

1 AN ACT concerning children.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**  
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the  
5 Commission on Children and Youth Act.

6 Section 5. Legislative findings. The General Assembly  
7 finds that positive development opportunities for children and  
8 youth are an essential investment in the future well-being of  
9 our State. Over the past decade Illinois has invested  
10 significant resources in programs and services for children and  
11 youth in areas such as education, health care, delinquency  
12 prevention, and child welfare. Recent initiatives to expand  
13 health care and preschool for all children statewide are  
14 significant steps toward establishing Illinois as a national  
15 leader in providing foundational services to its youngest  
16 residents. These investments have supported important  
17 opportunities for healthy development, yet there continue to be  
18 unmet needs, service gaps, and other challenges facing  
19 children, youth and young adults across Illinois. It has been  
20 over 22 years since Illinois has had a commission to explore  
21 how the State serves its children and youth and allocates its  
22 resources in a manner that most effectively supports children  
23 and youth. Illinois is committed to being a model state in

1 forging innovative life development opportunities for all  
2 children and youth and needs to develop a vision and strategic  
3 plan to achieve this goal.

4 Section 10. Commission on Children and Youth. The  
5 Commission on Children and Youth is established. Under the  
6 leadership of the Office of the Governor, the Department of  
7 Human Services shall provide administrative support to the  
8 Commission, subject to appropriations. The purposes of the  
9 Commission are to (1) create a comprehensive 5-year strategic  
10 plan for providing services to children, youth and young adults  
11 ages birth to 24 in Illinois, (2) monitor the implementation of  
12 the strategic plan, and (3) review and, if deemed appropriate,  
13 revise the strategic plan.

14 Section 15. Commission members; appointments. The  
15 Commission shall be composed of the following members, to be  
16 appointed within 60 days after the effective date of this Act:

17 (a) Four members of the General Assembly: 2 members of the  
18 Illinois Senate, one member appointed by the President of the  
19 Senate and one member appointed by the Senate Minority Leader;  
20 2 members of the Illinois House of Representatives, one member  
21 appointed by the Speaker of the House and one member appointed  
22 by the House Minority Leader.

23 (b) A member of the Governor's leadership team appointed by  
24 the Governor, who shall serve as one of the co-chairs of the

1 Commission.

2 (c) Up to 30 public members appointed by the Governor with  
3 demonstrated interest and expertise in children and youth  
4 across the major stages of child and adolescent development.  
5 Public members shall include rural, suburban and urban  
6 entities; direct service providers; child advocates; human  
7 rights organizations; faith-based service providers;  
8 philanthropic organizations that invest in children and youth;  
9 at least 3 parents of children under the age of 16; and at  
10 least 3 young people between the ages of 16 and 24. A second  
11 co-chair of the Commission shall be elected from among the  
12 public members of the Commission by the public members.

13 (d) The following shall serve as ex-officio members of the  
14 Commission: the Director of Children and Family Services or his  
15 or her designee; the Director of Commerce and Economic  
16 Opportunity or his or her designee; the Director of Corrections  
17 or his or her designee; the Director of Employment Security or  
18 his or her designee; the Director of Healthcare and Family  
19 Services or his or her designee; the Secretary of Human  
20 Services or his or her designee; the Director of Juvenile  
21 Justice or his or her designee; the Director of Public Health  
22 or his or her designee; the State Superintendent of Education  
23 or his or her designee; the Commissioner of the Chicago  
24 Department of Children and Youth Services or his or her  
25 designee; the Executive Director of the Illinois Violence  
26 Prevention Authority or his or her designee; the Chair of the

1 Illinois African-American Family Commission or his or her  
2 designee; and the Chair of the Latino Family Commission or his  
3 or her designee. In addition, there shall be a representative  
4 of a local government entity coordinating services for children  
5 and youth and a representative of the Illinois Early Learning  
6 Council, to be chosen by the chairs.

7 Section 20. Strategic plan; desired outcomes. The  
8 Commission shall develop a 5-year strategic plan that includes  
9 specific recommendations to enhance coordination of existing  
10 State programs and services and innovative strategies to  
11 achieve the following outcomes:

12 (1) Thriving: preventive health. All children and youth  
13 should have access to adequate health care and be educated on  
14 healthy lifestyle choices to prevent future illness and  
15 disease.

16 (2) Learning: education completion. All children and youth  
17 should have the opportunity to earn a high school diploma and  
18 should receive appropriate individualized supports when they  
19 face challenges in doing so.

20 (3) Working: workforce development. All children and youth  
21 should have an opportunity for education, skill building, and  
22 work experience to prepare them for success in the workforce.

23 (4) Connecting: social and emotional development. All  
24 children and youth should have opportunities to develop  
25 essential social and emotional skills that allow them to

1 communicate effectively, resolve conflict, and manage stress.

2 (5) Leading: civic engagement. All children and youth  
3 should have opportunities to build relationships with adults  
4 and their peers as well as cultivate leadership skills through  
5 service learning, mentoring, and other safe activities in their  
6 communities.

7 Section 25. Strategic plan; responsibilities. The 5-year  
8 strategic plan shall be developed by the Commission in  
9 collaboration with other children and youth experts and service  
10 providers as needed. Commission members, Commission staff, or  
11 both may confer and collaborate with relevant State and  
12 national organizations with expertise in child and youth  
13 development. The Illinois Early Learning Council shall have  
14 primary responsibility for development of the strategic plan  
15 pertaining to children birth to 5 and shall collaborate with  
16 the Commission on creation of the final plan. The Commission  
17 may establish committees that address specific issues or  
18 populations and may appoint individuals with relevant  
19 expertise who are not appointed members of the Commission to  
20 serve on committees as needed.

21 Section 30. Recommendations; factors. The Commission shall  
22 address all of the following factors in developing the 5-year  
23 strategic plan:

24 (1) Strategies to broaden access to programs and services

1 to youth up through age 24.

2 (2) Disparities in access and outcomes that may be present  
3 based on racial, ethnic, geographic, gender, sexual  
4 orientation, disability, incarceration status, medically  
5 fragile health conditions, or other variables.

6 (3) The role of and supports for families and communities  
7 in achieving successful outcomes for children, youth and young  
8 adults.

9 (4) Mechanisms for data collection and tracking that  
10 integrate data across programs and funding streams when  
11 possible.

12 (5) All other factors the Commission deems relevant to the  
13 positive development of children, youth and young adults.

14 Section 35. Reporting; timelines. The Commission shall  
15 issue an interim report to the Governor and to the General  
16 Assembly on the Commission's activities on or before December  
17 31, 2009. A draft strategic plan shall be submitted to the  
18 Governor and to the General Assembly on or before December 31,  
19 2010. The final strategic plan shall be submitted to the  
20 Governor and to the General Assembly on or before June 1, 2011.  
21 Any subsequent revisions to the strategic plan shall be  
22 submitted to the Governor and to the General Assembly within 30  
23 days after the revisions are approved by the Commission.

24 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon  
25 becoming law.