A momentous event just took place in Arizona. For a brief period in history, the issues of children and families became the spotlight of a very heated legislative session. The governor, state lawmakers, the media, and hundreds of citizens came together to back the Success by 6 bill. The bill became a symbol of the pressing need to turn the tide for thousands of Arizona’s children and provide them the support to be healthy, productive members of society.

Although the Success by 6 bill appeared to be lost at the end of the regular legislative session, a special session on children enacted a compromise version of it along with $10 million for At-Risk Preschool. The compromise, or the Arizona Children and Family Stability Act, contained $9.1 million over two years for Health Start, Healthy Families, and Family Literacy.

This compromise contained less money than the original Success by 6 bill, a two-year commitment of funds rather than a five-year commitment, and over ten pages of prescriptive, bureaucratic language. Still, passage of this bill means that some children and families will benefit.

Several volatile events of the last few months led up to the passage of the compromise.

Background

Late last summer, the governor’s office made a remarkable announcement. Arizona’s revenue drought was over, and the state now was able to boast a budget surplus.

The call went out immediately. Children’s Action Alliance went public, submitting that the entire budget surplus be invested in children. A plan was developed, which became the “Success by 6” bill.

The bill took three exemplary pilot programs and proposed to expand them over a five-year period. Health Start works to increase the number of pregnant women who receive prenatal care and ensure their infants receive well-baby care and age-appropriate immunizations through a neighborhood-based outreach program. Healthy Families prevents child abuse and neglect through home visits by trusted caseworkers during at-risk babies’ early years. At-Risk Preschool prepares children to start school “ready to learn” through comprehensive preschool services, much like the well-known federal Head Start program.

Bill Launched with Unprecedented Support

Great fanfare surrounded the Success by 6 bill’s introduction. Fifty-nine lawmakers from both political parties signed onto the bill, and Governor Sylvestor embraced Success by 6 in his “State of the State” speech. More than one hundred organizations and businesses endorsed the proposed legislation, and the Arizona Republic made it the focal point of their “Saving Arizona’s Children” series. Political pundits predicted Success by 6 would be the first bill on the governor’s desk.

From Celebration to Shock

House Health Committee Chair Susan Gerard, the first and foremost sponsor of the bill, scheduled the bill for her initial committee meeting, and it flew out without one dissenting vote. The bill then moved to the House Appropriations Committee, where it hit a brick wall.

House Appropriations Chairman Bob Burns, now legendary opposition to the bill has been chronicled in numerous articles denouncing his seemingly irrefutable power as a committee chair. For months, he stood firm, refusing to schedule the bill under public outcry.

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Commentary
The End of the Beginning

I have always loved graduation speeches, particularly the student speeches. This past graduation season I heard them up close and personal because my two sons graduated — Daniel, from college and David, from flight grade. The common thread throughout most student graduation speeches is the articulation of hope, community, and unbridled enthusiasm, together with the message that we are, indeed, our brother’s and sister’s keepers.

During the speeches at my sons’ graduations, I knew I needed a vacation when this proud mom realized that she was not thinking about them and the “end of the beginning” of their lives, but of the Success by 6 bill that had been defeated during the regular session.

I thought of the bill because of the thousands of people from all over Arizona who had supported it and who had given voice to that spirit of hope and optimism. I thought of it because these Arizona citizens had told their elected officials that, although there is no magic bullet to solve the devastating problems facing far too many of our children and families, we must stop wringing our hands in despair; that we need to have as much concern for other people’s children as we do for our own; and that if we put our minds and hearts to it, the horrific link between early disadvantage and later dependency and crime could be broken.

The people who supported the bill recognized that, while there is no substitute for strong, capable, and resourceful families, families have never done it all by themselves; that there have always been support systems and safety valves; and that although these systems may have been informal, they were nevertheless effective, such as extended families, neighborhood associations, immigrant societies, and religious organizations. People recognized that to leave isolated and overwhelmed families on their own with only exhortations to bring up their children properly in today’s complex times was at our collective peril.

To recreate those supports, families need the kind of help that is personal, comprehensive and neighborhood-based — like the programs in the Success by 6 bill. They need the kind of help that doesn’t wait for the expensive and gut-wrenching crises: the birth of the sick baby, the abused child, the eighth-grade dropout, and the fourteen-year-old tried “as an adult.”

Government can’t raise children when parents fail and can’t prevent all of the alarming statistics we hear about daily. Yet, government that doesn’t offer support to bolster struggling parents, and instead waits to spend precious tax dollars to pick up the broken pieces, contributes mightily to the failure.

