

AN ACT concerning children.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the Commission on Children and Youth Act.

Section 5. Legislative findings. The General Assembly finds that positive development opportunities for children and youth are an essential investment in the future well-being of our State. Over the past decade Illinois has invested significant resources in programs and services for children and youth in areas such as education, health care, delinquency prevention, and child welfare. Recent initiatives to expand health care and preschool for all children statewide are significant steps toward establishing Illinois as a national leader in providing foundational services to its youngest residents. These investments have supported important opportunities for healthy development, yet there continue to be unmet needs, service gaps, and other challenges facing children, youth and young adults across Illinois. It has been over 22 years since Illinois has had a commission to explore how the State serves its children and youth and allocates its resources in a manner that most effectively supports children and youth. Illinois is committed to being a model state in

forging innovative life development opportunities for all children and youth and needs to develop a vision and strategic plan to achieve this goal.

Section 10. Commission on Children and Youth. The Commission on Children and Youth is established. Under the leadership of the Office of the Governor, the Department of Human Services shall provide administrative support to the Commission, subject to appropriations. The purposes of the Commission are to (1) create a comprehensive 5-year strategic plan for providing services to children, youth and young adults ages birth to 24 in Illinois, (2) monitor the implementation of the strategic plan, and (3) review and, if deemed appropriate, revise the strategic plan.

Section 15. Commission members; appointments. The Commission shall be composed of the following members, to be appointed within 60 days after the effective date of this Act:

(a) Four members of the General Assembly: 2 members of the Illinois Senate, one member appointed by the President of the Senate and one member appointed by the Senate Minority Leader; 2 members of the Illinois House of Representatives, one member appointed by the Speaker of the House and one member appointed by the House Minority Leader.

(b) A member of the Governor's leadership team appointed by the Governor, who shall serve as one of the co-chairs of the

Commission.

(c) Up to 30 public members appointed by the Governor with demonstrated interest and expertise in children and youth across the major stages of child and adolescent development. Public members shall include rural, suburban and urban entities; direct service providers; child advocates; human rights organizations; faith-based service providers; philanthropic organizations that invest in children and youth; at least 3 parents of children under the age of 16; and at least 3 young people between the ages of 16 and 24. A second co-chair of the Commission shall be elected from among the public members of the Commission by the public members.

(d) The following shall serve as ex-officio members of the Commission: the Director of Children and Family Services or his or her designee; the Director of Commerce and Economic Opportunity or his or her designee; the Director of Corrections or his or her designee; the Director of Employment Security or his or her designee; the Director of Healthcare and Family Services or his or her designee; the Secretary of Human Services or his or her designee; the Director of Juvenile Justice or his or her designee; the Director of Public Health or his or her designee; the State Superintendent of Education or his or her designee; the Commissioner of the Chicago Department of Children and Youth Services or his or her designee; the Executive Director of the Illinois Violence Prevention Authority or his or her designee; the Chair of the

Illinois African-American Family Commission or his or her designee; and the Chair of the Latino Family Commission or his or her designee. In addition, there shall be a representative of a local government entity coordinating services for children and youth and a representative of the Illinois Early Learning Council, to be chosen by the chairs.

Section 20. Strategic plan; desired outcomes. The Commission shall develop a 5-year strategic plan that includes specific recommendations to enhance coordination of existing State programs and services and innovative strategies to achieve the following outcomes:

(1) Thriving: preventive health. All children and youth should have access to adequate health care and be educated on healthy lifestyle choices to prevent future illness and disease.

(2) Learning: education completion. All children and youth should have the opportunity to earn a high school diploma and should receive appropriate individualized supports when they face challenges in doing so.

(3) Working: workforce development. All children and youth should have an opportunity for education, skill building, and work experience to prepare them for success in the workforce.

(4) Connecting: social and emotional development. All children and youth should have opportunities to develop essential social and emotional skills that allow them to

communicate effectively, resolve conflict, and manage stress.

(5) Leading: civic engagement. All children and youth should have opportunities to build relationships with adults and their peers as well as cultivate leadership skills through service learning, mentoring, and other safe activities in their communities.

Section 25. Strategic plan; responsibilities. The 5-year strategic plan shall be developed by the Commission in collaboration with other children and youth experts and service providers as needed. Commission members, Commission staff, or both may confer and collaborate with relevant State and national organizations with expertise in child and youth development. The Illinois Early Learning Council shall have primary responsibility for development of the strategic plan pertaining to children birth to 5 and shall collaborate with the Commission on creation of the final plan. The Commission may establish committees that address specific issues or populations and may appoint individuals with relevant expertise who are not appointed members of the Commission to serve on committees as needed.

Section 30. Recommendations; factors. The Commission shall address all of the following factors in developing the 5-year strategic plan:

(1) Strategies to broaden access to programs and services

to youth up through age 24.

(2) Disparities in access and outcomes that may be present based on racial, ethnic, geographic, gender, sexual orientation, disability, incarceration status, medically fragile health conditions, or other variables.

(3) The role of and supports for families and communities in achieving successful outcomes for children, youth and young adults.

(4) Mechanisms for data collection and tracking that integrate data across programs and funding streams when possible.

(5) All other factors the Commission deems relevant to the positive development of children, youth and young adults.

Section 35. Reporting; timelines. The Commission shall issue an interim report to the Governor and to the General Assembly on the Commission's activities on or before December 31, 2009. A draft strategic plan shall be submitted to the Governor and to the General Assembly on or before December 31, 2010. The final strategic plan shall be submitted to the Governor and to the General Assembly on or before June 1, 2011. Any subsequent revisions to the strategic plan shall be submitted to the Governor and to the General Assembly within 30 days after the revisions are approved by the Commission.

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon becoming law.