



Press Release:
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Child Advocates Gather in Frankfort to Push Blueprint for Kentucky's Children Agenda

Jeffersontown, KY - Over 800 Kentuckians from across the Commonwealth are gathering in Frankfort today for Children's Advocacy Day at the Capitol. They are urging legislators to make Kentucky's children a priority when making decisions this session. Participants come with a common agenda, known as the Blueprint for Kentucky's Children.

"The Blueprint was created as a response to legislators who asked child advocates to come together around a concise agenda," says Terry Brooks, executive director of Kentucky Youth Advocates. "In order for Kentucky to improve our current ranking of 41st in the nation for child well-being, we need to focus on proven, evidence-based policies that will make the biggest impact."

The Blueprint has three goals: safe and healthy families, a fair deal for working parents, and a fair opportunity for every child. Key items on the 2010 Blueprint include:

- **Payday Lending** – Allow working families to keep more of their hard-earned money by capping the triple-digit interest annual percentage rates charge on payday loans at 36 percent.
- **Family Preservation** – Expand and increase the duration of family preservation and family reunification services for families who are appropriate candidates, and maintain adequate funding for these successful and cost effective programs.
- **Child Wellness** – Integrate at least 30 minutes of physical activity into the school day or 150 minutes into the school week and submit child health-related data, such as BMI, from schools to the Department of Education for aggregate data reporting on child wellness.
- **Graduation Rate** – Require that students stay in school until the age of 18, offer opportunities in all high schools for students to combine part-day schooling with employment,

and ensure that all high schools offer their students access to early college credits through dual enrollment courses.

- **Juvenile Justice** – Reduce the use of secure detention for children who commit status offenses (offenses that would not be crimes if committed by an adult).
- **Early Childhood** – Establish a framework for expanding quality preschool for 3-and-4 year old children as funds become available, adopt a statewide definition of school readiness and a system of developmentally appropriate assessment so that all stakeholders are working towards the same goal, and encourage collaboration among current programs.

“There are clear steps that Kentucky can take that will make a big difference for children and families without costing the state extra money, like capping the interest rate on payday loans at 36% and increasing the dropout age to 18,” said Brooks. “Other measures like expanding family preservation and reducing secure detention actually save the state money because they cost much less than their alternatives, and improve long-term outcomes.”

The Blueprint for Kentucky’s Children Agenda will be revealed in a new way this year – through the voices of child advocates from all across Kentucky in a 15 minute video. The video includes Kentuckians in all walks of life – doctors, teachers, public health experts, elected officials, members of the military, seniors, and kids – and each one of them have the same vision – a Kentucky that is the best place to be young.

For more information about Children’s Advocacy Day at the Capitol visit

<http://kyyouth.org/Advocacy/cad.htm>.

For more information about the Blueprint for Kentucky’s Children visit <http://www.blueprintky.org>.

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***Kentucky Youth Advocates** is a non-partisan, non-profit, children's advocacy organization. KYA represents a voice for Kentucky's most precious asset – its youth. We believe that Kentucky's youth deserve the opportunities and resources necessary to ensure their productive development and health.*