I believe that the enemy in our communities is isolation. The individual left alone on the mountain top is not the Arizona dream. The only way we can get out of the hole we have dug for ourselves is to figure out ways to give back to isolated families the feeling of connectedness, the feeling of hope and community. Our young graduates speakers know this.

By the middle of the regular legislative session, it became obvious that the Success by 6 bill was not going to pass. This was not because of a lack of strong and vocal state-wide support, but because of ideological and political bickering as well as a system that allows few people in powerful positions to block the clear will of the majority. The fact that the governor called the legislature back into special session in June to pick up the pieces of the bill, and that as a result of that session — almost not what we had originally wanted — thousands more Arizona children and families will be helped to realize their potential, should embolden us all.

This past legislative session we experienced the dark side of politics. However, in the spirit of the graduation speakers, I choose, today, to think of the brighter side. As Madeleine Kunin writes in her book Living a Political Life: “Justice can triumph, wrongs can be righted, and pain can be alleviated, if the right fix is found. The optimistic illusion that one can change the world is difficult to resist, especially when time to time that illusion is sustained by even a hint of reality. Change does happen in the political process. When a political decision affects a life, the result is extraordinarily satisfying.”

Through your support of the Success by 6 bill, you have changed thousands of lives. Our job in the next number of years is to move from an “optimistic illusion” of political change to real change for Arizona’s children. It is the end of the beginning.

Barbara Polk

Present resident Barbara Polk is a hard-working volunteer who generously donates her time and resources to a number of causes, especially to improving the condition of foster children in our state. Barbara is a charter member and past state chairman of the Arizona Supreme Court Foster Care Review Board. She has served on the Yavapai County Foster Care Review Board for the past fifteen years, and has been a Court Appointed Special Advocate for foster children for the past five years. Additionally, Barbara is a co-founding board member of Yavapai Big Brothers/Big Sisters and is proud to have been a Big Sister for the last twelve years.

Barbara's charitable work also extends to philanthropy. Barbara is a co-founding member of the board of directors of the Arizona Friends of Foster Children Foundation and chaired the grants committee for that organization during its first seven years. She serves on the boards of directors and executive committee of the Arizona Community Foundation and is a member of the distribution committee. On a local level, Barbara serves as vice chairman of the Prescott Children's Trust Fund Advisory Committee and co-chairman of the Yavapai County Community Foundation.

Barbara has made a longstanding contribution to the Children’s Action Alliance. She has been a board member since 1989 and serves as a member of the child welfare committee. Additionally, she chaired the Homeless Children’s Task Force where she brought the issue into focus with her passion and concern for thrown away, runaway and homeless children. Her boundless energy and compassion for children is a tremendous asset to our Board of Directors.

Board Profiles

Win Holden

Children’s Action Alliance is fortunate to have on our board an outstanding marketing communications professional in Win Holden. Win graduated from Southern Illinois University in 1970 with a degree in communications. He followed his father into the advertising agency business, working for advertising firms in Phoenix and Chicago, including serving as executive vice president and general manager of Phillips-Ramsey.

Since 1992, Win has been working for Media America Corporation, owner and operator of KTVK-FM, KSER-FM, and Desert Production Center. Win serves as general manager of the publishing division, which publishes PHOENIX Magazine and PESUMAT News.

Win’s impressive professional career is complemented by his diverse civic and social affiliations. Currently or in past service, Win has served as chairman of the Phoenix Pride Commission, president of the Phoenix Advertising Club, chairman of the Fiesta Bowl Committee, chairman of the Super Bowl XXXI Media and Public Relations Committee, president emeritus of the Valley Big Brothers/Big Sisters Board as well as serving on the boards of the Phoenix Midtown Rotary, the Phoenix Memorial Hospital Foundation, Silent Witness, the Phoenix Commission on Excellence in Education and Home- ward Bound.

Win joined the Children’s Action Alliance board in 1989, and has been a tremendous asset, serving as co-chair of the Arizona Infant Immunization Project Grant Oversight Committee and member of the Arizona Children’s Campaign Committee.

Win frequently meets with legislators and is an articulate spokesperson at Children’s Action Alliance press conferences and media events. Children’s Action Alliance greatly appreciates his talent and time on our board.
Have Things Changed For Arizona's Children?

