

Re: An update on The Children's Movement of California
To: All interested parties
From: Ted Lempert
Date: December 2012

The Children's Movement of California is continuing to connect all of the organizations that want to see children's health and education improved in our state and empowering them to make it happen together. Members of The Children's Movement are provided with the trusted information and easy-to-use tools they need to positively influence state-level policymaking for kids as it is happening. It's the new force for change our children need and deserve.

The Chamber of Commerce is able to hold California's leaders accountable for being Pro- or Anti-Business, positioning all of the individual issues it covers on that simple and effective platform. Similarly, The Children's Movement of California has the potential to hold policymakers accountable for being Pro- or Anti-Kid. And that would be game changing.

A dizzying number of organizations in California support children's well-being either directly or indirectly. In Los Angeles and San Francisco alone, there are hundreds of groups working on education reform, and countless business, parent, and faith- and community-based organizations throughout the state want to see kids' outcomes improved. **The strong support for children's well-being that exists across the ideological spectrum in California is remarkable. No other topic of political debate is so widely supported, but that support has been too diffuse to shift the focus of public policymaking to kids, where we so clearly need it to be.** The Children's Movement of California is organizing everyone who is Pro-Kid and enabling their collective strength to push policymakers and other stakeholders to address children's needs, like reforming the state's schools. That would benefit all of us, not just kids.

Like the Chamber of Commerce does for businesses, The Children's Movement covers a broad range of policy issues for children – from early learning to health insurance coverage to school discipline. This range is key to the Movement's ability to effectively position individual issues as Pro- or Anti-Kid and avoid the strategic weakness issue-specific efforts have of getting marginalized by policymakers vis-à-vis one another. Parents strive to meet all of their child's developmental needs – from regular trips to the dentist to enriching activities after school – because they know how important every one is to children's chances of success. For all kids to have a chance to succeed, policymakers must employ that same perspective. The Children's Movement of California provides the new model needed to get them to do it.

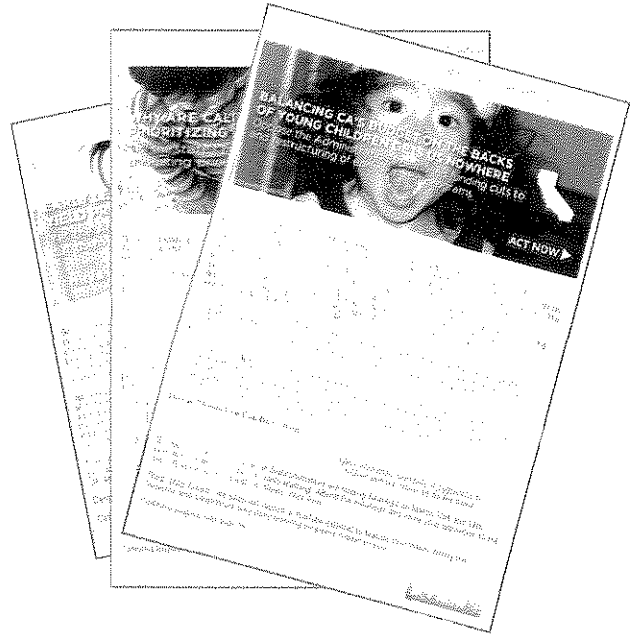
The California Children's Hospital Association, California Police Activities League, Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, YMCA of the East Bay, First 5 Fresno County and the Merced County Office of Education are among The Children's Movement's newest members.

The Movement's membership is growing every day. Over 550 organizations have joined already. Members include businesses, non-profits, faith- and community-based organizations, parent groups, direct service providers, local government agencies, and thousands of individuals. **Never before has such a diverse and powerful base of support for children been organized and we've barely scratched the surface.** You can see the complete list of organizations that have joined the Movement, and become a member yourself, at childrennow.org/join.

The many collective actions orchestrated by the Movement helped kids weather the state budget debate.

The Movement's efforts helped protect smart investments in children during the recent state budget negotiations and made a difference for thousands of kids. While the final 2012-13 California state budget includes \$130 million in cuts that negatively impact children's early learning opportunities, it could have been much worse. Initially, early learning programs were slated to be cut by more than \$500 million, which would have denied access to 80,000 young children, and Transitional Kindergarten was also slated for elimination, which would have denied another 40,000 kids access to school.

Furthermore, the final budget did not end up shifting responsibility for early learning programs from the Department of Education to the Department of Social Services as originally proposed, which would have seriously jeopardized program quality.



The Movement is seeking funding to support and hasten its growth.

Our plans include:

- Placing dedicated Movement representatives on the ground throughout the state to conduct outreach activities with a wide range of local, community-based organizations – this model has tested successfully in Los Angeles and the Bay Area and is poised for expansion;
- Hiring professional services agencies for ongoing (a) media relations support to generate increased levels of awareness of the Movement and the issues it is addressing and (b) web development and information systems design support;
- Producing a variety of Movement campaign-related materials, including, but not limited to (a) email, print, and other creative requirements and (b) regularly-scheduled webinars on the status of policy issues and next steps.

Contact

If you would like to find out more about The Children's Movement of California, please contact me by phone, (510) 763-2444 ext. 155, or email, ttempert@childrennow.org.