



Our Children • Our State • Our Future

# 2006 Priorities for New Hampshire's Children

## A Smart Investment for New Hampshire

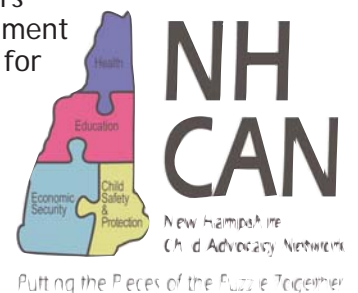
What does the NH Child Advocacy Network (NH CAN) mean when we ask New Hampshire to invest in children?

We mean ensuring that all children receive appropriate physical, mental and oral health care. We mean enabling schools to help all children reach their full potential. We mean helping families meet their needs and provide safe and stable homes for their children. We mean understanding how families, workplaces, communities and government can work together to promote thriving children, healthy families and a strong economy.

Investments in children today will benefit all of us tomorrow. Well-educated, healthy children are

more likely to become productive workers and engaged citizens. Strengthening families, keeping children safe, and addressing needs before they become problems will create safer, more vibrant communities and a healthier economy.

**2006 Priorities for New Hampshire's Children** recommends investments that we can make now. These recommendations reflect the shared expertise of nearly 200 NH CAN partners and advisors. Each recommendation offers significant return on investment - social and/or monetary - for our children, our state, and our future. For more information please visit: [www.ChildrenNH.org](http://www.ChildrenNH.org).



**Economic Security • Education • Health • Safety & Protection**



New Hampshire's programs overcome their challenges by age 3. Without help, many would have fallen behind their friends developmentally, struggled when they started school, and required more intensive and expensive interventions later. Not all NH children receive necessary services, however. That is why supporting Family-Centered Early Supports and Services is a top priority for 2006. Proposed legislation would require that all health insurers in NH offer this benefit to children ages birth to 3. Together we CAN provide the early support and services many children need for the right start in life.

**Public education** lays the foundation for a healthy democracy, a prepared workforce and a flourishing economy. The link between quality education, individual success and a community's prosperity is unquestioned. Ongoing budget and legal challenges offer an opportunity to preserve and improve our commitment as a state to public education. That is why supporting quality public education is a top priority for 2006. Investing in public education in New Hampshire means protecting the right of all children to a quality public education. It means consensus around a credible definition of what constitutes an adequate education. And it means adoption of a long-term and reliable education funding system. Together we CAN ensure a quality public education system, for our children, our families and our state.

**Supporting the "best interests of the child"** means making decisions based on the needs of children rather than on the desires of adults. Research shows that children thrive when their unique needs are considered - whether in the classroom, the physician's office, or the courtroom. That is why the preservation of the "best interests of the child" standard in divorce is a top priority for 2006. The "best interests" standard assures that, even in the heat of a contested divorce, adult disputes and disagreements take a back seat to long-term planning for children. Parents who focus on their children's interests are more likely to make decisions that support healthy growth and development. Recent legislative proposals would change the focus of these decisions away from the family members who are the most vulnerable and least likely to have their needs represented in court - the children. Together we CAN protect children by continuing to focus on their best interests.

**Early intervention** identifies infants and toddlers who have developmental challenges, and supports them and their families with services, education and training. Early intervention services are extremely effective. Half the children in

**Reporting suspected child abuse** helps ensure that children who have been subject to abuse receive treatment soon after the traumatic event, and start the healing process as soon as possible. This can only happen when every adult, including religious leaders, meets their responsibility to report suspected child abuse to the state. That is why universal child abuse reporting is a top priority for 2006. When NH citizens report



abuse promptly, they not only do the right thing for the child, they do the smart thing for the state. Untreated child abuse and neglect is a thread that connects many of our most serious and expensive social problems, including delinquency, runaways and sexual promiscuity among youth and violence and sexual crime committed by adults. Together we CAN protect our children, for their sake and for ours.