The newest numbers on child well-being in Arizona were released this spring with the publication of The Annie E. Casey Foundation's national KIDS COUNT Data Book, the Morrison Institute for Public Policy's KIDS COUNT Factbook, Arizona's Children 1994, and Children's Action Alliance's The State of Arizona's Children: Action Agenda 1994. The fifth annual national KIDS COUNT Data Book ranked Arizona 37th among other states in the nation regarding the well-being of children. The KIDS COUNT Factbook: Arizona's Children 1994, a publication of the Morrison Institute for Public Policy, was a re-examination and expansion of their research originally conducted in 1992. The latest document looks at 48 indicators of child well-being between two time periods; three years ago and eight years ago.

The following are some of the significant findings:

- Child health and safety showed improvement, with decreases in the percent of mothers receiving late or no prenatal care and low weight babies.
- Poverty continues to be a significant factor in the decline of child well-being. More than 17.3% of the state's children lived in poverty in 1993, and the number is increasing.
- Reports of suspected child abuse and neglect continued to climb, reaching 48,283 in 1993 involving almost 85,000 children.
- The number of births to teens continued to climb with an increase of nearly 700 more births per year.

When it comes to the well-being of our children, every citizen in Arizona must ask whether our children are ready to learn, earn, compete, and lead. If current trends persist, too many of Arizona's children will not reach their full potential due to increases in the rate of child poverty, increased rate of teen births, and escalating reports of child abuse and neglect.

A copy of the KIDS COUNT Factbook: Arizona's Children 1994 is available by contacting the Morrison Institute for Public Policy at 965-4525. The State of Arizona's Children: Action Agenda 1994 is available by contacting Children's Action Alliance at 266-0797.

Statistics are useful and essential when we are attempting to determine if we have a problem, where the problem exists, and how intense the problem might be. But the effective creation of public policy for solutions requires greater insight than mere numbers. Using the factbook data, Children's Action Alliance subsequently published The State of Arizona's Children: Action Agenda 1994, a translation of the data into a macro perspective — the state's children viewed as a whole — and a micro perspective — how daily family problems left untreated or ignored develop into major social problems for all of us.

The State of Arizona's Children: Action Agenda 1994 calls for a renewed commitment by the public and private sectors to develop and support a long-range plan that will give all children in Arizona hope for their future. Among its priorities, the document calls for:

- State policy that requires all reports of child abuse and neglect to be responded to;
- Sound welfare policies that encourage responsibility and provide realistic opportunities for a transition to economic self-sufficiency;
- Continued improvements in the juvenile justice system.

What Tax Cuts Mean to Poor Families Today and the Rest of Us Tomorrow

Children's issues such as child abuse and neglect by 6 legislation have been much in the news lately. But other major issues that have a long-term impact on children in Arizona have not gotten quite the same public attention. You didn't read in the newspaper about the number of Child Protective Services caseworkers the state would fund, because that discussion took place largely behind closed doors at the legislature. And while you probably saw some news reports about the state budget and the hundreds of millions of dollars of tax reductions, those reports didn't talk much about what those numbers mean to poor families in Arizona.

There is a gap in our community debates on children's issues. In one committee room, the social workers and parents talk about supporting and strengthening families. In another committee room, the accountants and business leaders talk about balancing the budget, improving efficiency, and reducing taxes whenever and however possible. The truth is that we all have the same ultimate interest in promoting healthy families and a healthy economy. It's time that we all start talking about the connection between fiscal policy and children and families.

Children's Action Alliance is doing that. We are speaking out on how budgets and taxes make a difference to poor families, to kids in a classroom, to good health, to preventing problems, and to helping families solve problems. In January, we produced a one-page flyer comparing state and city government spending in Arizona in various categories to the national average. Our most recent publication Who's for Kids? Who's Just Kiddin' and The State of Arizona's Children: Action Agenda 1994 include information on Arizona's economy, our state budget, the savings of prevention, and taxes and children.
CAA Expands Its Advocacy Efforts with Juvenile Justice Project

