

# Children First

## 2016 LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### »» ***Protected the Children First Trust Fund***

We oversaw the passage of this vital trust fund (CFTF) of almost \$40 million dollars which is dedicated solely for the needs of children. It has become the backbone of support that allows many state agencies to provide programs and services to over 150,000 of Alabama's children.

### »» ***Conceptualized and Currently Manage the #IamMedicaid Campaign***

In order to educate the public about who a Medicaid recipient in Alabama really is and to advocate for full funding for the Medicaid Agency we developed the #IamMedicaid campaign. Through the year, and with the help of 50+ partner organizations, we held numerous press conferences, sent almost 5,000 emails to legislators, gained national attention, gathered pictures and information from over 100 Medicaid recipients in Alabama, and successfully advocated for full funding of the Medicaid program in FY17.

### »» ***Advocated for Sufficient Funding for Agencies that Serve Children***

The twelve state agencies that benefit from the Children First Trust Fund are also funded by either the General Fund or the Education Trust Fund. As budgets in Alabama become tighter, it is important to continue to educate lawmakers on what proposed cuts could do to the well-being of Alabama's children. Children First played a vital role in insuring that the agencies that serve children received level funding from the previous year.

### »» ***Defended Dollars Earmarked for Agencies that Serve Children***

A bill was introduced that would have un-earmarked \$400 million dollars from various state agencies and have those dollars appropriated to the General Fund. The agencies proposed were the Department of Human Resources at \$153 million dollars; the Department of Mental Health at \$206 million dollars and the Department of Public Health at \$6 million dollars. We helped to prevent this bill's passage, and as a result, protected hundreds of millions of dollars dedicated to children.

### »» ***Assisted with the Passage of Tougher Child Abuse Laws***

Two bills were passed that impose tougher penalties on people who abuse children. One was named Ava's Law after a young girl who was beaten to death in Lee County. The other dealt with penalties related to aggravated child abuse. It changed the offense from a Class B felony to a Class A felony if the crime is committed to a child under the age of six. Aggravated child abuse is defined as when a person tortures, willfully abuses, cruelly beats, or otherwise willfully maltreats a child.

### »» ***Worked with Legislators Regarding Juvenile Justice Issues***

We worked with policy makers to find ways to give judges more discretion with regards to the trying of children as adults and on the expungement of their records. A joint coalition, of which we are a part, was formed to study these issues more closely.

### »» ***Monitored 72 Bills Concerning Children and Families***