

L O U I S I A N A  
**Platform**   
for **Children**  
Progress Report - 2016

The Louisiana Platform for Children, released September 2015 by the Louisiana Partnership for Children and Families, is a comprehensive guide for policymakers that focuses on critical issues affecting children and families. The Platform covers eight major policy areas and offers over 90 detailed recommendations to improve the well-being of Louisiana's children. This update reviews progress made during 2016 through either legislation or policy. [The Platform report](#) and a broad review of bills passed during the 2016 Legislative Session impacting children and families is available on the Partnership's website, [www.louisianapartnership.org](http://www.louisianapartnership.org).

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## LOUISIANA'S CHILDREN

### Physical Health and Development

**Expand Nurse Family Partnership** - Funding for the Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) Program was continued at current level. A nationally recognized evidence-based program, NFP operates statewide with the capacity to serve 2,500 high-risk first time moms annually. More information about NFP's impact in Louisiana is available [here](#).

**Expand School-Based Health Clinics** - Funding for the School-Based Health Clinics (SBHCs) was continued at current level. SBHCs operate in 24 parishes in Louisiana. More information on SBHCs can be found [here](#).

**Encourage Breastfeeding** – The Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) continues to work with birthing hospitals to become *Baby Friendly*, a designation by the World Health Organization that supports breastfeeding. [Click here](#).

**Require newborn screenings** – [Act 507](#) added Krabbe disease to the list of required newborn screenings, subject to specific funding being appropriated for such testing. The law also required LDH to develop and maintain information Krabbe disease on its website. The American Academy of Pediatrics provides information for parents on [newborn screenings](#).

**Prevent sudden infant death and promote safe sleep** – [Act 506](#) requires birthing centers, hospitals, and licensed midwives to offer information to parents of newborns on shaken baby syndrome and sudden unexpected infant death; requires LDH to provide a compendium of resources approved for use by providers and to make them available on the department's website. The [Louisiana Child Death Review Panel](#) continues to recommend ways to prevent sudden infant death and suffocation including safe sleep positioning.



## LOUISIANA'S CHILDREN Early Care and Education

**Continue oversight of early education** – The [Early Childhood Care and Education \(ECCE\) Advisory Council](#) receives regular [updates](#) on the transition of the Child Care Block Grant from Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) and also on the status of the new childcare accountability system.

**Provide access to child care for low-income working families and families with special needs** – The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) approved reducing weekly work requirements for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) from 30 hours to 20 hours per week. CCAP is the only program that assists low-income working parents to pay for child care. The work requirement was reduced to 15 hours for parents of children with disabilities and for parents attending school. More information on the rule change can be found [here](#).

**Enact criminal penalties for illegal operation of child care business** – [Act 411](#) created the crime of unlawful operation of a child care center and [Act 659](#) provided penalties for operating without a valid license.

**Maintain the network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies** – LDOE [State Child Care Plan](#) continued funding for the CCRR agencies. This [map](#) provides contact information for the CCRR by parish.

**Continue mental health consultation for child care/early learning centers** – LDOE expanded the use of [mental health consultation](#) recognizing the critical need for social-emotional supports for very young children and their teachers.



## LOUISIANA'S CHILDREN Social Emotional Development

**Monitor transition from Magellan to Bayou Health, now Healthy Louisiana** – The Louisiana [Children's Cabinet Advisory Council](#) receives regular updates on the [transition](#) effort.



## LOUISIANA'S CHILDREN Developmental Disabilities

**Restore Early Steps eligibility criteria** – Funding for existing [Early Steps](#) programming was continued but additional funding to restore eligibility criteria was not appropriated.



## LOUISIANA'S CHILDREN Child Welfare

**Ensure a skilled and culturally competent child welfare workforce** – [Act 90](#) reorganizes DCFS to include the Division of Child Welfare and Division of Family Support

**Restore funding for youth aging out of foster care** - [HCR 94](#) continues the Task Force on Youth Aging Out of Foster Care through July 2017 to study and explore policy and financing options for programming foster care youth ages 18 – 21.

**Provide funding for foster care and adoption services** – [Act 117](#) created the Foster Care and Permanence Task Force to make recommendations to the governor and legislature on best practices for achieving permanency for children in foster care.

**Continue state support for Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)** – Funding for CASA programming was continued. More information on CASA can be found [here](#).



## LOUISIANA'S CHILDREN Juvenile Justice

**Raise the age of juvenile jurisdiction to age 17** – [Act 501](#) moves 17 year olds from adult to juvenile prisons, effective July 1, 2018 and charges the LA [Juvenile Jurisdiction Planning and Implementation Committee](#) with developing the plan for implementation.

**Right size juvenile prisons** – [Act 499](#) seeks to reduce over-reliance on confinement by requiring additional data from the Office of Juvenile Justice (OJJ), reducing the maximum time children can be held in secure detention for contempt charges, reducing the time a child can spend on probation for a misdemeanor offense, and establishing timeframes for contradictory hearings in certain circumstances.

**Develop pathways out of the juvenile justice system** – [Act 617](#) created the Safe and Fair Return Act, requiring in-person review hearings to ensure child is receiving necessary treatment and services. Because there is no administrative parole system for juveniles, this act provides for regular opportunities for the judge to review the child's case and consider the possibility of early release onto parole supervision.

**Provide high quality education** – [Act 500](#) added OJJ to state and district accountability program and provided for OJJ to be considered a parish school board for data collection and development of pupil progression plans. The law also created the mutual accountability team to design a "report card" for OJJ schools.

**Promote positive behavioral supports in schools** – [Act 522](#) revised existing law on seclusion and restraint of students with disabilities and created Advisory Council on Student Behavior and Discipline to advise BESE and LDOE regarding best practices in providing support to public school governing authorities in the adoption and implementation of school student behavior and discipline plans.



## LOUISIANA'S CHILDREN Family Economic Stability

**Accept Medicaid Expansion** – Governor John Bel Edwards issued his first [executive order](#) beginning the process of expanding Medicaid. Enrollment opened on July 1, 2016 and by December 27, 2016, over 374,000 people had [enrolled](#) in the program.

**Invest in financial literacy** – [Act 401](#) requires BESE to adopt rules and guidelines for implementation of the law authorizing public schools to offer instruction in personal financial management based on the concept of achieving financial literacy.



## LOUISIANA'S CHILDREN Budget

**Eliminate or minimize the use of non-recurring dollars for ongoing expenses** – The 2015-16 budget faced a \$963 million mid-year shortfall, and there was a \$2 billion gap between revenues and expenses for 2016-17. One-time dollars were dramatically reduced in FY17 (from \$826 million to \$34.5 million), but \$1.3 billion in [tax revenue expires](#) in 2018.

[The Children's Budget](#) and the [Early Childhood Systems Integration Budget](#) (ECSIB) offer greater detail on the state's budget specific to children.



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