

The Children's Movement of Florida

Summary Overview

Led by a 27-member committee of influential Floridians, The Children's Movement of Florida has announced a statewide, citizen-led, non-partisan series of **"Milk Parties"** on behalf of Florida's children. The sweeping series of 15 "Milk Party" rallies will be conducted throughout Florida between Sept. 6 and Sept. 30, beginning in Pensacola and ending in Key West. The goal is to attract substantial media coverage.

The events will include appearances by movement leaders, children's advocates, entertainers and local celebrities and supporters. **Refreshments will include milk and cookies.** A bus called "The Children's Express" will carry the group on "The Children's Movement Road Tour" from city to city. No public funds are being used.

The objective: To educate political, business and civic leaders – and all parents in Florida – about the urgent need to improve the way we care for our children, making the well-being and education of our youngest and most vulnerable citizens, Florida's highest priority. The need is clear: By almost every objective standard, Florida ranks poorly in measure after measure of how we invest in children.

Through the sheer magnitude of these rallies and the thousands of supporters who attend them, the aim is to show influential leaders in Tallahassee and everywhere else that we have the power to obtain for Florida's children the resources they require and deserve. The Children's Movement of Florida is supported by a broad coalition that includes hundreds of children's advocates and others.

For information about the "Milk Party" rally scheduled for your area, about the origins, objectives and leaders of The Children's Movement of Florida, and about the current state of Florida's children, please visit www.childrensmovementflorida.org/



The State of Florida's Children

Here are some facts regarding the state of children in Florida and the consequences of funding priorities that have diminished or undermined programs meant to serve our children.

Children's Health, Special Needs and Insurance

- Ninety percent of human brain development occurs during the first five years of life, making those years crucially important to the overall development of our children.ⁱ
- Florida regularly ranks in the bottom half of states in child health, largely due to the high rate of babies born underweight and children who die within their first year of life.ⁱⁱ
- By most measures, Florida ranks 49th in the nation in the percentage of uninsured children,ⁱⁱⁱ and a recent report places our state last.^{iv} More than 18 percent of Florida's children – nearly 800,000 children – do not have health insurance, almost double the national average.
- Thirty-two percent of Florida's uninsured children do not have a regular place of care, compared with only 7 percent of insured children.^v As a result, many uninsured children do not swiftly seek treatment when they are ill.^{vi} When uninsured children finally are able to enter a hospital in Florida, they are 1.5 times more likely than insured children to die in the hospital.^{vii}
- The cost of uncompensated care for uninsured Florida children and adults was around \$2.9 billion in 2005 and was estimated to rise to more than \$4 billion in 2010.^{viii} To help pay for this, each insured Florida family absorbs a hidden \$1,400 insurance premium surcharge, and each insured Florida individual pays a \$510 hidden surcharge.^{ix}
- Florida meets just two of eight policy benchmarks aimed at addressing children's dental health needs. More than half of the children on Medicaid received no dental service in 2007, the last year for which data are available.^x
- Early screening for and treatment of children's special needs can help children thrive and save \$30,000 to \$100,000 per child.^{xi}
- Research shows that those with better childhood health earn and save more money, are more productive,^{xii} and are less dependent on welfare and public subsidies.
- Every dollar spent by Florida to improve the health and well-being of children in the state creates an aggregate total of \$4.55 in economic output. That is a return on investment of 455 percent.^{xiii}
- Florida ranks 47th in the percentage of pregnant women receiving prenatal care in the first trimester.^{xiv}

High Quality Pre-Kindergarten Programs

- Florida's pre-kindergarten program meets only four of 10 nationally recommended standards and ranks 34th among 38 states in per pupil funding.^{xv}
- Studies show returns of up to \$17 for every \$1 invested in a high-quality preschool education. These savings come from increased school achievement and high school graduation rates, decreased child abuse and neglect, reduced reliance on public assistance, increased adult earnings, and decreased contact with the criminal justice system.^{xvi}