**Consumer protection** is a key component to children's economic stability. Children thrive when their families thrive, and families are more likely to thrive when they can afford food, shelter and transportation. Families that are not financially stable, and that lack basic financial knowledge, are vulnerable to lenders that charge exorbitant interest rates - dragging vulnerable families deeper into debt. That is why studying the adequacy of New Hampshire's consumer protection laws is important for our children, our state, and our future. Together we CAN thoughtfully examine how consumer protection law can help promote and protect the economic stability of families, children, and communities in our state.

**Students who eat a nutritious morning meal** are more alert and ready to learn than are those who don't. Research shows that breakfasts served in schools help students improve grades, remain attentive, decrease disruptive behavior and visits to the nurse, and decrease tardiness and absenteeism. That is why creating state funding for school breakfast programs is important for our children, our state, and our future. State funding of just 3 cents per breakfast (in addition to existing federal funding) can help increase the number of schools that offer breakfast and the number of students who get a nutritious start to their day. Together we CAN help more children start their

school day prepared to learn.

**Oral health** is an important part of overall health. Tooth decay is the most

common childhood disease and has profound effects on children's ability to grow and learn. Oral disease is suspected to contribute to chronic health problems, like heart disease. The good news is that we can prevent oral disease in children by supporting NH Healthy Kids and Medicaid insurance coverage, by improving access to dentists, and by banning the sale of unhealthy snacks and drinks in schools. That is why the "Watch Your Mouth" campaign to improve children's oral health is important for our children, our state, and our future. Together we CAN Watch Our Mouths and use them to speak up for oral health in children.

**Underage alcohol use** is the top youth drug problem in New Hampshire; alcohol is six times more likely to kill young people than all illegal drugs combined. Youth see more advertising for beer than for sneakers or jeans. We must acknowledge that alcohol abuse is a significant challenge for our children and our state. That is why the State Strategy to Reduce Underage Alcohol Problems is important for our children, our state, and our future. This comprehensive plan blends legislation, public education and law enforcement strategies to help keep alcohol out of kids' hands and to educate the community about its dangers. Together we CAN prevent problems, change policies and build strong systems of support to reduce underage alcohol use.

For more information on the **2006 Priorities for New Hampshire's Children** including Fact Sheets and suggestions about how you can raise your voice for children, please visit [www.ChildrenNH.org](http://www.ChildrenNH.org).



## PARTNERS

Adoptive Families Together  
Adult Learning Center  
AFL-CIO, NH  
Alliance for Better Child Care  
Alliance for Community  
Supports/Project Renew  
American Academy of Family  
Physicians  
American Cancer Society  
American Friends Service  
Committee, NH  
American Heart Association  
America's Promise  
Atkinson Academy PTA  
Belknap County Citizens  
Council on Children and  
Families  
Big Brothers/Big Sisters  
Greater Seacoast  
Big Brothers/Big Sisters NH  
State Alliance  
Bi-State Primary Care  
Association  
Boscawen Elementary PTA  
Casey Family Services, NH  
Cedarcrest  
Chase Home for Children  
Child Advocacy Center of  
Rockingham County  
Child and Family Services of  
NH  
Child Development Center of  
Strafford County  
Child Health Services  
Children of Sullivan County  
Children's Alliance of New  
Hampshire  
Children's Coalition of  
Southern NH  
Claremont Coalition  
Clean Water Action  
Coalition for Adequate  
Education Funding  
Community Action Program,  
Belknap-Merrimack County,  
Inc.  
Community Child Care Center  
Community Support Network,  
Inc.  
Concord Children's Initiative  
Concord Substance Abuse  
Coalition  
Council for Children and  
Adolescents with Chronic  
Health Conditions  
Court Appointed Special  
Advocates (CASA) of NH  
Crotched Mountain  
Foundation  
Danbury Community Center  
David's House  
Derry Village Extended Day  
Program  
Disabilities Rights Center, Inc.  
Early Childhood Mental Health  
Network of Upper Valley  
Early Education and  
Intervention Network  
Early Learning NH  
Easter Seals New Hampshire  
and Maine  
Education-A-Must  
Endowment for Health  
Episcopal Diocese of New  
Hampshire  
Every Child Matters  
Families First of the Greater  
Seacoast

