



## 2024 Legislative Agenda

*Children's Home Society of Florida's Board of Directors approved on September 8, 2023.*

The Children's Home Society of Florida (CHS) Board of Directors is proud of the successes during the 2023 Legislative Session. The outstanding efforts of our local and state leaders, advocates, team members, and volunteers are greatly appreciated. These efforts helped to advance necessary funding increases to support the continuation of successful and effective programs serving Florida's children and families. The Board remains committed to ensuring our children are prioritized while striving for quality and excellence in all we do.

We offer the following legislative priorities for the 2024 Legislature to consider:

### ***Improve System Accountability & Reduce Harm to Children***

Current practice in the child welfare system shifts more and more liability risk to be shouldered by private nonprofit child welfare community providers – even for actions or omissions by state and lead agencies. This limits adequate compensation from corresponding entities to children who have been harmed and allows bad behavior to continue from organizations that are not held responsible. This lack of system accountability and fairness impacts the insurance coverage for child welfare providers, increasing premiums and potentially placing them at risk for non-renewal. All threaten the stability and ability for providers to deliver much-needed services to children and families and increases the risk of children being harmed. Without legislative action prohibiting state agencies and lead agencies from this practice, it can negatively impact children and threaten provider sustainability.

CHS seeks to modify statute to require ALL parties involved in the child welfare system to be held liable for their own actions or omissions, and prohibit any contract from requiring such indemnification to other parties.

### ***Expand a Proven Model to Success: Community Partnership Schools***

Community Partnership Schools eliminate barriers to learning that can prevent many children from reaching their full potential: poverty, hunger, safe housing, and unmet health and mental health needs. Community Partnership Schools address these issues and create greater long-term access to services and supports for students and their families, which can positively impact their futures.

CHS requests support to expand the Community Partnership Schools™ model throughout Florida.

### ***Strengthen Families through Stabilized Workforce***

Keeping families safe and together when possible is key to reducing trauma and improving child outcomes. Healthy Families Florida is a child abuse prevention program that assists parents who are experiencing stressful life situations and provides them the resources and tools to keep them self-sufficient and their children safe. During the 2023 Legislative Session funding was granted to improve the stability of our workforce serving children and families. We are extremely appreciative of the commitment to ensure families are empowered.

CHS requests recurring funds to keep more families strong and together.