



## 2012 FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA INNOVATION AT WORK FOR AMERICA'S CHILDREN

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The Children's Partnership (TCP) is calling for leadership in government, for profit, and nonprofit sectors to ensure all children—especially those at risk of being left behind—have the resources and opportunities they need to become healthy, productive adults. In 2012, our work will focus on achieving the following critical goals for America's children.

### **Access to Affordable, High-Quality Health Care**

Health insurance helps children get the care they need, stay healthier, miss fewer days of school, and be better prepared to learn. Yet 5.9 million children in America remain uninsured. Most of these children are eligible for coverage through programs such as Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), but face barriers to enrollment. The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) expands health insurance options for families and sets the course toward a streamlined enrollment and renewal process.

In 2012, TCP will work to:

- Ensure that the benefits of health reform are fully realized so that children have access to high-quality care that covers all of their health needs, including comprehensive physical, dental, and mental health services, especially for those children in low-income and other underserved communities;
- Advance effective federal and state policy development pursuant to ACA to ensure a seamless, data-driven enrollment and renewal process;
- Promote the use of information technology to create a consumer-friendly, efficient experience for children and their parents; and
- Encourage states to use Express Lane Eligibility to support effective outreach and enrollment under ACA.

### **Better Health Outcomes through Innovative Technology Solutions**

Health information technology (HIT) has the potential to transform the way health care is delivered, received, managed and paid for in the United States. As this electronic revolution accelerates, there has been little public discussion about how it can improve care for the nation's children. At this time of technological innovation, it is critical that all children benefit from these technologies, with special attention to those in low-income, geographically isolated, and other underserved communities.

In 2012, TCP will work to:

- Ensure that federal investments in HIT – through ACA, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), and other avenues – adequately consider and address the needs of children and support those who care for them;
- Promote the role of the consumer in managing the exchange of information that relates to their own health and health care, with particular attention to what this means for children;

- Provide incentives for and remove barriers to electronic information exchange to improve delivery and coordination of services for particularly vulnerable children, such as those in foster care; and
- Extend the reach of telehealth to provide health care services to children in schools, childcare centers and other sites where underserved children spend time.

### **Proficiency in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills**

Computers, broadband, and the Internet can open up new opportunities for youth and provide them with the necessary skills to take advantage of educational and economic opportunities in a digital economy. To fully realize these opportunities, children must have access to affordable digital tools at home and in school; and parents and teachers must be equipped to use technology to support children's educational achievement and to direct children's Internet use toward safe, educational, and enriching opportunities.

In 2012, TCP will work to:

- Secure forward-looking policies and sufficient resources to ensure every child grows up with this home and school technology connection and can become proficient in 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. Relevant policy vehicles include the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), revised uses of Universal Service Funds, and implementation of Race to the Top, the National Broadband Plan, and the National Education Technology Plan; and
- Leverage public and private sector initiatives to provide parents the technology training and tools they need to support their children's education: Promise Neighborhoods, Title I (ESEA), low-income housing, and the like.

### **New Ways to Benefit Children in the Digital Age**

Undertake and publish original research about how the growing \$25 billion dollar industry around online social games and virtual goods can benefit America's children. This research will examine state of the art ways that game companies can improve the lives of children and put forward concrete recommendations for new ways to enhance their efforts.

### **More Information**

The Children's Partnership looks forward to working with policy leaders and partner organizations to achieve these goals for children. For further information, contact Lisa Han, Program Coordinator, at (202) 429-0033.