

**MAYOR'S COMMISSION ON CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES**  
**Policy Framework**

Every child in the City of St. Louis deserves a safe, healthy and enriched childhood that helps them grow to reach their full potential. The mission of the Mayor's Commission on Children, Youth and Families is to organize and prioritize our individual and collective work on behalf of children and families. Therefore, we believe that children deserve:

- A nurturing family with economic security
- Developmentally appropriate early care
- Access to age-appropriate physical, mental and dental health
- A high-quality, 21<sup>st</sup> Century education
- Enrichment activities that develop skills and resiliency
- Intervention and treatment services for antisocial behaviors
- Recognition that they are capable of positive contributions and opportunities to participate in addressing the needs of their community
- To be safe in their homes, schools and communities
- A community that cares about and invests in meeting their needs

Therefore, we recommend that in 2007 the following be enacted:

**State of Missouri:**

- State government and community social service systems provide meaningful financial support for those who are willing to serve as foster and adoptive parents.
- State government and community social service systems provide adequate, well trained staff to investigate child abuse and neglect and provide both treatment and placement services when abuse or neglect are found.
- State of Missouri increases child care subsidy payments and raises the maximum income levels for subsidy eligibility to support working parents and provide quality services in the area of early childhood development.
- State of Missouri aligns Parents as Teachers funding with emerging group-visit strategies that successfully engage hard-to-reach families over longer periods of time.
- State of Missouri restores Medicaid funding to a level where all children who need it are covered.
- State of Missouri aggressively pursues strategies to assure that all children in the City of St. Louis have access to a high quality K-12 education.
- State of Missouri extends professional development subsidies to include school age youth workers.

**City of St. Louis:**

- City of St. Louis updates and streamlines licensing and regulatory procedures in the City to facilitate the creation of high-quality child care spaces, particularly to meet the need for infant care.

- City of St. Louis, State of Missouri, St. Louis Regional Health Commission and community health providers create venues to deliver age-appropriate health services for 13-18 year olds that will address the unacceptably high rates of sexually transmitted diseases, teen pregnancy and suicide.
- City of St. Louis promotes annual testing for lead poisoning for all children under the age of 6.
- City of St. Louis promotes the development and awareness of options for K-12 education.
- City of St. Louis promotes a coordinated system approach to afterschool programs to assure more consistent quality and cost effectiveness of programs.

**Business and Civic Communities:**

- The business and civic communities invest more in early childhood and youth development strategies.
- The business and civic communities build a greater awareness of the direct linkage between the status of children, the overall quality of community life and the success of community and economic development efforts.

**Neighborhoods and Families:**

- Families and community members are involved proactively in efforts to ensure that children are safe and secure in their homes and free of abuse and neglect in every form.
- Families and community members are actively involved in providing foster care for older children.
- Families and community members are informed of and hold accountable the child care, youth programs and K-12 education they use to high standards of quality.

**Schools:**

- St. Louis Public Schools will provide high-quality educational services so that all children are performing at or above the state average and are able to successfully complete 2- or 4-year post-secondary education or training.
- St. Louis Public Schools creates high schools that target careers with existing job growth and career advancement.
- St. Louis Public Schools, City Courts and community organizations, along with families, develop strategies to reduce truancy.
- All elementary schools in the City offer high-quality after school programs by 2008.
- New schools open to provide alternatives to poor performing schools.