



Governor Pat Quinn: Fighting for Illinois Children

Since taking office on January 29, Governor Pat Quinn has fought to protect our children, strengthen our families and build a bright future for families throughout Illinois.

Here are some of the Quinn Administration's major accomplishments for our children and families:

Strengthening Families – On August 25, Governor Quinn amended The Differential Response Program Act (Public Act 096-0760) to allow the Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS) to take a more flexible, supportive approach to helping families in need. In cases where a family is in need of help but the risk of harm to children is low, DCFS is authorized to conduct a less disruptive family assessment, rather than a formal investigation. DCFS can then tailor services to support the family and protect the children.

Supporting Youth in the Transition to Adulthood – The Foster Child Successful Transition into Adulthood Act (Public Act 096-0581) allows emancipated youth who are under the age of 21 to receive assistance from DCFS. Research has shown that young adults coming out of foster care have better outcomes when they continue to receive state support during their transition to adult independence.

Reunifying Families – The Service Plans Improvement and Foster Permanency Changes Act (Public Act 096-0600) allows the court and DCFS to review children who are age 13 and over to determine whether the parents whose rights have been terminated can be restored. Reinstatement will not automatically return a child to the custody of the parent, but will allow the court to oversee services and visitation, helping the child understand and manage relationships with their biological family.

Cross-Reporting of Child Abuse and Animal Abuse – On August 14, Governor Quinn joined with Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart to sign legislation (Public Act 096-0494) requiring that an animal control officer, Department of Agriculture investigator, or humane society investigator with reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child is being abused or neglected or is in danger of being abused or neglected must immediately make a written or oral report to DCFS. The law also requires DCFS investigators to report signs of animal abuse.

Protecting the Financial Futures of Children in Foster Care – Legislation signed into law by Governor Quinn (Public Act 096-0619), requires DCFS to conduct annual credit history checks to determine financial history of children placed under its guardianship, starting at age 12. If financial exploitation is discovered, DCFS is required to notify the proper law enforcement agency, States' Attorney or Attorney General.

Supporting Children and Families with Disabilities – In April of 2009, more than 300 additional families of children with developmental disabilities were given the opportunity to receive support services through the Department of Human Services, Division of Developmental Disabilities Home-Based Support Services program. The program provides respite, personal supports, behavior therapy and adaptive equipment for children as part of a Medicaid waiver.

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Promoting Disability Awareness – The Disability History and Awareness Campaign, established when House Bill 1035 received the Governor’s signature (Public Act 096-0191), requires the state board of education to conduct an annual informational campaign about disability history and awareness in Illinois.

Establishing Children’s Day – On August 14, Governor Quinn signed legislation (Public Act 096-0465) to designate the second Sunday in June of each year as Children's Day in Illinois to recognize and acknowledge the lives of all children.

Protecting At-Risk Newborn Infants – Governor Quinn amended Abandoned Newborn Infant Protection Act to increase the time an unharmed baby can be relinquished at a safe haven without fear of prosecution from seven to 30 days (Public Act 096-0345). A parent may relinquish the unharmed newborn to personnel at any hospital, police or fire station in Illinois.

Collecting Child Support – Under Governor Quinn’s leadership, the state continues to collect record amounts of child support for Illinois families, despite being faced with a historic economic recession and rising unemployment.

Improving the Quality of Health Care – With the support of Governor Quinn, the state is encouraging physicians to provide primary care that keeps their patients healthy and out of hospitals. This summer, performance-based bonus payments were made to physicians who made sure children received preventative care, including developmental screenings and the proper immunizations on schedule.

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