

LFCS Advocacy Priorities

As part of our Mission, Lutheran Family & Children's Services is called to *help families, children and individuals experience greater hope and wholeness of life ...* and health care, child care and child welfare are vital components of that.

Child Welfare & Adoption

Lutheran Family & Children's Services of Missouri believes that all children deserve a safe and loving home. We also believe that it is the shared responsibility of families, faith and community-based organizations, and government (federal, state, and local), to ensure the safety and well being of these children.

Our Child Welfare Department works with many families including: pregnant women, mothers with young children, adoptive families, foster families, and even grandparents raising their grandchildren. LFCS Advocacy works to revise or create policies that support all types of families and provide the best care for Missouri children. This includes policies that respect all parties involved in the adoption process, provide extra protection for children in foster care and more resources for their caretakers whether they are foster parents or relative guardians, etc.

Advocacy Priorities

<i>Child Welfare</i>	<i>Child Care</i>
<i>Health Care</i>	<i>Budget</i>

Child Care

Lutheran Family & Children's Services of Missouri believes that quality, affordable child care:

- is critical to children's physical safety
- plays a vital role in children's emotional and educational development, preparing them for success later in life.

We also believe that the benefits of quality, affordable child care extend to the overall family, enabling parents to maintain steady employment and better support their families.

LFCS Advocacy supports Hilltop and Elm Point by working with the Missouri Legislature and other child care advocates to promote policies that support working families and ensure the safety and healthy development of children. This includes policies dealing with child care subsidies, provider reimbursement rates, sound child care regulations etc.

Health Care

Lutheran Family & Children's Services of Missouri believes that all Americans should have access to basic, affordable physical and mental health care. We also believe that health care should:

- provide quality, affordable health care choices for all Americans, especially for the children and other vulnerable populations who are currently uninsured.
- include access to basic affordable physical and mental health care, substance abuse treatment, dental and vision care.

LFCS staff members identified the "lack of affordable health insurance" as the most significant trend currently impacting health and human services in a 2009 United Way poll. LFCS Advocacy collaborates with other groups and communicates with our Congressional Legislators to ensure that our clients and other vulnerable populations get the care they need.

Budget

Lutheran Family & Children's Services of Missouri believes that the Missouri budget reflects the states priorities more clearly than any other document ...and has a stronger impact on the quality of life experienced by all Missourians than any other document. We also believe that the state budget should invest in infrastructure, transportation, education and social services that strengthen our families, our communities, and our state as a whole.

During every budget cycle vital programs are at risk of being cut or eliminated, and during the last several years many of these programs, like the Alternatives to Abortion or child care subsidies, are cut out of initial budget proposals and LFCS Advocacy worked hard to get them reinstated. Likewise, LFCS Advocacy is engaged in educating legislators about the importance of tax credits to agencies like Lutheran Family & Children's Services to make sure they are not eliminated.