

What is Children First?

Children First is a non-profit, nonpartisan diverse group of statewide leaders who serve as the driving force to shape public policy and enhance the quality of life for the children and families of Alabama. Children First strives to improve the well-being of Alabama's children through:

Awareness, by bringing children's needs and issues to the attention of Alabama's policymakers and political leaders.

Advocacy, by securing commitments from policymakers for the support of children's services and programs, then translating that commitment into action for the benefit of children and families.

Accountability, by serving as a watchdog over children's programs and services and over policymakers on children's issues.

What We Do

Children First focuses primarily on the area of advocacy to effect change in the lives of Alabama's children and families. We are the only organization in the state that provides a full-time lobbyist to advocate on behalf of children at the Alabama State House. Our work in the establishment and protection of the \$53 million Children First Trust Fund (CFTF), juvenile justice reform, and safe teen driving legislation are just a few examples of our work. In 2011, the CFTF provided over one million critically needed services for children and families. Children First works each year to make sure the CFTF dollars are appropriated to the following state agencies:

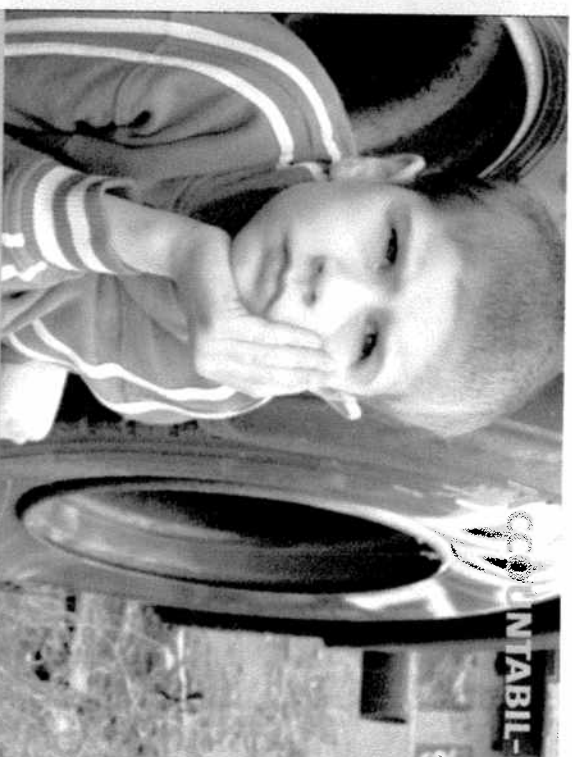
Department of Human Resources • Department of Youth Services • Department of Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention • Department of Mental Health • Department of Public Health • Multiple Needs Office • Department of Juvenile Probation Services/AOC • Department of Rehabilitation Services • ABC Board • Department of Forensic Sciences • Medicaid Agency

Why Children First Needs You

According to the 2011 Kids Count Data Book, Alabama is ranked nationally as:

- 48th for overall child well-being;
- 47th for low-weight births
- 48th for infant mortality rate
- 49th for children living in poverty
- 46th for single parent families
- 44th for child death rate
- 42nd for teen death rate
- 38th for teen birth rate
- 39th for idle teens
- 45th for children living with under employed parents

Children First believes these statistics should and can be elevated to a level that provides each of Alabama's children a chance to become productive citizens of our state. Our board hopes to accomplish this by making sure children's interests are represented during the policy making process and we need you to join us in our efforts.



What You Need To Know

According to a recent survey, 91% of Alabamians believe meeting children's needs should have a high priority in public policy and state funding and over 85% support fully funding the Children First Trust Fund to provide for critically under-funded family and children's programs. Also, according to the survey, 86.5% agree that spending money on preventative programs for children today will cost far less than corrective programs in the future.

"In forums that resolve children's issues, children are neither present nor able to define or defend their interests.

This is where Children First steps in."

Former Chief Justice Sue Bell Cobb

Children First will continue to be a watchdog for the effectiveness of children's programs and services and will persist in the crucial advocacy efforts for the children of this state. A large percentage of Children First's time and privately funded resources are spent defending the tobacco dollars that are appropriated to the Children First Trust Fund (it is important to note that Children First receives none of the CFTF dollars) and advocating for change in public policy that affects Alabama's children and families.

Want to join our cause? For more information go to www.alabamachildrenfirst.com or call 334-396-6314

