

## Rhode Island Children's Cabinet

### Logistics

**Name of Coordinating Body:** Rhode Island Children's Cabinet

**Administrative Home:** Executive Branch of State Government. Chaired by the Secretary of Health and Human Services and vice chaired by the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education.

**Staffing:** Staffed by a policy director with support from departments for specific projects.

**Funding:** No dedicated budget line.

**Membership:** The cabinet is composed of the following members:

- Director of the Department of Administration
- Secretary of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services
- Director of the Department of Children, Youth, and Families
- Director of the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals
- Director of the Department of Health
- Commissioner of Post-Secondary Education
- Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education
- Director of the Department of Human Services
- Director of the Department of Labor and Training
- State Child Advocate
- The Governor or his or her designee.

### Structure

- *Children's Cabinet meetings:* The Cabinet meets monthly. This is a public meeting by statute.
- *Staff meetings:* Regular staff meetings by project team.
- *Stakeholder meetings:* Community members attend the monthly public meeting. The policy director and project teams meet regularly

with stakeholders and partner with community groups for specific projects.

### History

**Year & Method of Establishment:** The cabinet was established in 1991 and ran until 2007. The cabinet was reconvened in 2015 by Governor Gina Raimondo when she took office. She worked with the General Assembly to revise R.I.G.L. §42-72.5 (1-3).

**Duties/Responsibilities/Goals:** The Rhode Island Children's Cabinet aims to ensure that all Rhode Island children have an opportunity for safe, healthy and bright futures. It acts on this aim by providing overarching leadership and a holistic approach to governance in order to coordinate services to improve outcomes for youth and children in partnership with the community.

### Current Work

The cabinet achieves its goals by addressing five key desired domain areas: (1) physically healthy and safe; (2) behaviorally able and emotionally hopeful; (3) academically empowered and career ready; (4) socially, civically and culturally engaged; and (5) supported by stable families and communities. The cabinet supports and amplifies initiatives across government and in the community, and actively manages the governor's goal to double the third-grade reading proficiency rate in Rhode Island.

### Priority Projects/Initiatives

- The Third Grade Reading Challenge: Governor Raimondo charged the Rhode Island Children's Cabinet with doubling state-wide third-grade reading proficiency – from 37 percent reading proficiency in 2015 to 75 percent by 2025.

### Accomplishments

- In 2016, 98.1% of children had health insurance, ranking Rhode Island the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest in the nation.
- Statewide 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading proficiency has increased from 37% in 2015 to 40% in 2017.
- Member departments have pursued innovative approaches to supporting broad goals. This includes a new tool developed at the Department of Education that has [helped to](#)

[reduce elementary chronic absenteeism](#) from 17 percent to 8 percent at a pilot site. The Department of Children Youth and Families, supported by the Casey Foundation, developed a first of its kind [Foster Care Family Recruitment Weekend](#) to engage more families in becoming foster parents.

### Contact Information

**Name:** Kayla Rosen

**Title:** Policy Director

**Office/Agency:** Rhode Island Children's Cabinet

**Email:** [kayla.rosen@ohhs.ri.gov](mailto:kayla.rosen@ohhs.ri.gov)

**Words of Wisdom:** *The Children's Cabinet is a unique opportunity to put youth at the center and have everything else flow from that simple but powerful premise. Departments and stakeholders are eager to put youth at the center of their practice, yet too often face structural barriers to implementation. The cabinet is at its best when it is collaborating to knock down barriers and building partnerships with the community.*

### Links

Council website: <http://www.kids.ri.gov/index.php>

Work Plan: [Strategic Plan](#)

---