Policy and Advocacy

ICOY conducts policy advocacy on behalf of children, youth, and families and the network of providers who serve them. ICOY works to strengthen the systems serving children, youth, and families by:

- Monitoring and influencing state and federal policies that affect children, youth, and families.
- Analyzing legislation and budgets at the local, state, and federal levels to help ICOY members make informed decisions.
- Influencing developments in child welfare, juvenile justice, and youth services that improve outcomes for children, youth, and families.
- Facilitating an open dialogue between public officials and private providers.
- Advocating to build and sustain critical community-based child welfare, juvenile justice, and youth services.
- Supporting and enhancing local advocacy efforts and providing a collective voice in Springfield for children, youth, and families.

ICOY’s policy priorities are formulated by the Policy Advisory Board. The Policy Advisory Board is comprised of ICOY members who volunteer to help shape ICOY’s legislative agenda according to the following guiding principles:

- Promote policies and programs that are trauma-informed, evidence-supported, family-focused, culturally responsive, and community-based.
- Promote policies and programs that support families, empower communities, and prevent involvement in the formal juvenile justice and child welfare systems.
- Promote policies and programs that ensure out-of-home placement in juvenile detention or foster care is used only when necessitated by safety concerns that cannot otherwise be mitigated, and occurs in the least restrictive setting, for the least time possible, and close to the child’s family and community.
- Promote policies and programs that advance racial equity and reduce the entrenched patterns of disproportionate representation and disparate outcomes for minority children, youth, and families involved in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems.
- Promote policies and administrative practices that provide full funding for community services to enhance the well-being children, youth, and families.
- Promote policies and administrative practices that support a well-qualified, trained, and stable workforce serving children, youth, and families.
- Promote policies and administrative practices that safeguard the interests of marginalized children, youth, and families throughout the State’s design, implementation, and administration of Medicaid and managed care arrangements for community social services.
- Promote policies and administrative practices among community youth service, juvenile justice, and child welfare providers to measure their performance, evaluate outcomes, and apply sound continuous quality improvement practices.
- Fulfill ICOY’s strategic imperative to take a strong stance on social justice issues that impact Illinois’ children, youth, and families.