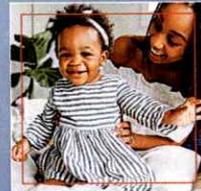


# The Children's Agenda

Smart Choices. Bold Voices.



1

## Mission:

The Children's Agenda improves the health, education and success of children by advocating for effective, equitable policies, especially for families most impacted by poverty, racism, health inequities and trauma.



### The Children's Agenda

Smart Choices. Bold Voices.

## Our Founding Principles:

The Rochester Area Community Foundation convened an 18-month long planning group with United Way, local funders and children's service providers. As a result, The Children's Agenda was founded in 2004 to fill a vacuum for three needed, missing ingredients in our community:

### ADVOCACY:

Independent, nonpartisan, exclusively focused on children

### EXPERTISE:

Evidence-based research

### SEAMLESS CONTINUUM:

Prenatal to young adulthood; systems-building for the whole child

2

**Our communities have many programs to help children, one by one or year by year. But few efforts change the system for *all* children. That's where The Children's Agenda comes in.**

	What	Who	
<b>Direct Services</b>	Child care providers, doctors, and therapists	e.g., YMCA, Golisano Children's Hospital, Step by Step Pediatrics	<p>Individual &amp; Group Changes</p> <p>Population-wide Change</p>
<b>Self-Help</b>	Assistance with filing tax credits, legal, parenting, and housing supports	e.g., Empire Justice CASH program, Legal Aid Society, Rochester Housing Authority vouchers	
<b>Education</b>	Schools, Pre-Kindergarten, and home visiting programs	e.g., Rochester City School District, Mary Cariola, Hope Hall, Nurse Family Partnership	
<b>Advocacy</b>	Data analysis and research, policy change, getting elected officials' support	e.g., The Children's Agenda, Education Trust-NY, ACLU	
<b>Social Change Movements</b>	Not only changes policies but also changes our entire politics and culture	e.g., Civil Rights, Labor, and Women's Rights	

12/3/2025 © The Children's Agenda. All rights reserved.

**TheChildren'sAgenda**  
Smart Choices. Bold Voices.



3

## Preventable Problems



### Economic Mobility

(2024 NYS Comptroller Report on Child Poverty – 2022 data)

- 41.7% of children live below the FPL, and 19.8% in deep poverty (half of FPL)
- Rochester's child poverty rate is 5<sup>th</sup> in the nation among comparably sized cities



### Health

(NYS Dept of Health – Monroe County 20-22 data)

- 9.5% low birth weight
- 5.8 deaths before 1st birthday per 1,000 live births
- 26.5 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births
- 70% with adequate prenatal care



### Education

(ROC the Future's 2025 annual report card on RCSD students – 22-23 data)

- 45.5% deemed school ready by Kindergarten
- 15% deemed proficient in reading by 3rd grade
- 37.7% of RCSD & charter school graduates enrolled in postsecondary programs



### Mental Health

(2023 Monroe County Parent Poll conducted by TCA)

- 40% of parents said their child has struggled with emotional or mental health, yet only 25% received counseling services

12/3/2025 © The Children's Agenda. All rights reserved.

**TheChildren'sAgenda**  
Smart Choices. Bold Voices.



4

# Our Agenda



**Ending Child Poverty:** Poverty is a policy choice, not a personal failing. No child should go hungry or wonder where they are going to sleep tonight.



**Universal Child Care:** Children and families need safe, reliable child care. Every community should have high-quality, affordable care, and every educator should be paid a thriving wage.



**Early Childhood Supports:** 85% of brain development occurs before age 5. No child with developmental delays or disabilities should have to wait to get the intervention services they need.



**Education (PreK to 12):** Entrenched disparities in funding, curriculum, and climate lead to inequitable outcomes and lasting harms. Every child has the right to a free, appropriate, high-quality education.



**Health:** Unfair differences in care options lead to poorer quality of life for families in urban and rural communities. Every child and family should have access to quality, affordable, responsive health care.

# What We Do & Why We Do It

We advocate for state and local policies that support the well-being of children and build equitable systems.



## Data & Policy Research

- Budget analyses (school, city, county, state)
- Issue reports & policy briefs
- Parent polling
- Evidence-based recommendations for programs, practices and policies

Because decisions should rely on more than intuition or partisanship



## Advocacy

- Work with elected officials on policy/funding
- Organize 80 "VIP" parent leaders engaging personally
- Mobilize 6,100+ constituents in advocacy network, social media
- Interfaith Collaborative

Because our reports don't sit on shelves



## Collaborative Power-Building

- Lead, partner, or follow 21 coalitions
  - Local
  - Statewide
  - National
  - NYS Appointments

Because children need us all working together



## Advocacy in Action



12/3/2025 © The Children's Agenda. All rights reserved.