In November, CAA welcomed the addition of Jan Christian and Gene Siegel, professionals with 35 years of combined experience working with the juvenile justice system, to serve as directors for The Juvenile Justice Project (TJJP), funded through a two-year grant from The Annie E. Casey Foundation. Juvenile justice has long been underrepresented in the continuum of children's advocacy efforts. TJJP was created to advocate for balanced public policy based on sound research, accurate information, and a view of juvenile justice that places emphasis on public safety, accountability (for both the youth and the system) and equitable and effective treatment. The project's work is enhanced and guided by a steering committee chaired by community leader Alice "Dinky" Snell. Much of TJJP's initial work has revolved around the legislative process. Jan and Gene prepared a series of recommendations along with position papers on a variety of critical juvenile justice issues including opposition to automatic transfer of juveniles to adult court and questions about increased parental accountability in the absence of a more comprehensive and accessible system. Since the end of the legislative session, TJJP has begun to focus on long-term goals. These include the development of a broad-based knowledgeable constituency to help advocate for balanced juvenile justice policy. The first training session took place on July 16 in Phoenix. Over 50 citizens received training and draft copies of a "Handbook on Juvenile Justice and a Citizen's Guide to Fact-Finding and Action in the Juvenile Justice System." For more information on TJJP, or to register for a future training, please contact Jan Christian at 266-0770 or Gene Siegel in southern Arizona at 8400 E. Cressail Drive, Tucson, Arizona 85715, (602) 885-9553.

CAA Celebrates Sixth Birthday with Smiles and Style

Melody S. Robidoux Foundation receives Horace Steele Child Advocacy Award

The Sixth Annual Meeting of Child's Alliance was celebrated on March 15, 1994 at the Plaza Club in downtown Phoenix. Over 100 guests enjoyed refreshments, entertainment and the panoramic view as CAA rang in its seventh year of child advocacy. The highlight of the evening was the presentation of the Horace Steele Child Advocacy Award to the Melody S. Robidoux Foundation. Following a light-hearted salute from board member Sid Brickenkohl and staff member Penelope Jacks, Carol Kamim presented the award to Melody. The award, a sculpture by nationally recognized artist John Waddell, is presented annually to a citizen who has demonstrated outstanding leadership and advocacy on behalf of Arizona's children. "In the last five years, the Melody S. Robidoux Foundation has helped organizations like ours communicate their messages more forcefully and effectively," said Carol Kamim. "They have supplied us with techniques that only the wealthiest corporations have had at their disposal in the past. Their innovative ways of presenting materials, their unique contributions of expertise and technology and their foresight in understanding what message will work have transported child advocacy into the twenty-first century."

Academy of Pediatrics & CAA Form Partnership

The impending federal health reforms are expected to delegate considerable responsibility for the structuring, implementation, and administration of changes in the health care system to the states. In anticipation of these changes, many players in the health care arena have already been active in shaping policies that will benefit their constituencies and set a precedent that will likely be "grandfathered in" through a federal-level plan. CAA has, therefore, begun the process of monitoring administrative and legislative reforms happening right now in Arizona as part of its maternal and child health agenda. We have counseled ourselves very fortunate to have the Arizona Chapter of the Academy of Pediatrics as an ally in this process. As CAA has become more deeply involved in maternal and child health issues, we have found ourselves working ever more closely with the Academy. Therefore, when we received an invitation from the National Association for Child Advocates (NACA) and the national office of the Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) to apply for the State Child Health Access Project (SCAP), we saw it as a tremendous opportunity to formalize our partnership. The AAP and NACA have developed the multi-state effort, SCAP, to encourage and nurture the development of partnerships between child advocates and child health providers in order to combine their expertise to address current state-level child health access issues and prepare for the expected policy changes to be brought about by national health reform. SCAP is designed to bring child advocates together with those who can best support them in their efforts to monitor and influence these processes. Twenty states were selected to participate in a two-day SCAP Strategic Conference at Wingspread Conference Center in Racine, Wisconsin in April of this year. Dr. Mary Russell, President of the Arizona Chapter of AAP, and Susan McCown Helms, Senior Program Associate for Health Policy at CAA, represented Arizona. The Conference provided the opportunity for uninterrupted time to get to know each other as partners, focusing on mutual goals, identifying possible differences, and identifying strengths each party brings to the partnership. Several policy issues of immediate concern were identified, and CAA and the Academy in Arizona both came away with a deep sense of mutual regard and a commitment to work together in the further development of a child health agenda for Arizona. SCAP is funded by a grant from the David and Lucille Packard Foundation and in-kind contributions from the Johnson Foundation, for use of the Wingspread Conference Center, Racine, Wisconsin.