Families for Justice  
Families Matter in Carroll  
County  
Family Mediation and Juvenile  
Services  
Family Resource Center at  
Gorham  
Family Resource Connection,  
NH State Library  
Family Support NH  
FamilyStrength  
Foundation for Healthy  
Communities  
Friends of Recovery, NH  
Gay, Lesbian and Straight  
Education Network  
Girl Scouts of Swift Water  
Council  
Girls Incorporated of NH  
Good Beginnings of Sullivan  
County  
Good News Garage LSS, Inc.  
Granite State Federation of  
Families for Children  
Greater Salem Council Against  
Family Violence  
Growing Places  
Healthy Minds and Bodies  
Henniker PTA  
Heritage United Way  
Home Health & Hospice Care  
Hood Center for Children and  
Families  
HUB Family Resource Center  
Institute for Health, Law and  
Ethics, Franklin Pierce Law  
Center  
Kearsarge Unitarian  
Universalist Fellowship  
Keene Day Care Center  
Keene Police Officer's  
Association  
Kingston Police Department  
Lake Sunapee Region VNA  
Lakes Region Day Care Center  
Lakes Region United Way  
Lil' Iguana's Children's Safety  
Foundation  
Little Frogs and Polliwogs  
Learning Center  
Londonderry High School PTSA  
Lutheran Social Services  
Makin' It Happen Coalition for  
Resilient Youth  
March of Dimes  
Microptix  
Million Mom March, NH  
Chapter  
Monadnock Family Services  
Monadnock United Way  
Nashua Soup Kitchen and  
Shelter  
National Alliance for the  
Mentally Ill (NAMI), NH  
National Association of Social  
Workers, NH  
National Congress for Fathers  
& Children, NH Chapter  
National Education  
Association, NH  
New Beginnings  
New Futures  
New Heights  
NFI North, Inc.  
NH Association for the  
Education of Young Children  
NH Association of Family and  
Consumer Sciences  
NH Association of School  
Principals



NH Association of School  
Psychologists  
NH Ceasefire  
NH Children's Trust Fund  
NH Citizens Alliance  
NH Coalition Against Domestic  
& Sexual Violence  
NH Coalition to End  
Homelessness  
NH Coalition for Oral Health  
Action  
NH Community Loan Fund  
NH Council of Churches  
NH Dental Hygienist's  
Association  
NH Dental Society  
NH Developmental Disabilities  
Council  
NH Family Voices  
NH Federation of Teachers  
NH Head Start Parents'  
Association  
NH Health Information  
Center-University of New  
Hampshire  
NH Healthy Kids Corporation  
NH Healthy Schools Coalition  
NH Hospital Association  
NH Housing Forum  
NH Minority Health Coalition  
NH Network of Children's  
Advocacy Centers  
NH Optometric Association  
NH Parent Teachers  
Association  
NH Partners in Health  
NH Partnerships for High  
Performance Schools  
NH Pediatric Society  
NH Public Health Association  
NH Public Television - Ready  
to Learn  
NH Safe Kids  
NH School Administrators  
Association  
NH School Boards Association  
NH School Counselor  
Association  
NH School Nurses' Association  
NH Special Education Policy  
Project  
NH Teen Institute  
North Country United Way  
Northwood Parent Teacher  
Association  
Odyssey House, Inc.  
Orion House, Inc.  
Parent Information Center  
Parent to Parent Upper Valley  
Support Group  
Parenting NH  
Parents as Teachers, SAU 6  
Parents, Family and Friends  
of Lesbians and Gays NH

