

2019 Organizational Overview

Mission: The Children's Agenda's advocates for effective policies and drives evidence-based solutions for the health, education and success of children, especially for children who are vulnerable because of poverty, racism, health disparities and trauma.

Type: 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

Staff: 14 staff (13.4 FTEs)

Board: 16 community leaders

Budget: \$1.3 million annually. 42% of [our income](#) is foundation grants, 43% multi-year contracts, 9% individuals, 6% businesses and faith groups. We do not pursue or receive government dollars, making us an objective advocate for what is best for children in our area.

Synopsis

Only The Children's Agenda improves the lives of children of all ages by engaging leaders in systemic change through research, collaboration and advocacy. Our work creates an equitable community. The organization was created in 2004 as an initiative of the Rochester Area Community Foundation with United Way and leading children's service providers to help our community make (as our tagline says) "Smart Choices & Bold Voices." The Children's Agenda does three things: **advocacy** (such as strengthening Child Protective Services or increasing funding for child care assistance), **evidence-based research** (such as analyzing proposed school district, city, county and state budget expenditures), and **collaborative systems-building** (such as staffing ROC the Future). We make systems work for kids.

Recent Accomplishments

- **Early Childhood Developmental Services:** 54,000 New York infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities [will have better early intervention services](#), thanks to our advocacy leading to the first increase in state reimbursement rates to providers in 20 years. Closer to home, 2,100 Monroe County 3 - 5 year-olds will have [more support for Pre-School Special Education services](#), thanks to the County's response to advocacy to raise their reimbursement rates for the first time in 10 years. The Children's Agenda helped lead these state and local efforts, working in partnership with other advocates, parents, providers, pediatricians and faith leaders.
- **Rochester City School Students' Success:** [Partnering the facts from our budget analysis with parent advocacy](#) led thousands more courses passed by students than they otherwise would, thanks to reductions in suspensions (40% in 5 years) via restorative practices and help zones continuing in the 2019 – 2020 RCSD budget. 6,600 of our most vulnerable children with special needs will also benefit from 28 staff positions to connect them to services and programs.
- **Paid Family Leave and Raise the Age:** Working together with many partner organizations, we've been an instrumental part of statewide campaigns to pass New York State's landmark [Paid Family Leave](#), the strongest in the nation, benefiting 6.4 million working families every year, and [Raise the Age legislation](#), affecting over 20,000 disproportionately African American and Hispanic 16 and 17 year-olds, who are wrongly subjected to the adult criminal justice system every year.

What We Do

Our community has many programs and organizations to help children — one by one, or year by year. But few efforts actually help change the system for all children, particularly our most vulnerable, over the long run. That’s where we come in. The Children’s Agenda was designed by key community institutions 15 years ago as a [unique, trustworthy organization](#) to knowledgeably, collaboratively, strategically and courageously fill a vacuum for three needed but missing supports for children:

- 1. Evidence-based research:** Decisions affecting children’s lives should rely on more than just a hunch. We support “what’s needed most and works best” for children’s development every step of the way based on proven outcomes and the best data. We provide:
 - Detailed, [annual analyses of the impact of proposed budgets](#) on kids and the evidence-based programs supporting them best in the Rochester City School District, City of Rochester, Monroe County and New York State;
 - [Reports identifying evidence-based, effective policies, programs and practices](#) that best address the problems faced by our community’s children. The Children’s Agenda’s thought leadership is relied upon by policymakers and advocates at the local, state and even national levels;
 - Annual data-based [report cards on outcome indicators](#) of children’s health and education with multiple organizations as part of ROC the Future.

- 2. Collaborative systems-building:** Instead of pointing fingers and assigning blame, we bring organizations and leaders together for shared goals and mutually reinforcing activities. We focus on the entire cradle-to-career continuum, spanning issues and ages for an integrated, whole child (physical, social-emotional, cognitive) developmental approach. The Children’s Agenda is:
 - Working with other leaders for a model of early childhood supports known as [All Kids Thrive](#);
 - Mobilizing our community’s collective impact by helping to staff, lead or participate in local cross-sector initiatives such as [ROC the Future](#) (Pre-K – 12 education), the [Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative](#), Early Childhood Development Initiative, [Greater Rochester Afterschool Alliance](#), [Common Ground Health’s Healthi Kids](#), etc., to help kids across the entire cradle to career continuum;
 - An active member of the national [Partnership for America’s Children](#), a federation of 53 state and local children’s advocacy organizations in 42 states. Larry Marx, CEO of The Children’s Agenda, serves on the Board of Directors of the Partnership, and was formerly Co-Chair.

- 3. Advocacy:** Our reports don’t sit on shelves. The Children’s Agenda:
 - Works with City, County, State and Federal officials behind the scenes to identify policy alternatives and funding sources to maximize the impact of evidence-based programs on children’s lives;
 - Mobilizes more than 3,000 people online in our Advocacy Network, on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#);
 - Engages more than 75 congregations in our [Interfaith Collaborative](#), along with grassroots and grassroots advocacy from influential business executives, higher education officials and health care providers, to weigh in on the policy process;
 - Focuses public attention on key issues via [print, TV and radio news](#) stories.