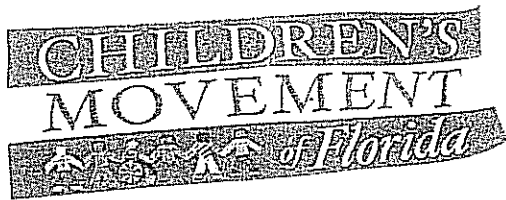
The State of Florida's Children

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- ^{ix} Ben Furnas and Peter Harbage. "The Cost Shift from the Uninsured." Center for American Progress Action Fund. March 24, 2009.
- ^x The Pew Center on The States, *The Cost of Delay, State Dental Policies Fail One in Five Children*, February 2010.
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The State of Florida's Children

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- ^{xxi} 2010 Florida Children's Budget Report, Florida Children and Youth Cabinet.
- ^{xxii} Piquero, A., Farrington, D., Welsh, B., Tremblay, R., & Jennings, W. (2008). Effects of Early Family/Parent Training Programs on Antisocial Behavior & Delinquency. Available:
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The Children's Movement of Florida Launches Statewide "Milk Parties" To Make Children a Greater Priority

Movement will leverage grassroots support to make young children the state's highest priority

MIAMI, Aug. 9, 2010 – Led by a 27-member committee of influential Floridians, The Children's Movement of Florida today announced a statewide, citizen-led, non-partisan series of "Milk Parties" on behalf of Florida's children.

The sweeping series of 15 "Milk Party" rallies will be conducted throughout Florida between Sept. 6 and Sept. 30.

The events will include appearances by movement leaders, children's advocates, entertainers and local celebrities and supporters. **Refreshments will include milk and cookies.** A bus called "The Children's Express" will carry the group on "The Children's Movement Road Tour" from city to city.

The objective: To educate political, business and civic leaders – and all parents in Florida – about the urgent need to improve the way we care for our children, making the well-being and education of our youngest and most vulnerable citizens Florida's highest priority.

Special concentration will be focused on early childhood, the years from birth through five years old, when science tells us that 90 percent of human brain development occurs.

"Through the sheer magnitude of these rallies and the thousands of supporters who attend them, we will show influential leaders in Tallahassee and everywhere else that we have the power to obtain for Florida's children the resources they require and deserve," said David Lawrence Jr., president and co-chair of The Children's Movement of Florida, founding chair of The Children's Trust of Miami-Dade County and retired publisher of The Miami Herald.

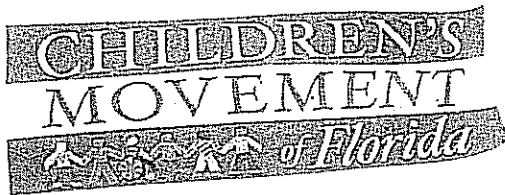
The need is clear: Florida regularly ranks in the bottom half of states in child health, largely due to the high rate of babies born underweight and children who die within their first year of life. Hundreds of thousands of children in Florida are not covered by health insurance. The state's prekindergarten program does not meet most national standards. And more.

"I am a frustrated Floridian," Lawrence said. "By almost every objective standard, Florida ranks poorly in measure after measure of how we invest in children.

"What we're trying to do is make children – particularly infants and toddlers – a top priority in this state," he said. "This powerful, well-organized, well-funded movement is about the future of our community and our country."

To fund the initial phase of the movement, almost all of the million-dollar initial goal has been raised from foundations, individuals and businesses. No public funds are being used.

Lawrence and other leaders of The Children's Movement of Florida emphasized that the movement is not advocating higher or new statewide taxes. Rather, it will work in coming years to ensure that all of



Florida's children receive a bigger piece of the budgeting pie.

"When it comes time to fight for the budget, children's issues are usually outgunned by lobbyists for various other interests," said Roberto Martinez, co-chair of The Children's Movement, a former U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Florida and a member of Florida's State Board of Education. "Children's issues suffer because they don't have an advocate speaking for them as vigorously and consistently as they should."

The Children's Movement of Florida is supported by a broad coalition that includes hundreds of children's advocates and others. "When it comes to what's best for Florida's children, there should be no partisanship," Martinez said.

For information about the Milk Party rally scheduled for your coverage area, about the origins, objectives and leaders of The Children's Movement of Florida, and about the current state of Florida's children, please visit www.childrensmovementflorida.org/



Media Contact:

Martin Merzer, Communications Director
martin.merzer@childrensmovementflorida.org
Cell: 954-465-1099 or
Alia Faraj-Johnson, 850-222-1996