

2008 **Priorities for** New Hampshire's *Children*

New Hampshire values community, and children and families are the foundation of our communities.

Ensuring the opportunity for our children to thrive — from quality public education to stable housing for every family — is a commitment to community values. New Hampshire depends on it.



The **2008 Priorities for New Hampshire's Children** reflect the consensus of nearly 100 New Hampshire Child Advocacy Network (NH CAN) partners and advisors. The Priorities recommendations are an effort to ensure that our children, our communities, and our state, have the opportunity to thrive.

Quality public education

IS A COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY VALUES

Investment in quality public education is an investment in a prosperous future for our children and our state. The state legislature has a duty to support quality education by determining the cost of an adequate education, and this year they will continue that work before moving forward with funding and ensuring its delivery. **That is why supporting a credible, sustainable cost for an adequate education is a top priority for 2008.** Together, we CAN protect all children's right to a quality public education.



Protecting vulnerable youth

IS A COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY VALUES

Few people believe 17-year-olds are ready to shoulder the responsibilities of adulthood.

Still, these young people are placed in the adult corrections system, instead of keeping the focus on rehabilitation. Outside of the juvenile system, they are denied the services and supports that enable them to be productive citizens, and they experience recidivism, homelessness, and suicide at much higher levels than adults within the system. **That is why protecting our community and our youth by returning 17 year olds to the juvenile justice system is a top priority for 2008.** Together, we CAN ensure better outcomes for our at-risk youth.

We have a duty to keep children in our foster care system safe and healthy. Research has proven that there is no safe level of cigarette smoke for children, and the devastating effects of secondhand smoke



on foster children burden children, families, and on taxpayers through the healthcare system. **That is why safeguarding foster children by protecting the air they breathe is a priority for 2008.** Together, we CAN educate families about this health issue, and protect foster children in the state's care.

Every child deserves a loving, stable family as they enter adulthood. Yet despite our best efforts, youth aging out of the foster care system face enormous obstacles, and are often left to make their way in life without adult guidance and support. These young adults often face poverty, homelessness, and other barriers at much higher rates than their peers. **That is why providing a solid road to adult independence for foster care youth is a priority for 2008.** Together, we CAN ensure that foster children don't face adulthood alone.

Raising healthy children

IS A COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY VALUES

Active, healthy children grow up to be productive, healthy adults. Yet one in three children in New Hampshire are overweight or obese, putting them in danger of chronic disease, such as diabetes and depression, who's risks increase as a child grows older. **That is why promoting child health with physical activity and healthy eating is a top priority for 2008.** Together, we CAN curb the risks of child obesity with community solutions for a healthy life.

We all want to protect our children from alcohol abuse and addiction.

Alcohol abuse is the number one youth drug problem in New Hampshire, and the related crime, high-risk sex, traffic accidents, and other consequences are staggering. Flavored malt beverages, alcoholic products which have a sweet, fruity taste and are marketed to adolescents, particularly girls, increase the risk of abuse and addiction for our teens. **That is why raising healthy kids, not the alcohol content of flavored alcoholic beverages, is a priority for 2008.** Together, we CAN protect our youth from the destructive effects of underage alcohol abuse.



Supporting working families

IS A COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY VALUES

New Hampshire consumers and hard-working families deserve access to responsible credit and lending. Yet many short-term personal loans, marketed as emergency cash advances, have interest rates that drive financially distressed borrowers deeper into crisis. **That is why supporting working families with fair interest rates on small loans is a top priority for 2008.** Together, we CAN reverse the 'debt trap,' and support working families with responsible lending practices.

Children without consistent, stable housing are less likely to grow up healthy, well educated, and prepared for future success. Today's public assistance grant for our most vulnerable families is not enough to cover the basic needs of life while keeping a roof overhead. Many families are unable to provide a home while they seek job training and childcare. **That is why ensuring a home for every child through rental supports for vulnerable families is a priority for 2008.** Together, we CAN prevent homeless children while parents work toward self-sufficiency.



Partners

AFSC - NH Economic Justice Project
 AFT - NH
 American Lead Poisoning Help
 Belknap County Citizens Council on Children and Families
 Breathe New Hampshire
 Casey Family Services
 Cedarcrest Center for Children with Disabilities
 Child and Family Services of NH
 Children's Alliance of NH
 Children's Museum of Portsmouth
 Concord Substance Abuse Coalition
 Council for Children & Adolescents with Chronic Health Conditions
 Crotched Mountain Foundation
 Disabilities Rights Center
 Early Learning NH
 Endowment for Health
 Episcopal Diocese of New Hampshire
 Families First Health and Support Center
 Families for Justice
 Family Resource Center - Gorham
 Family Support New Hampshire
 Familystrength
 Foundation for Healthy Communities
 Franconia Children's Center
 Franklin Pierce Institute for Health, Law & Ethics
 Girl Scouts of Swift Water Council
 Good Beginnings of Sullivan County
 Good News Garage LSS Inc.
 Granite State Coalition Against Expanded Gambling
 Keene Police Officers Association
 League of Women Voters
 Makin' It Happen Coalition
 March of Dimes
 NAMI - NH
 NARAL Pro-Choice NH
 Nashua Soup Kitchen
 New Beginnings
 New Futures, Inc.
 NFI North

NH Association for the Education of Young Children
 NH Chapter - National Association of Social Workers
 NH Child Care Resource & Referral Network
 NH Children's Trust Fund
 NH Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence
 NH Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities
 NH Community Loan Fund - Child Care
 NH Dental Hygienist's Association
 NH Dental Society
 NH Developmental Disabilities Council
 NH Headstart Parent's Association
 NH Healthy Kids
 NH Healthy Schools Coalition
 NH Legal Assistance
 NH Minority Health Coalition
 NH Public Television
 NH School Administrator's Association
 NH School Counselor's Association
 NH School Nurse's Association
 Orion House
 Parenting New Hampshire
 PlusTime NH
 Richie McFarland Children's Center
 Riverbend Parent-Child Center
 Salem Family Resources-Success By 6
 Spaulding Youth Center
 The Grapevine Family & Community Resource Center
 The HUB Family Resource Center
 The River Center
 The Way Home
 United Way of Merrimack County
 United Way of Northern NH
 Women for Women Coalition

NH Commission on the Status of Women
 Second Start
 UNH Cooperative Extension
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 Representative Suzanne Harvey
 Representative Tony Matarrazzo
 Representative Jim Pilliod, MD
 Representative Frances Potter
 Representative Barbara Hull Richardson
 Representative Marjorie Smith
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 DHHS Div. for Children, Youth, and Families
 DHHS Div. of Public Health, Bureau of Prevention Services
 DHHS, Special Medical Services

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NH CAN thanks those who make our work possible



Northeast Delta Dental
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...and the partners of the NH Child Advocacy Network

For more information on the 2008 Priorities for New Hampshire's Children, please visit www.ChildrenNH.org
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