



Keep Children First in Hoosier Communities

What are you doing to help keep children the #1 priority in our state? Not your job? If you stop to think about it, taking care of the needs of children is a job for all of us, not just our newly elected politicians.

The needs of Indiana's children are urgent. As reported by the Children's Defense Fund, our children in Indiana are hurting:

- Every 37 minutes, a baby is born into poverty.
- Every 3 hours, a baby is born to a mother receiving late or no prenatal care.
- Every 34 minutes, a child is abused or neglected.
- Every 2 days, a child or youth dies in an auto crash.
- Every 7 days, a child or youth commits suicide.
- Every 4 days, a child or youth is killed by a firearm.

Investing in the future of our children takes more than building new schools and hospitals or buying computers. Indiana's future is our children, and many of them are in trouble. Many are hungry or sick. Some children don't have clothes, healthcare, transportation, or a place to live. Many don't feel safe in their homes, neighborhoods, and schools. Many experiment

with smoking tobacco, using drugs, or drinking alcohol—choices that lead to poor health or early death. What is happening to children in your neighborhood?

Speaking up for children doesn't always mean demonstrating for (or against) an issue or testifying before the State Legislature or the City Council. There are many behind-the-scenes activities that you can do to make positive changes for children.

Here are some ideas:

- Stay informed on children's issues and vote.
- Pick a cause you believe in, and let others know why it is important.
- Get on the mailing list of an advocacy group that focuses on your issue.
- Encourage a young person to get involved.
- Write a letter to the editor or station manager.
- Add facts about children's issues to your church bulletin or school newsletter.
- Get involved in your PTA, local Step Ahead Council, Children's Coalition of Indiana, or other local organizations interested in children's issues.
- Baby-sit for the children of homeless families while their parents are out looking for housing or work.
- Volunteer, attend a conference, or answer telephone calls for a local children's organization.

Riley Hospital works with many partners across the state to help build resources, publish policy, and partnerships to keep children's issues first. For more information about Riley Hospital's resources in child advocacy, or to get the names of other advocacy campaigns, contact Riley Hospital's Community Education Department at 317-274-2964 or visit www.rileyforkids.org