

Who's for Kids,
and Who's just
kidding

Children's Campaign Current

Mission
To engage citizens to
take action and hold
our leaders accountable
to deliver the 5
Promises to Florida's
Children

Free!

Weekly Review of Children's News

www.iamforkids.org

In this tough economy to help prevent Florida's most vulnerable population from bearing the brunt of the budget woes, it is more important than ever for child advocates to be vigilant.

*The **Children's Campaign Current** is a weekly review of top news stories about children's issues across the state.*

You can also view the [Truth Tour Video](#), check to see when the [Our Children: 2009 Truth Tour](#) is coming to your area, and read [Legislative and Congressional Issues Briefs](#).

Promise 1 - Children's Health

[KidCare wins](#) (*Tallahassee Democrat*) SB918, which goes now to Gov. Charlie Crist for his almost certain signature, would decrease the time that working families who have lost private health insurance must wait before switching to KidCare. It also shortens the length of time they must wait to reapply if they've been dropped from the program for failing to pay the small monthly premium, about \$20 per child.

Promise 2 - Child Protection

[Zahid Jones bill could prevent future deaths](#) (*Southwest Florida's News-Press*) This much-needed legislation gives a voice to grandparents and other relative caregivers who have concerns about the well-being and safety of children. Had such a law been in place two years ago, Zahid might be alive today.

[Doing the right thing for foster children](#) (*Miami Herald*) Foster Care Review was created from community frustration and outrage over foster children's plight and is a proud model of community involvement and advocacy. Trained volunteers review children's cases to assure that we all meet our responsibilities. They look at the safety and wellbeing of children in care, but also keep the system focused on finding them permanent homes.

Promise 3 - Early Learning

[Registration is slow to attend summer pre-K](#) (*Sun-Sentinel*) "We're holding our breath," Steele said. "Enrollment is low for all counties. One reason for this may be that many parents who are likely to use voluntary pre-K resources are doing so during the school year."

[Education may not be held harmless](#) (*Tampa Tribune*) Kiar charges that the Legislature could have done better - that it ignored the possibility of raising more revenue for schools through gambling expansion, ending sales tax exemptions or closing corporate tax loopholes. "I agree the economy's bad and people are cutting amenities they can't live without," he said. "But our students can't live without a good education."

Promise 4 - After School

[So far, St. Petersburg summer camps sign up fewer kids than in 2008](#) (*St. Petersburg Times*) Judging by the city's summer camp numbers, the Bristols aren't the only ones having second thoughts about a summer tradition. Once so popular that parents would stand in lines before dawn to secure a spot, many camps have plenty of openings.

Promise 5 - Juvenile Justice

Youths honored for turning lives around (*Pensacola News Journal*) "Youth Success Week recognizes students' successes and the schools, agencies and organizations that helped them get there," said Laurie Rodgers, council chairwoman. "It also makes the community aware that positive things are happening in juvenile justice."

Zero Tolerance Bill Passes Legislature (*WCTV*) Recent data from the Department of Juvenile Justice illustrates the vital need for this bill. More than half of the youth referred from schools are first-time offenders, and a misdemeanor was the most serious charge for 69% of school-related referrals. HB 997 and its Senate companion bill redirect a large number of these children away from the juvenile justice system through diversionary alternatives.

PACE Center: 10 years of prevention for at-risk girls (*Naples Daily News*) PACE is a sound investment for the state of Florida. It costs on average \$12,500 per student to provide these services for one year. This is a bargain compared to the \$42,500 average cost to taxpayers to house and treat a single juvenile in a facility for the same period of time.

All Promises

In regular session's final two days, a mad push of legislation (*St. Petersburg Times*) But the session, which was set to end Friday, won't. Only the legislation will. Debate and negotiations on the budget are likely to continue for a full week longer because legislators just broke a logjam on how to balance the \$65 billion-plus spending plan.

Kids Group Scores Obama, Congress in 100 Days Report Card (*Houston Chronicle*) Voices gave President Obama a "B" and Congress received a "B-" for their 100 days score. With the report card, Voices sought to remind elected officials that many of the jobs lost in the economic downturn also represent family benefits lost.

What happened? Little good (*Daytona Beach News Journal*) This session of the Florida Legislature started with incoming House speaker Ray Sansom being forced from his position after lawmakers learned of his shenanigans in directing tax money to his future employer. And it just went downhill from there.

Children's Campaign News

Top Secret (*Legislative Connection*) An "extra innings" Session presents a challenge and an opportunity. The challenge is to maintain the momentum to be heard about the cuts to children's services and the pressing need to find additional revenue.

Florida Set to Repeat History (*Legislative Connection*) The state has proven time and time again, when it continues to do things the same way it produces the same bad results. Ask Tallahassee to show some courage and come up with a solution for Florida's children. If we don't then we have learned little from past history and are destined to make the same mistakes again.

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