

The Children's Movement

Group Talking Points on behalf of Children From May 4th "Action" Meeting

Did you know?

- 44% of households in Fresno County have at least one child under 18 years of age?

Source: Census Bureau Data on Fresno County population

- The city of Fresno ranks 4th in the nation for having the highest percentage of children that live in a metro area?

Source: Urban Institute study – 2008 analysis of Census Data

- 75 % of Americans ages 17 to 24 are unable to join the military for various reasons, with 'being overweight' the leading medical cause?

Source: Report titled "Too Fat To Fight" by Military Leaders for Kids - Mission: Readiness

- Majority of public funds going to children's programs and services are to help meet minimum legal requirements, not necessarily as a preventative strategy?

Source: Report titled: "Public Expenditures on Children through 2008" by the Urban Institute and Brookings Institution

Below are the six goals of the Central California Children's Agenda to get our communities and leaders more focused on the well-being of children. The bullets represent arguments for each one that can be used when challenging leaders on how their decisions will impact children and families.

1) Communities and Families Ready for Children

- What happens in our community impacts the life of a child
- Poverty has a tremendous impact on the lives of children in critical areas of their development such as access to healthcare, early childhood education, preventative services, etc
- Any child care environment must be safe and supportive of children's development, not the opposite

2) Nurturing Parents and Caregivers

- We need to prioritize children and families through important and much needed resources such as supportive neighborhoods for parents
- When we invest in parents, they learn to better support their children, support each other and give back to their community
- By educating our parents, the results are less troubled youth and less incarcerated youth in our communities
- Early connections with other parents create a greater support system which our communities desperately need

3) Children Ready for School

- Small things make a big difference. We need more adults and parents to read to our children – it is a proven strategy to help children excel in life
- Without quality preschools, our future will only consist of six-story jail buildings that will house more and more of our children today.

4) Healthy, Safe and Secure Youth

- Healthy children are a good indication of the health of our community – obesity rates are too high for our youth and we need more emphasis on healthy lifestyles.
- Healthy neighborhoods are not possible without healthy homes and healthy homes are not achieved by having more badges patrolling our streets
- Having safe communities does not always translate to more law enforcement badges
- When parents are supported, neighborhoods thrive and children grow up safer
- No other bond can compare to the one that exists between a child and their parent

5) Engaged and Connected Youth

- We need to mitigate the continuous high teen pregnancy rates because when youth become parents there is a greater risk for a life in poverty and poverty impacts all of us.

6) Youth Prepared for Life

- It is unacceptable that the current budget process allows for little flexibility to prepare our children for the future
- Leaders need to begin the shift from short-sighted decisions to a culture where children are first in their priority list
- We are not going away, we will be back and we will not give up!