CHILDREN’S ACTION ALLIANCE

COVID-19 STATE POLICY ASKS

Protect our state’s ability to meet the education, health care, and human services needs of vulnerable children and families by not introducing new tax cuts, tax credits, or any other legislation that reduces state revenue.

CHILD WELFARE

- Use federal COVID-19 relief funds to provide grandparents and other informal kinship caregivers access to “child-only” TANF and/or other emergency TANF funds. Informal kinship families, who step up and prevent children from entering the child welfare system, are vital to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to prevent DCS from becoming overwhelmed during COVID-19. Many of these kin caregivers are older, placing them at higher risk of complications for COVID-19.

- Keep older foster youth connected to services and housed during this health crisis and ensure successful transitions by:
  - Placing a moratorium on discharges of youth aging out of extended foster care at age 21 and provide placement and other services for young people scheduled to discharge for at least 6 months following the end of the crisis.
  - Loosening eligibility requirements for extended foster care around education and employment activities, which are difficult to meet during the health crisis.
  - Providing post-foster care services and supports to youth until age 23 using either federal Chafee or COVID-19 relief funds.

HEALTH

- AHCCCS should reinstate prior quarter coverage and expand presumptive eligibility. This will extend coverage and care to more people in Arizona during this health crisis. Both mechanisms are tools to help newly uninsured Arizonans get into coverage quickly without fear of uncovered medical bills.

- Governor Ducey should allocate public health emergency funds to increase the number of health navigators statewide, so newly uninsured people can enroll in the health coverage option they qualify for.

- Provide culturally responsive technical assistance to support tribal governments in investigating and containing the spread of COVID-19.
CHILD CARE

- **Appropriate the $88 million in federal child care funds** Arizona will receive as a part of the CARES Act.

- Use part of the CARES Act funding to **waive or delay licensure fees for child care providers** until the COVID19 crisis has passed. Under the shut-down, providers have either significantly reduced the number of children they serve, or they’ve closed altogether. The CARES Act allows states to use the funds for operational expenses to keep programs from permanent closure.

- **Appropriate $13 million annual increase in federal funding for the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG)** and use it for rate increases to bring the state closer to the federal minimum requirement.

K-12 EDUCATION

- **Use federal COVID-19 relief funds to help districts respond to increased needs during the pandemic** and not to replace existing state investments and commitments to public education funding.

- Use federal relief dollars to fully phase in **restoration of the DAA funds** to purchase technology and curricula that can be used to provide instruction for students, particularly in rural communities. Rural schools are not well equipped to handle the new demand for online and distance learning.

- **Invest in broadband infrastructure in rural and tribal areas** to reduce disparities in access to education and telehealth services.