Partnership for Children Completes Initial Redesign of Family and Children's Services

The Partnership for Children has concluded two years of intensive committee work involving over 120 individuals from state agencies, private providers, advocacy organizations and the private sector by publishing an interim report on the design of a proposed system of family and children's services in the state of Arizona. Funded by the Ford Foundation through the Arizona and Tucson Community Foundations, the purpose of the Partnership is to design and assist in the implementation of an effective public assistance system that responds to the needs of Arizona's vulnerable children and families. Because local planning and consensus are essential if the proposed design is to be successfully implemented, the Partnership has identified three types of communities to determine how the proposed design can be best implemented in each locale. The communities tentatively selected are: Casa Grande, the Murphy School District in Phoenix and the C.E. Rose Family Resource Center in Tucson. In the coming months, staff from the Partnership will begin work with representatives of each of these communities on implementation plans and will report back to the Steering Committee and Design Team. The Partnership has also contracted with Jane Wahlen, a consultant from the Governor's Office for Children to work with staff from Children's Action Alliance and the Arizona and Tucson Community Foundations on each of these implementation plans. By year's end, the Partnership will submit three implementation plans to the governor's office and the Ford Foundation. Actual implementation at the three sites is projected to begin in 1995. For more information on the Partnership or to obtain a copy of the interim report on the proposed design, please call Kate McAloney at 266-0770.
Quiet Crisis — Turning Up the Volume on Child Care in Arizona

A quiet crisis is occurring in Arizona and across the nation. While the demand for quality child care is reaching an all-time high, the availability and cost are soaring out of the reach of many parents. Children left in poor quality child care are denied a healthy start, and can pay the price their entire life. By focusing on ensuring every child access to quality child care, we can turn these early formative years from a time of loss for some children to an opportunity for secure early attachments essential for healthy human development.

The Quiet Crisis: Early Care and Education in Arizona’s "turn up the volume" on the pressing need for quality child care.

Well over half (60%) of mothers with children under six years old are in the workforce, with that number predicted to climb to 80% by the year 2000. In Arizona, this translates into 206,000 children under six, 72,000 of whom are infants and toddlers.

The challenge of finding quality child care is complicated by a number of factors, predominantly parents’ concern with cost and availability, opposed by excessively low wages for child care staff. Yet to improve the quality of child care — to ensure our children receive the kind of care and nurturing necessary to help them be whole, productive members of our society — demands that we reduce staff-to-child ratios, improve child care staff’s compensation and training, and maintain or even reduce the cost to parents.

Arizona has begun to analyze how our state can effectively balance these factors, but there is need for intensified and immediate action.

The Quiet Crisis is a comprehensive overview of the child care situation in Arizona, with an emphasis on the critical needs of infants and toddlers. The purpose is to serve as a reference guide and a catalyst for action. Methods for businesses and policymakers to improve the current condition are proposed. To obtain a copy, call CAA at 206-0707.

CAA Publications For People Who Care About Kids

All publications are available from CAA at no charge; however, there is a $2.50 postage and handling fee.

The Arizona Partnership for Infant Immunization (TAPII) Making News Nationally and Locally

TAPII, the statewide coalition staffed by CAA, is now in its second year of working to promote the delivery of age-appropriate immunizations to at least 90% of Arizona’s children before their second birthday. In the last few months, TAPII has:

- published Infant Immunization Week (April 23-31, 1994) through press releases and television and radio public service announcements in English and Spanish;
- expanded its newsletter circulation to 3,000, including every pediatrician, physician’s assistant, doctor of osteopathy and family practice physician in the state, among others;
- hosted delegations from the Group Health Association of America (GHAA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) who came to Arizona to learn from TAPII’s experience in assessing immunization coverage levels through a public-private partnership;
- trained — through partnerships with the Department of Health Services and the Academy of Pediatrics — over 1,000 health care providers around the state on immunization schedules, vaccine management and documentation, and the best ways to provide a barrier-free environment for immunizations; and
- assisted in the development of the Arizona State Immunization Information System (ASIS), which has now received implementation funding from the Flinn Foundation. The $605,000 grant awarded to the Arizona Department of Health Services is the largest the Flinn Foundation has ever granted to a public agency.

CAA’s efforts on behalf of TAPII are funded by the Flinn Foundation. For more information on TAPII, please call Susan McGraw Helm or Maria Ortiz at 206-0707.

National Observance of Children’s Sabbaths

The Children’s Defense Fund, in cooperation with a wide range of denominations and religious organizations, is coordinating the third annual nationwide observance of Children’s Sabbaths on October 14-16, 1994.

This special observance invites congregations of all faiths to speak out on behalf of the vulnerable, and encourages a commitment to help children and families through prayer, education, service, and advocacy.

Beginning with Sabbath services on Friday, October 14th and concluding with church services on Sunday, October 16th, congregations across our nation will hold special worship services, education programs, and related activities on how people can respond to children’s needs. Most Children’s Sabbaths are held in individual congregations, but some areas participate in community-wide interfaith events.

