



STATE OF ALABAMA
GOVERNOR ROBERT BENTLEY

THE ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF
CHILDREN'S AFFAIRS

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JEANA ROSS
COMMISSIONER

Memorandum

TO: County Children's Policy Councils

FROM: Liletta Jenkins

DATE: September 30, 2014

RE: 2014 Needs Assessment Rankings and Alabama Children's Policy Council Recommendations

This is the fourteenth year that the Children's Policy Councils (CPC) from across the state has submitted Needs Assessments to the Alabama Children's Policy Council. The Needs Assessment serves several very important purposes. It fulfills a legal responsibility of both the county Children's Policy Councils and the Alabama Children's Policy Council. It serves as an avenue for the counties and state to identify the issues that are affecting our children's lives and ability to grow into productive citizens. It also gives the members of the council a link to resources, policy makers in local communities and Montgomery.

Needs Assessments are reviewed by agencies and legislators for them to learn what is needed and where priorities should be placed. Additionally, Children's Policy Councils consistently report the most valuable benefit of the Needs Assessment is the local communication and planning it fosters. Alabama law requires that Children's Policy Councils submit their Needs Assessment by July 1st of each year and the Alabama Children's Policy Council prepare this compiled report with recommendations by October 1.

The report below contains the top twelve issues that are affecting Alabama's children that were identified in the County Children's Policy Councils, Needs Assessments from across the state and recommendations made by the Alabama Children's Policy Council.

1. Substance Abuse

- Funding for Substance Abuse, prevention programs and education
- Decrease Underage Drinking and Use of Electronic Cigarettes

2. Child Health/Mental Health

- Healthy Living and Development
- Funding for Social Workers in Schools
- Mental Health Psychological Testing

3. Parental Involvement
 - Parenting Education and Parenting Resources
 - Healthy Parent Relationships with children
4. School Success
 - Quality Education
 - Increase Graduation Rates
 - Tutoring Programs
 - Mentoring Programs
 - Workforce Development
5. Child Safety
 - Reduce Juvenile Crime
 - Bullying
 - Child Abuse Prevention
6. Early Learning
 - School Readiness
 - Quality Childcare
7. Teen Pregnancy Prevention
 - Teen Pregnancy Prevention programs
 - Resources
8. Truancy
 - Increase attendance
 - Decrease behavior problems
 - More parent accountability
9. Strengthening Families
 - Improve the delivery of local services
 - More access to services (transportation)
 - More programs for at-risk youth
 - Funding for family resource centers
10. Recreational Activities for Teens
 - Funding for afterschool programs

11. Child Literacy

- Improve Reading Skills
- Increase Reading Levels
- Summer learning programs to decrease summer learning loss

12. Foster Care

- Need more foster homes
- Need more local placements

Recommendations/Resources that can help with identified needs

1. Substance Abuse- (Administrative) - The Alabama Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Office of Treatment and Prevention. Alabama Alcohol Tobacco Fire Arms, Drug Courts, (Administrative Office of Courts)

2. Child Health/Mental Health (Administrative) The Alabama Department of Public Health, Alabama Department of Education and Alabama Department of Mental Health websites contain community resources.

3. Parental Involvement (Administrative) Engage Community Local PTA/ PTO, Community Action Agencies and Family Services Centers.

4. School Success (Administrative) The Alabama Department of Education, The Governor is working on a Dropout prevention program, Start early with quality childcare programs, expansion of Pre-K, Alabama School Readiness Alliance, Alabama Partnership for Children, A+ Education and Voices for Alabama's Children. Alabama Possible Mentoring Program, New ACT testing better indicator of how children are doing and if they are on track to graduate. Reading on grade level by 3rd grade, Education attainment of parents can impact educational outcomes of the child-address both parent and child. English as 2nd language presents additional obstacles that need to be addressed and Boardband Internet access.

5. Child Safety (Administrative) The Administrative Office of Courts, additional Juvenile Probation Officers, Alabama Department of Education, Alabama Department of Human Resources, Mandatory Reporting Training, Alabama Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention(Children's Trust Fund) and Alabama Child Advocacy Centers.

6. Early Learning (Administrative) The Alabama Department of Children's Affairs, Office of School Readiness, Alabama School Readiness Alliance, Alabama Partnership for Children and Alabama Department of Human Resources and Alabama Home Visiting Programs

7. Teen Pregnancy Prevention (Administrative) The Alabama Department of Public Health, Out Reach program and Alabama Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy.

8. Truancy (Funding Request) Early Warning Programs and need more JPO's at the local level.

9. Strengthening Families (Administrative and Funding Request) The Students against destruction decision (SADD) program, Alabama Possible Mentoring, Kid Check, 21st Century Learning grants, Department of Transportation Administrative Funding, Community Transportation grants, Department to Education, services for families

10. Recreational Activities for Teens (Funding Request) The Alabama Department of Education, Alabama Afterschool Community Network, Research YMCA and Boys and Girls clubs, 21st Century Learning grants and Youth at Risk funds.

11. Child Literacy (Administrative) Collaboration with local libraries, Department of Education has PSA's encouraging parents to read to their children

12. Foster Care (Administrative and Legislative) The Department of Human Resources, Ongoing Recruitment, Engaging State in Foster Parent Association and engage 67 counties in local foster parent association. Legislative- advocate for increase in board payment funding.