Safe child care:** In an effort to promote safe, high-quality child care throughout Alabama, the Chapter supports mandatory licensing of every child care/day care center in the state.

Our Partners in Alabama Child Well-Being



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