**TheChildren'sAgenda**  
Smart Choices. Bold Voices.



## Who We Work With

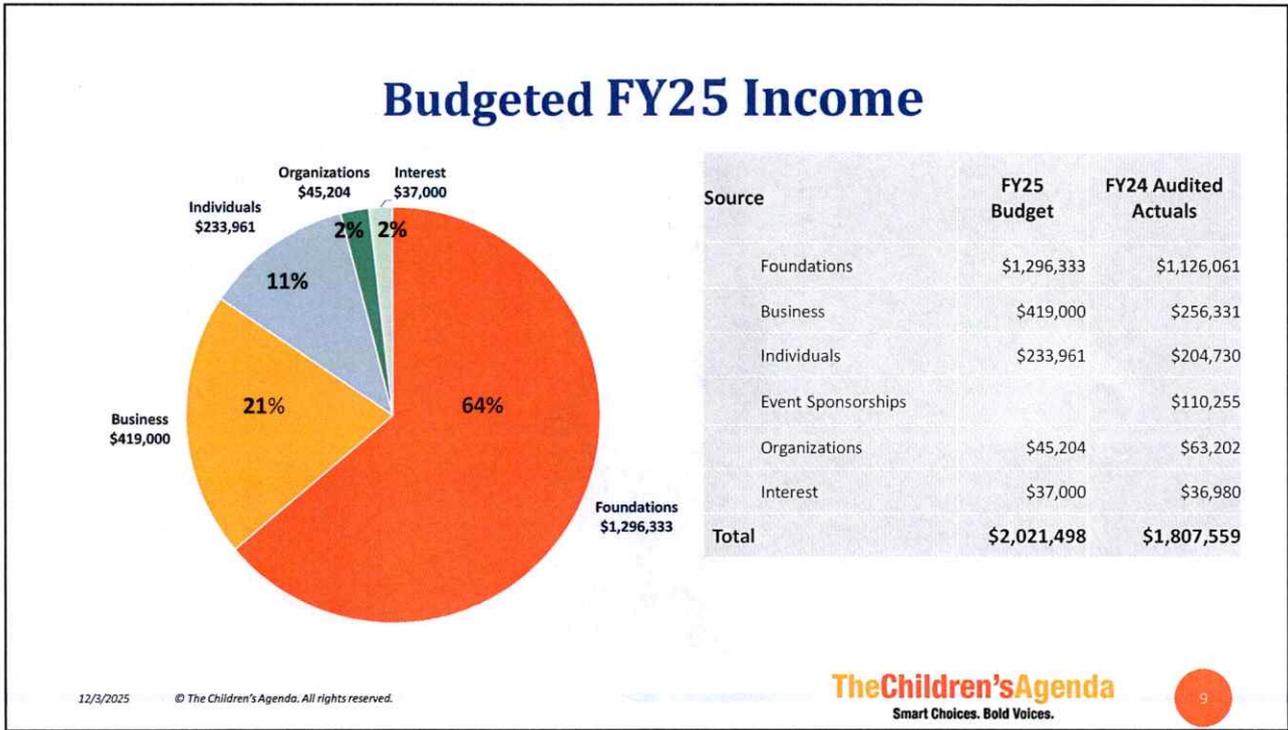
The Children's Agenda partners with more than 20 cross-sector organizations, coalitions, and community groups.



12/3/2025 © The Children's Agenda. All rights reserved.

**TheChildren'sAgenda**  
Smart Choices. Bold Voices.





9

## Progress for Children and Families

### Poverty

- Child Poverty Reduction Act enacted
- Empire State Child Credit expanded to give expanded tax credits for children under 4,
- City of Rochester adopted Children's Savings Accounts for Kindergartners

### Early Childhood

- Paid Family Leave in New York
- Expansion of child care assistance eligibility statewide to 50% of children ages birth – 12
- Increased reimbursement rates for Early Intervention statewide, and increased staffing in Monroe County

### Education

- Full funding of Foundation Aid
- Adoption of new Student Code of Conduct in RCSD
- Expansion of restorative practices in RCSD
- Increased support for RCSD multilingual learners and students with disabilities

### Health and Safety

- Continuous Medicaid coverage for children from birth to age 6
- Increased funding for Home Visitation
- Raise the Age enacted to keep kids out of adult criminal justice system
- Expanded mental health services in RCSD (8 on-site clinics, up to 26 buildings with on-site providers)

12/3/2025 © The Children's Agenda. All rights reserved.

**TheChildren'sAgenda**  
Smart Choices. Bold Voices.

10



"The Children's Agenda is the reason I came out as the parent of a child with special needs. It isn't something I was purposely hiding, but I had no opportunity to share my story until The Children's Agenda came into my life. Sharing my story ignited my desire to advocate, not only for my own child, but for children throughout Monroe County and New York state."

~ Kim, mom of Vivian

12/3/2025

© The Children's Agenda. All rights reserved.

**TheChildren'sAgenda**  
Smart Choices. Bold Voices.

11

11

## What You Can Do

Sign up for our monthly e-news and periodic action alerts



Visit our website to learn more

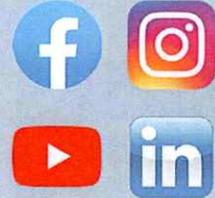
[thechildrensagenda.org](http://thechildrensagenda.org)



Donate and help ensure every child has the chance to thrive



Follow us on socials to stay engaged



## TheChildren'sAgenda

Smart Choices. Bold Voices.

Questions? Contact Samantha Standing:

[Samantha@thechildrensagenda.org](mailto:Samantha@thechildrensagenda.org) ~ 585-256-2620 ext. 2607

12