2027 Budgetary and Legislative Priorities

Our #1 priority is to defend and protect access to basic needs including access to food, health and mental health services, health care, and housing for all babies, children, and youth regardless of income, immigration status, or gender identity.

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT priority

Defend and protect access to basic needs including access to food, health and mental health services, health care, and housing for all babies, children, and youth regardless of income, immigration status, or gender identity.

While defending and protecting Rhode Island's progress, we will continue to be bold in leading campaigns for policies that increase equity and reduce disparities in child well-being. These campaigns will focus on:

Civic Engagement

- Grant voting rights to both the Student Representative and the Teacher of the Year on the State Council on Elementary and Secondary Education. **

Early Care, Education, and Development

- Make it easier for families to access child care assistance by ending the requirement that parents seek child support to qualify. *
- Expand access to affordable, high-quality child care by helping more families qualify for assistance and investing more resources in child care providers. *
- Stabilize Head Start and RI Pre-K programs. *
- Use state money instead of federal TANF money to support Head Start so it is less reliant on federal funds. *
- Invest in wage supplements for skilled, but low-paid early educators to address staffing crisis. *
- Leverage state funding to unlock the maximum federal investment in family home visiting programs. *

Housing

- Help Rhode Island's poorest families afford rent by allowing them to keep their full RI Works benefit when they receive housing assistance. +

Health Care Access

- Help more children get timely medical care by increasing Medicaid reimbursement rates for primary care doctors including pediatricians. *
- Protect immigrant children's access to health coverage by preserving Cover All Kids.

Mental Health

- Invest funds states receive from legal settlements with social media companies in youth mental health by increasing access to school-based counseling, afterschool and summer programs, and community-based mental health services. ** ++

RI Works

- Increase RI Works benefit amount to reflect rising costs for food, housing, and other necessities. +
- Make sure families receiving RI Works get the full amount of child support they're entitled to, helping them cover their children's everyday needs. +
- Restore access to RI Works for Green Card holders so they can meet their children's basic needs while pursuing education, job training, and better jobs.

Family Economic Security

- Increase paid family leave from 8 weeks to 12 weeks and let workers use it to care for a seriously ill grandchild. *

Public Education

- Fully fund public education.
- Use more accurate methods to determine school meal eligibility so low-income students get free school meals, and schools get the funding they need to meet their needs.
- Allow school districts to use state funding for summer learning programs and credit recovery opportunities that help students get back on track academically.

Youth Justice

- Strengthen Rhode Island's youth justice system by establishing a minimum age for incarceration so that children age 12 and under are not sent to the Rhode Island Training School and by extending the upper age of the system through age 21 to prevent youth from being placed in the adult prison system.

** priority for*
RIght From the Start

*** priority for the Anti-Racist Education Policy Collaborative*

++ priority for the RI Afterschool Network and the Meta Coalition

+ priority for
Raising Rhode Island

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT advances equitable policies that improve the lives of all Rhode Island children and eliminate disparities through the power of data, advocacy, and civic action.