



# 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:

- **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.
- **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. Government intervention should not cause harm.
- **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.

### 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
- Rate of children uninsured

*Objectives:*

1. Increase access to and use of community-based collaborative efforts that promote wellness in the first year of life, 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 adults caring for vulnerable children
6. Increase access to healthcare and developmental services by decreasing the child uninsured rate

*Other statewide efforts/groups with which to coordinate efforts<sup>1</sup>:*

Indiana Perinatal Quality Improvement Collaborative (ISDH)

Indiana Sexual Violence Primary Prevention Council (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
- Number of new behavioral health licenses and renewals
- 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, and parity for treatment of all types of addictions.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

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.

*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 (MHAI)

### **Strategic Goal 3:**

Improve educational outcomes of vulnerable youth

*As measured by:*

- Enrollment in high quality early care and education
- Retention in grade
- Use of exclusionary discipline
- Number of referrals to probation from schools
- High school graduation rate

Objectives:

1. Improve access to high-quality early care and education for vulnerable children and families
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, including schools in detention and corrections facilities
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:*

Early Learning Advisory Council (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
- Number of JDAI counties

- Number of delinquency and status cases filed
- Number of youth waived to adult court
- Number of youth with justice system history re-entering the adult system
- Ratio of disproportionate minority contact with the justice system at various points

Objectives:

1. Strengthen collaboration between juvenile probation, mental health, the Department of Child Services, prosecutors, and public defenders at the county level, across the state, especially with regard to dual status children
2. Identify and encourage adoption of effective and promising practices for identification, referral, and appropriate services for victims of commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC)
3. Increase alternatives to detention for youth, such as shelter care, assessment centers, intake centers, and alternative therapeutic settings
4. Identify and encourage adoption of effective and promising practices for preventing and diverting youth from entering the juvenile justice system
5. Identify and encourage adoption of effective and promising practices for preventing serious and violent delinquent behavior
6. Identify and encourage adoption of effective and promising programs to engage justice-involved youth and parents in effective treatment, services, and community connections
7. Identify and encourage adoption of effective and promising practices to support youth transitioning back to their families and communities from corrections, secure detention, and residential programs
8. Identify and encourage adoption of effective and promising practices and policies that integrate the science of child and adolescent development into the justice system's response to children and youth.

*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)