Here in Arizona, efforts are underway to include as many denominations as possible. If you are interested in participating in a community-wide event, please call Randee Pri-Tal at 206-0707.

Children’s Sabbath Organizing Kits are offered in versions for Protestant churches, African-American Protestant churches, Catholic parishes, African-American Catholic parishes, and Jewish synagogues. Kits are available for $3.00 each to offset postage and handling from Children’s Sabbath, c/o Children’s Defense Fund, 25 E Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001 or call (202) 662-3589.
**Visions of Arizona’s Children**

CAA’s on-site visitation program, *Visions of Arizona’s Children*, enjoyed successes with two programs related to the Success by 6 bill. The audience in December was fifteen legislative staff members in Phoenix; in January, it was members of the Tucson news media hosted by the Success by 6 Campaign Southern Arizona Committee. Each group learned about the three program components of the Success by 6 legislation by meeting actual providers and recipients. Legislative staff visited the Health Start program at the Keys Community Center in south Phoenix, and the Tucson news media met with representatives from Yuma Health Start at the University Medical Center. Both groups enjoyed a presentation by Kate Whittaker, the Pima County Director of Healthy Families. In Tucson, Kate spoke to the group from the Healthy Families site at the Tucson Association for Child Care, and in Phoenix, the setting was the Crisis Nursery, where participants were reminded of the increasing number of abused and neglected children. Both groups saw three and four-year-olds playing, learning and growing in an environment that offered stimulation and love at the model comprehensive preschool programs at the Arthur M. Hamilton At-Risk Preschool program in Phoenix and the Van Buskirk Elementary School in Tucson. And, both groups had the opportunity to visit premature babies, some the size of your hand, at the neonatal intensive care units at the Maricopa and University Medical Centers.

Plans for the future include Visions tours for religious leaders and public affairs lobbyists. Anyone interested in this unique program, funded through a grant from the McKesson Foundation, Inc. and the American Express Foundation, should call Rundee Pri-Tal at 266-0707.

**Success by 6 Southern Arizona Committee**

The last few months have been fruitful for the Success by 6 Southern Arizona Committee. The committee began their busy 1994 with the *Visions of Arizona’s Children* tour for the Tucson news media and followed up with meetings with the newspapers’ editorial boards, letters to the editor, radio and television appearances by Southern Arizona Committee members, and speeches to community groups interested in kids and community service. This commitment to keeping the Tucson media informed no doubt contributed to Tucson’s excellent news coverage and editorial support of the Success by 6 bill. Other southern Arizona activities include:

- **Woman to Woman**, a prenatal outreach project initiated by the Community Prenatal Action Team and coordinated by committee member Sally Campbell.
- The Southern Arizona Immunization Committee, which continues to keep the importance of immunizations in front of the public with billboards, radio announcements, children’s art projects and education for health care professionals.
- **Families for Kids Panel**, a project funded by the Kellogg Foundation to evaluate and redesign the foster care system.

For more information on the Success by 6 Southern Arizona Committee, please call Penelope Jacks at 795-4199.

**What the Legislative Session Meant for Child Welfare in Arizona**

CAA’s Child Welfare Project, under the direction of the Child Welfare Committee and funded by the Margaret T. Morris Foundation, has had an active year on a wide variety of fronts. The number of commitments, task forces, legislative committees, and reports generated on issues surrounding children, youth and families in Arizona has been phenomenal.

**A Historic Session for Children’s Issues**

The energy expended during the past legislative session on family and child welfare issues was truly historic. Legislative committees met over the summer and fall of 1993 to examine Child Protective Services, Arizona’s behavioral health system, our child support enforcement system, adoption issues, and welfare reform. These efforts produced a number of recommendations and bills which were closely followed by CAA. Members of CAA’s Child Welfare Committee were instrumental in getting bills introduced, one of which related to adoption (it passed) and one for homeless and runaway youth (it didn’t), as well as actively supporting the Success by 6 bill and taking positions on a myriad of other child welfare and juvenile justice bills introduced this session.

While the final outcomes of these efforts were mixed (and are described elsewhere in this newsletter), it has become increasingly clear that, as a state, we lack a clear, coherent vision and plan regarding when and how we will intervene with troubled families and children and what the respective roles and responsibilities of individuals, families, communities, the private sector, and the state should be.

