



The Maine Children's Alliance

2020 Legislative and Advocacy Priorities

The Maine Children's Alliance is a public policy, nonprofit improving the lives of Maine children, youth and families through research, collaboration and advocacy. For 25 years, MCA has promoted sound policies and best practices to make sure all Maine children have the resources and opportunity to reach their full potential from birth to adulthood. Our priority issue areas include: Early Care and Education; Health, Safety & Well-being; and Family Economic & Food Security.

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

An Act to Support Children's Healthy Development and School Readiness (LD 1760)

This legislation would create opportunities in ten communities in Maine to develop a public-private partnership model for early care and education and workforce development. This will provide more high-quality childcare options, increase pay for early child educators, support parents, and provide for a stronger workforce today and in the future.

An Act to Provide Maine Children Access to Affordable Healthcare (LD 1539)

CHIP provides quality, affordable health care coverage to children from low-income households who don't qualify for Medicaid coverage. This bill will increase eligibility for Maine children to 300% FPL, making this critical health care available for more Maine children. The bill will also eliminate the waiting period to qualify, ensuring children can maintain continuity of care, regardless of their type of coverage.

An Act to Facilitate Dental Treatment for Children (LD 1975)

Early, preventive, and consistent oral health care is important for overall good health for children. This bill will eliminate waiting periods from private dental health insurance, ensuring children can get the care they need to maintain good oral and overall health.

An Act to Provide Women Access to Affordable Postpartum Care (LD 1957)

Assuring that women who are eligible for MaineCare coverage during pregnancy and birth maintain coverage postpartum would improve outcomes in maternal and infant health. This bill would extend MaineCare coverage for mothers from sixty days to twelve months following delivery.

An act to increase high school graduation rates for students experiencing homelessness or foster care (LD 1916) Education disruption is a reality for foster and homeless youth, whose circumstances require them to frequently move. This creates a significant barrier to earning credits to graduate. This legislation gives more responsibility to schools and the Department of Education to help facilitate the process for students experiencing homelessness or in foster care to earn their diploma, a critical benchmark to their ability to move into adulthood prepared to work and provide for themselves.

An Act Regarding School Discipline for Maine's Youngest Students (LD 2016)

Too often, children with challenging behaviors are removed from the classroom. This is especially true for our youngest students. This removal from the classroom has negative implications for the social emotional health and academic outcomes for students who experience it. This bill provides that schools eliminate the use of suspensions and expulsions for students pre-K to grade 5.

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Other legislation MCA is supporting this session:

With so many bills affecting the health and well-being of Maine children, youth, and families, MCA follows many other pieces of legislation throughout the session. To see the list of those bills, you can visit the Bill Tracker on our website <https://mainechildrensalliance.org/take-action/state-house-bill-tracking/>

IMPLEMENTATION AND WORK GROUPS

Along with new bills for consideration this session, there are several pieces of legislation that were passed last session that are still in process, either through a work group that will produce recommendations back to the legislature, or through implementation of passed legislation. Priorities of this work for MCA include:

LD 997, *An Act to Promote Social and Emotional Learning and Development for Young Children*

LD 1774, *Leveraging Investments in Families Today (LIFT)*

LD 1635, *Resolve, To Improve Access to Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment Services for Children from Birth to 8 Years of Age (EPSDT)*

LD 512, *Resolve, To Authorize the Legislature to Contract for an Independent Review to Evaluate and Plan for the Implementation of Maine's Early Childhood Special Education Services (CDS)*

The Maine Infant Mortality Research Project is a one-year initiative designed to identify the drivers of infant mortality (IM) in Maine, including the increases seen in the state over the last two decades.

CENSUS 2020

MCA is the Complete Count Committee for Young Children in Maine for the 2020 Census. Young children under age five are at an increased risk of being undercounted in the census. When kids aren't counted, communities don't get their fair share of federal dollars for important programs and services for children, including school lunch, Head Start, public health insurance, housing and childcare vouchers. MCA is collaborating and communicating around the importance of completing the census – especially to families with children - to ensure a complete and accurate count of Maine for the 2020 Census.