Penacook Community Center  
Peterborough Family Center  
Planned Parenthood of  
Northern New England  
PlusTime NH  
Portsmouth Early Education  
Program  
Richie McFarland Children's  
Center  
Riverbend Parent-Child  
Centers  
Rockingham Community Head  
Start  
Salem Family Resources-  
Success By Six  
Smoke-Free NH Alliance  
Spaulding Youth Center  
Strafford County YMCA  
Strafford County Head Start  
Summit Rehabilitation  
The Children's Place and  
Parent Education Center  
The Circle Program  
The Family Center of Greater  
Peterborough  
The Friends Program  
The Grapevine Family and  
Resource Center  
The Sad Cafe / Drugs Are  
Dangerous  
Tri-County Head Start  
United Church of Christ, NH  
Conference  
United Way of Greater Nashua  
United Way of Merrimack  
County  
United Way of Merrimack  
Valley  
United Way of Northern New  
Hampshire  
United Way of Sullivan County  
United Way of the Greater  
Seacoast  
United Way of the Upper  
Valley  
Upper Connecticut Valley  
Community Coalition  
Violence Intervention  
Program/SAFE-NH  
Visiting Nurse Alliance of  
Vermont and New  
Hampshire, Inc.  
VNA Upper Valley Fatherhood  
Program  
VNA, Child Care and Family  
Resource Center  
White Birch Community  
Center  
Windsor Mountain  
Wolfeboro Area Children's  
Center  
Workforce Opportunity  
Council  
Youth Suicide Prevention  
Assembly  
Youth Venture

## ADVISORS

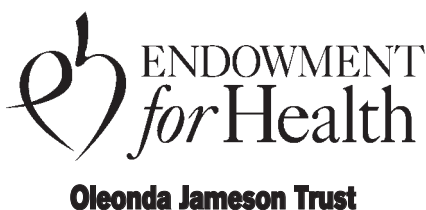
Rep. David Allison  
Jonathan Baird, Esquire  
Ken Barnes, Esquire  
Robert Chamberlin, M.D.  
Rep. Barbara French  
Earl Foss  
Mary-Catherine Gennaro,  
M.D.  
Rep. Mary Stuart Gile  
Beverly Grenert  
Margaret Hallyburton

Rep. Lee Hammond  
Susan Koerber, MEd  
Rep. James Pilioid, M.D.  
Rep. Frances Potter  
Rep. Barbara Hull Richardson  
Rep. Deanna Rush  
Rep. Marjorie Smith  
Rep. Mary Jane Wallner  
NH Commission on the Status  
of Women  
NH Department of  
Corrections  
NH Department of Education  
DHHS, Bureau of Child Care  
Licensing  
DHHS, Child Development  
Bureau  
DHHS, Division for Children,  
Youth and Families  
DHHS, Division of Behavioral  
Health  
DHHS, Division of Family  
Assistance  
DHHS, Division of Public  
Health  
DHHS, Head Start  
Collaboration Office  
DHHS, Office of Community  
and Public Health  
DHHS, Office of Health  
Planning and Medicaid  
Services  
DHHS, Oral Health Program  
DHHS, Special Medical  
Services Bureau  
Claremont City Welfare  
Manchester Health  
Department, School Nursing  
Division  
Manchester Office of Youth  
Services  
NH Institute for Health  
Policy and Practice  
New Hampshire National  
Guard  
UNH Cooperative Extension

## STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Jonathan Baird, New  
Hampshire Legal Assistance  
Charlene Baxter, UNH  
Cooperative Extension  
Tricia Brooks, NH Healthy  
Kids Corporation  
Joe Drake, PlusTime NH  
Karen Gincott, NFI North,  
Inc.  
Elizabeth Hager, United Way  
of Merrimack County  
Scott Johnson, Claremont  
Coalition  
Mark Joyce, NH School  
Administrators Association  
Susan Koerber, early child-  
hood consultant  
Jack Lightfoot, Child and  
Family Services of NH,  
Children's Lobby  
Jennifer Wierwille Norton,  
New Futures  
Ellen Shemitz, Children's  
Alliance

With Thanks To:



Bank of America