**Child Protection and Welfare Find Lawmakers at Odds**

The related themes of family responsibility and individual accountability came across quite forcefully in the areas of welfare reform, child support enforcement, adoption, and juvenile justice. However, policymakers seemed to have a harder time grappling with these themes when it came to the child protection and child welfare arenas. While initiatives calling for tougher sanctions for juveniles committing delinquent acts and mandating that their parents assume some degree of responsibility sailed through the legislature, child protective services legislation focused more on family preservation, confidentiality, and ensuring that all parents were notified of the availability of the Parent Assistance Program.

While welfare reform initiatives stressed that minor parents should remain with their own parents to be eligible for financial benefits, there was a lack of agreement on whether the state should have a role in assisting those youth who were homeless and had no families to which to turn. The role and responsibility of the state, both as a funder and provider of services to children, was also unclear. While there was a vast amount of attention paid to the behavioral health system and the need for greater system accountability, there was no final resolution as to who should be served by the state system and what range of services should be provided.

While there was consensus that all Child Protective Services reports should be investigated, the state appropriation for next year is anticipated to be sufficient to investigate only 93%. Although this is an improvement over previous years, it is hardly acceptable public policy. While there was unprecedented support for the Success by 6 bill and the need for early intervention services, the bill became caught in an endless debate, largely held behind closed doors, about how families at greatest risk should be identified and how services should and should not be delivered.

**Strike While the Legislative Iron is Hot**

With the increased attention and interest in children’s issues, we believe that the next twelve months offer a unique opportunity to sort through some of this ambiguity and effectively craft a broad-based plan for family and children’s services in Arizona. The CAA Child Welfare Committee sees the planning process mandated through The Family Preservation and Family Support Act passed by Congress last year as an important vehicle to achieve this.

The act mandates that the states produce a comprehensive five-year plan on how to expend newly appropriated federal funds. The intent is clear that this planning process should not simply be “more of the same” and must go beyond the traditional child welfare service delivery system. In Arizona, the Department of Economic Security (DES) is responsible for submitting this plan. The planning process must be designed to be inclusive (meaning both consumers and providers will participate) and should cross traditional agency and professional boundaries.

The CAA Child Welfare Committee sees this process as a critical and timely opportunity to pull together the work that has already occurred, to bring together broad-based representation from around the state, and to finally achieve a comprehensive plan for children and family services in our state. CAA will not only be actively involved in the planning process, but monitoring it closely to ensure that the intent of the legislation is realized.

We are hopeful that next year, rather than countless commissions and legislative committees looking at issues in isolation, policymakers at all levels, service providers, child advocates, the business community, and family members can look at these issues comprehensively and use our collective energies and perspectives to arrive at common strategies and take the necessary steps to achieve our agreed-upon goals.

*If you would like to be involved in this process or receive more information on the Family Preservation and Support Planning effort, contact the DES coordinators, Kathy Bamford at 285-9702 or Joan Arnold at 542-3598, or contact CAA at 266-0707.*
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“The Little Bill That Could: Success By 6”

A Compromise Emerges

Meetings were held to hammer out a compromise. Initial drafts were abortive, requiring, for example, poor families to commit to pay back all the funds expended on their behalf. Finally, as with many compromises, language was drafted to which all parties reluctantly agreed. This compromise reduced the funding for Health Start and Healthy Families from the original bill, and a five-year commitment of increasing funds was reduced to a two-year period. The proposed language regarding “home visits,” a principal strategy of the program, charged from that which acknowledged the value of voluntary participation to that which suggested extreme caution. In addition, the $10 million for At-Risk Preschool was replaced by $1 million for family literacy programs.

However, the compromise bit a stone wall again. There were not enough votes to pass the measure in the Senate without the At-Risk Preschool funding, and At-Risk Preschool funding was held hostage in the education reform bill, stuck in the House.

The End

This intolerable situation continued until the end of the legislative session. Education reform was finally voted down, and many assumed that At-Risk Preschool would then be attached to the Success by 6 compromise. However, House leadership would not permit At-Risk Preschool legislation to pass without the other provisions of education reform. On the last day of the legislative session, the compromise bill, without At-Risk Preschool was added to a child care bill — a measure strongly opposed by the Democrats. In the wee hours of the morning, the compromise failed by one vote.

A bill heralded by the governor, two-thirds of the legislature, every major newspaper in the state, hundreds of organizations, business leaders, and child advocates throughout the state, went down in stunning defeat. Instead of being the first bill to the governor’s desk, it was the last bill defeated.

