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FIRST STEPS

KIDS
CAN'T
WAIT

1994 progress report

MN PLANNING

RECOMMENDATION

Mobilize communities, workplaces, schools and other institutions in an integrated, long-range effort to strengthen families' ability to successfully raise their children and ensure that their children are fully ready for school.

Reduce poverty for all families with children.

Make children and youth active partners in community decision making.

Act to celebrate cultural diversity and end all forms of discrimination.

Require schools to become active partners with parents, youth and community agencies, social and health services, businesses and young people.

Overhaul the state service delivery system to produce better results for children and families.

STRATEGY

Encourage community planning and service delivery.
Generate discussion on family-friendly workplaces.
Develop family centers.

Make early childhood care and education support a priority.
Develop a family-impact assessment tool for all state-funded programs.
Institute home visiting programs for pregnant women and new parents.
Convene a task force to study negative and inappropriate media messages for children.
Establish children's milestones.
Create a common data base on programs for families and children.

Ensure access to children's health care and immunizations.
Enforce child support agreements.
Convene a poverty summit.
Develop programs to help working poor and welfare-dependent families become self-sufficient.
Require state agencies to consider graduates of state job training programs when hiring.
Redesign programs that combine housing with social services for families with special needs.
Increase the number of paternities established.

Integrate mentor programs and youth community service into school curriculum.
Encourage use of mentor programs and youth community service in teacher training programs.
Establish a statewide network for mentor recruitment and quality standards.
Require state agencies to develop a job connection for youth.

Develop a statewide resource and monitor network to help local communities develop services.
Encourage employer actions on state human rights and diversity issues.
Develop a campaign to create public will to eliminate racism and discrimination.
Use diversity and culture as resources for community efforts to support families.
Require state agencies to comply with Minnesota human rights laws to receive state funding.

Make effective early childhood development part of the state's education mission.
Designate agency-level responsibility for school readiness.
Provide strong incentives for integrating services for children.
Require the sharing of facilities by social, health, recreation, library and school services.
Provide a choice of full-day programs for all children to age 12.
Make the career teacher program available to all school districts to link families with schools.
Fully fund programs proven to be effective.
Involve parents and youth in the decision-making process of government.

Eliminate barriers to community residents and teachers working together.
Create a Children's Cabinet.

For the first time, Minnesota has a long-range plan for children, *Kids Can't Wait: Action for Minnesota's Children*, released in 1992 by Action for Children with staff support from Minnesota Planning. *First Steps: Kids Can't Wait 1994 Progress Report* looks at how far Minnesota has come in two years toward realizing this plan.

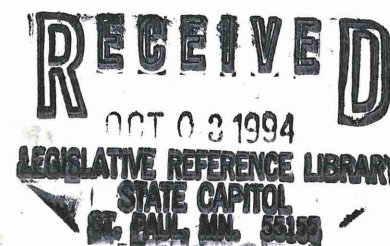
Governor Arne H. Carlson created Action for Children in 1991 to develop a vision of what children's lives should be like and recommend ways for the state to achieve that vision. Based on discussions with several

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hundred Minnesotans around the state, including communities of color, a long-range plan was developed. *Kids Can't Wait* includes a vision for the future, six recommendations and 37 strategies to help shape the kind of future wanted for Minnesota's children and families.

First Steps focuses on progress recommended by Action for Children and includes outcome measures from the long-range plan that assess the well-being of Minnesota's children. *First Steps* comes in two forms: a summary brochure and a full report that details progress for each strategy.

Progress has been made toward most of the strategies, including the creation of the Children's Cabinet consisting of commissioners from 11 state agencies; legislative funding to expand early childhood family education; and passage of the Recognition of Parentage Act, which increases identification of unmarried fathers.



PROGRESS

The 1993 Legislature appropriated money for family services and community-based collaboration grants.

The conference on "Building a Productive Workforce for Tomorrow: The Work Family Summit" was held in September 1992.

The Cornerstone project, funded by Head Start, the Pew Children's Initiative and several state agencies will create a statewide network for family resource centers.

Members were appointed to the Minnesota Early Childhood Care and Education Council to advocate for early childhood programs.

The Children's Cabinet and the Legislative Commission on Children, Youth and Their Families have begun to develop a family-impact assessment tool.

The Legislature appropriated money to early childhood family education to fund two home visiting initiatives.

Action for Children staff has researched the effects media have on children, and the Youth Advisory Council is considering a media summit.

Many children's milestones were included in *Minnesota Milestones: A Report Card for the Future*.

The Children's Cabinet has hired an information specialist to coordinate an integrated children's data system.

Minnesota is creating and implementing a health care program for children and uninsured working poor families through MinnesotaCare.

Minnesota strengthened the administrative process to increase the number of children receiving child support.

A poverty summit was held in summer 1992 and a symposium "Building Family Futures and the Collaboration Strategy" was held in April 1993.

The Minnesota Family Investment Plan was started to increase employment and decrease welfare dependency among welfare families.

This strategy has not been implemented yet and will take a collaborative effort among all state agencies.

The Rental Assistance for Family Stabilization Program and the Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program were initiated.

The paternity of a child can now be documented at birth by signing the Recognition of Parentage form.

The 1993 Legislature established a youth community services program.

The Minnesota Higher Education Coordinating Board administered federal and state funds to colleges and universities to provide service learning and mentor models in their curriculum.

Minnesota Mentor Network was formed in 1993.

