

The Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy's (SCAA) priorities focus on strengthening families and communities by ensuring a strong and healthy start for all, regardless of income, and by promoting robust and sustainable public systems that generate positive results for vulnerable New Yorkers.

Family Economic Security

Almost one in four New York children live in poverty, which can set a child up for a lifetime of challenges. Most low-income children live in families with parents who are working, but in jobs that don't pay enough to meet basic needs. SCAA promotes policies that make work pay and that ensure that families can meet their needs.

- Increase and index the minimum wage.
- Ensure access to and participation in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), School Breakfast and Lunch, and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infant and Children (WIC).
- Expand the State Earned Income Tax Credit.
- Strengthen the unemployment insurance system's ability to help meet the needs of workers and employers by raising unemployment benefits and the taxable wage base.

Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting

There is a growing understanding about the importance and efficacy of strengthening families by intervening early with at-risk children and families. Evidence-based maternal, infant and early childhood home visiting has documented outcomes—increasing children's safety, health and learning, as well as promoting families' economic stability—and significant cost savings. SCAA urges policymakers to build and strengthen New York's statewide prenatal and postpartum home visiting infrastructure.

- Invest in sustainable funding for evidence-based maternal, infant and early childhood home visiting programs and for additional home visiting support services for the State's most vulnerable children and families, including increased funding for evidence-based home visiting, including Healthy Families New York (HFNY) and Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP).
- Amend or enact home visiting legislation that prioritizes programs with a proven record of effectiveness, sets clear standards for child and family outcomes and requires rigorous monitoring of program quality and outcomes.
- Support New York State's Medicaid proposal to allow Medicaid to cover home visiting services for eligible families.

Early Care and Learning

There is strong and significant research that shows that investing early saves money and improves outcomes. Seventy-five percent of brain growth and 85% of intellect, personality and social skills develop before age five, so it is imperative that we invest thoughtfully in our youngest children well before they enter school. New York has the power to reach at-risk young children with programs and policies that begin early and can have a lasting impact, by expanding access to high-quality early childhood programs for all children across the state and especially in low-income communities. Diminished funding, low-wages and increasing costs have strained the capacity of the State's low-income child care program to provide funding so that low-income parents can go to work knowing that their children are learning, safe, and cared for

in an environment that lays the foundation for success in school and life. Investment is needed to make certain that families across New York State have access to affordable, high-quality early childhood education.

- Invest \$20 million for implementation of QUALITYstarsNY so that parents and taxpayers are making the best investments with the highest returns for New York's children, particularly those at most risk.
- Ensure a commitment to child care subsidies for low-income families and improve access to licensed and regulated early care and learning.
- Invest in expansion of high-quality full-day Pre-K to serve more children with excellent early education.

Health

Health in the earliest years, beginning with the future mother's health before she becomes pregnant, lays the groundwork for a lifetime of well-being. We know the impacts of toxic stress and adversity in the early years can have a lasting and significant effect on future health. Thoughtful planning is needed so that New York's most vulnerable residents have both coverage and access to appropriate care, particularly as New York implements health care reform and redesigns Medicaid.

- Ensure that child, family and consumer-friendly policies are adopted by New York State as it plans for and implements key milestones of the Affordable Care Act, including development of the Exchange.
- Improve access to high-quality health, mental health and dental health care for foster care children and youth and those who age out as New York implements Medicaid managed care and the Affordable Care Act.
- Augment the provision of developmental screening and follow-up for vulnerable children.

- Improve access to oral health care for vulnerable children.
- Improve access to mental health care, in part through a focus on expanding and supporting the mental health workforce.

Child Welfare

One of the best ways to prevent the negative outcomes and costs associated with involvement in the child welfare system is to invest in programs that strengthen families before a report is needed to the State Central Register. State investments should provide localities with the resources, flexibility and responsibility to address local needs and target those most at-risk as early as possible, while at the same time ensure that funds are spent on high-quality programs that work. New York should promote, propose and maintain effective systems that serve at-risk families and prevent entry into the child welfare system.

- Fully fund preventive, protective, independent living, adoption, and aftercare services at the 65% state share in statute.
- Fund Kinship Guardianship Assistance (KinGAP), which helps relatives care for children, without reducing funding to the Foster Care Block Grant.
- Increase the number of former foster youth who have access to higher education by making the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) accessible to them.
- Raise the age of the juvenile courts' jurisdiction to include youth until their 18th birthday.