The Rest of the Story

The following day, Governor Symington announced plans for a special session to enact the bill. On June 15, 1994, after two months of often painful negotiations, the legislature came back into session on four bills: (1) the Arizona Children and Family Stability Act or the Success by 6 compromise; (2) a modified education reform bill, without vouchers, but including $10 million for At-Risk Preschool; (3) the highly controversial child care bill that had been earlier defeated with the final success by 6 compromise bill; and (4) $5 million for gang prosecution teams or “GITEM.” All four bills passed.

Although the Arizona Children and Family Stability Act contained some troublesome changes, Children’s Action Alliance supported it and the $10 million for At-Risk Preschool in the proposed school improvement act and urged others to do the same.

We arrived at this decision because, despite the changes, the programs will bring help to over 5,000 children and families. Arizona has taken a small step in the right direction.

The unprecedented media attention and controversy over the past few months has given us and thousands of advocates for children across the state the will to persevere and continue to build the political muscle necessary to change the troubling and frightening picture of childhood that far too many of our children face. We have only just begun.
Children's Action Alliance gratefully acknowledges our long-standing supporters, who, since our inception, have enabled us to improve the lives of Arizona's children.

**CAA Takes Position on Guns**

Every two hours a gun kills a child in this country. Within one year in the United States:

- 208 children younger than 10 are killed by firearms
- 560 children aged 10-14 are killed by firearms
- 2,245 children and youths younger than 20 commit suicide
- 4,723 children aged 15-19 are killed by firearms
- 11,230 children younger than 18 are arrested for violent crimes
- 613,514 students are corporally punished in public schools
- 1,047,000 babies are born into poverty
- 1,200,000 latchkey children come home to houses where there is a gun
- 1,939,456 children younger than 18 are arrested for all offenses
- 2,695,010 children are reported abused or neglected

**In Arizona**:

- Injuries due to guns are now among the five leading causes of all child deaths. Among all injuries, deaths, guns are the second most common cause. Parental neglect and safety precautions allows children to suffer death and injury due to guns. Children are victims whether they shoot someone or are themselves shot.

- **Homocide is now the 4th leading cause of death among children aged 1-14 and the 3rd leading cause of death among children aged 15-19.** Children sustain more deaths from homicide in the United States than in any other country that keeps statistics. In Arizona, most homicides of children aged 15-19 occur with guns. Two- and three-year-old children frequently use guns that have been found at home or have been given to them as gifts. Regardless of race, poor children have a higher risk of being the victim or the aggressor in a gun-related homicide or attempted homicide. The person who kills a child with a gun is usually another child of similar age. Both the assailant and the victim are more likely to be boys. Television and film depictions of violence have influenced children to believe that violence is an acceptable means of solving conflict. Viewing television programs as young children can stimulate aggressive behavior in those children as they grow older.

- Suicide is the second leading cause of death among children aged 15-19. Most childhood suicides are accompanied by firearms found at home, which allow children at-risk to act on suicidal ideas.

- Most gun-related deaths are caused by handguns. Among the 601 firearm fatalities in 1990, 77% of the known gun types were handguns.

CAA believes that the surest way to reduce gun-caused injury and death to children is to remove guns from the environments in which children live and play. We support legislative and regulatory measures that would reduce the accessibility of guns in children's environments, including restrictions on the private purchase of guns (up to and including complete bans on certain kinds of firearms) and restrictions on the possession of guns in the home (up to and including complete bans on certain kinds of firearms). CAA supports efforts to reduce the destructive power of gun ammunition, especially handgun ammunition. CAA supports efforts to inform the public, and particularly parents, about the dangers of guns in the home and other places children frequent. CAA supports efforts to reduce the romanticizing of guns in the media. CAA believes that every gun safety education program be carefully evaluated before widespread to avoid those that might inadvertently encourage or promote the use of guns by children.


Based on these findings, CAA has defined its position on guns and children. This position does not stand in isolation but is now an integral part of CAA's dedication to improving the quality of life for Arizona's children.
Children's Action Alliance (CAA), is a private, nonpartisan organization that works to make children’s issues the subject of intense thought, debate, and action by all policy and decision makers, the news media, and the public. Through research, publications, media campaigns, public education, and advocacy, we focus attention on the need to build broad-based support for public and private investment in successful policies and programs that improve the lives of Arizona’s children and families.

SAVE THE DATE
1994 Gubernatorial Forum
Wednesday, August 31, 1994
11:30 am - 2:30 pm

Moderated by Pat McMahon of KTAR Radio & featuring Republican & Democratic Candidates for Governor of Arizona
Your invitation is coming soon.

Thanks to Honeywell and the Arizona Community Foundation for making this event possible.