The Department of Transportation created an outreach program called Seeds for minority and disadvantaged students.

Action for Children helped to build a statewide resource network while applying for the Pew grant; the Legislature gave money for grants to enhance cross-cultural understanding in schools.

This strategy has not been acted on yet.

Governor Carlson proclaimed the first annual Diversity Week in 1993.

The Department of Transportation held six focus groups in 1991, and the Department of Human Services conducted a forum to discuss how services could be more responsive.

The Children's Cabinet required two collaboration grant communities to develop new models of participation with communities of color to receive funding.

In fiscal year 1993, provider training and culturally relevant early childhood programs received funding, and additional special needs programs were developed.

Learning readiness has been promoted throughout the state by Action for Children and Minnesota 2000.

In 1992, services and planning grants were funded from the co-location of services grant program, as well as the 1993 family services collaboration grants.

Several communities that were awarded family services implementation grants plan to integrate services for families in one building.

This strategy has not been implemented yet.

Hopkins School District was awarded a family services collaboration grant to implement a career teacher education model.

The Cornerstone project has been fully funded for the next five years, and state and federal funding for Head Start increased; however, no proven programs have been fully funded.

Several initiatives have begun around the state to include parents and youth in decision making at the city, county, school district and state levels.

This strategy has not been implemented yet.

The Children's Cabinet was created by the Governor in 1992 and codified by the Legislature in 1993.

INDICATOR	1980	1990	1992
Decrease the percentage of low birthweight babies.	5%	5% (1988)	5%
Increase the percentage of babies whose mothers begin prenatal care in the first trimester of pregnancy.	78%	80% (1988)	84%
Increase the percentage of children who are adequately immunized.	74%	56%	61%
Decrease the percentage of violent and accidental deaths of children and youth.	34%	34%	32%
Decrease the percentage of youth using alcohol at least once a month during the past year:			
Ninth grade	Not Available	26%	19%
12th grade	Not Available	54% (1989)	41%
Decrease the rate of pregnancies per 1,000 Minnesota teens:			
Under age 15	1.5	1.8	2.1
Age 15 to 17	36.9	33.8	31.4
Reduce the percentage of children and youth in poverty.	10%	12%	2000 Census
Increase the rate of established paternity for infants born to single mothers, per 1,000 births.	315 (1981)	347 (1987)	Not Available
Reduce the number of children abused or neglected, per 100,000.	360	790	940
Reduce the percentage of children caring for themselves before and after school hours.	Not Available	26% (1991)	Not Available
Decrease the percentage of children and youth of color who worry about racial discrimination.	Not Available	33% (1989)	34%
Increase the percentage of youth who volunteer at least one hour per week.	Not Available	Not Available	34%
Increase the number of children and youth who participate in school-based youth service programs.	Not Available	56,968 (1991)	105,000 (estimated)
Decrease the percentage of sixth-graders who watch 40 or more hours per week of television.			
Males	Not Available	Not Available	18%
Females	Not Available	Not Available	11%

NEXT STEPS

Over the next year, Action for Children will review the recommendations and strategies in *Kids Can't Wait*, monitor progress and adjust the strategies as needed. It also will update the indicator data and determine if other indicators should be tracked. Work with local communities will continue to be a major focus for Action for Children. Among its activities will be encouraging public discussion and awareness of issues affecting children and families, and helping communities with such efforts as involving the private and non-profit sectors in redesigning services.

Action for Children will continue to provide a framework to guide Minnesota to responsible, effective children's policy development and work on several fronts, including implementing service delivery reform; bringing integrated, comprehensive services into the schools; creating the public and political will to solve the pressing economic and social problems of children and families; and creating community environments that foster strong families and successful children.

Action for Children is a bipartisan, public and private group that stimulates public policy to improve conditions for Minnesota's children and families. Staff assistance is provided by Minnesota Planning.

For copies of the summary brochure or the complete report, *First Steps: Kids Can't Wait 1994 Progress Report*, contact:



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Upon request, *First Steps: Kids Can't Wait 1994 Progress Report* will be made available in an alternate format, such as Braille, large print or audio tape. For TDD, contact Minnesota Relay Service at (612) 297-5353 or (800) 627-3529 and ask for Minnesota Planning.

Printed on recycled paper with at least 10 percent post-consumer waste.

Even though progress has been made toward many strategies, much remains to be done. Some strategies in the children's long-range plan were too specific and need to be expanded. For instance, a funding strategy focused on strict enforcement of human rights laws but overlooked many additional ways to achieve diversity.

In some cases, evaluation measures are needed to help determine whether programs are working as intended. Other strategies need clarification so that progress measures can be developed. For ex-

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ample, progress cannot be measured now for the strategy that removes regulations preventing teachers, parents and others from becoming partners in education. What does "partners in education" mean and how is success toward this strategy identified? Action for Children will review the strategies for effectiveness and revise them as needed.

In addition to progress on specific strategies, long-term progress toward the well-being of Minnesota's children is measured by a series of outcome indicators taken from the 1992 report, *Kids Can't Wait*. Many of these indicators became part of the state's overall 30-year plan, *Minnesota Milestones*. When available, data for 1980, 1990 and 1992 is reported for each indicator. If other years are used, they are noted in parenthesis. No data is available for three indicators: increasing the percentage of children who meet national physical fitness standards; increasing the percentage of children who receive full payment of awarded child support; and decreasing the percentage of children with low self-esteem.