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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Raimondo's Children's Cabinet Driving Better Outcomes for Rhode Island Children**

*Strategic Plan Will Strengthen Governance, Services to Expand Opportunity for Kids and Families*

**PROVIDENCE, R.I. (December 3, 2015)** – Governor Gina M. Raimondo's Children's Cabinet released today a data-driven, [strategic plan](#) to drive improvements in outcomes for Rhode Island children over the next five years. For the first time, the plan articulates shared goals and objectives across the state's child-serving agencies, setting expectations to hold state government accountable for collaborating to improve child health, safety and well-being. It also lays the framework to align statewide spending with desired outcomes for children.

"As a mom, I know that every child deserves a chance for a safe, healthy and bright future," said Raimondo. "And every family deserves an efficient, responsive government. When our families are healthy and stable, and our kids prepared to succeed in school and on the job, our communities and economy grow stronger. I look forward to working with the Children's Cabinet to do better by our kids and families."

When Raimondo took office, Rhode Island ranked 31st in the nation and last in New England for child well-being. Nearly 1 in 5 Rhode Island children live in households with incomes below the federal poverty threshold, and roughly 4,000 teens are not in school and not working.

While working to address these challenges, the Children's Cabinet is positioned to build on several strengths in how the state delivers services to children. This year, the federal government named Rhode Island's Rite Care program the nation's [top Medicaid managed health care program for children](#), and a [national report](#) by Georgetown University's Center for Children and Families highlighted Rhode Island as a national leader for children's health coverage, with nearly 97% of children with health insurance.





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“We are focused on driving innovation across our service-delivery system, with an eye to better quality, coordination, and outcomes for Rhode Island families,” said Health and Human Services Secretary Elizabeth Roberts, who chairs the Children’s Cabinet. “And it’s working. By aligning policies and performance measures and building upon strong existing partnerships across the state, we can set more kids up for lifelong success.”

“The Children’s Cabinet strategic plan will ensure that each member of the Raimondo administration focuses on opportunities and outcomes for Rhode Island children,” said Education Commissioner Ken Wagner, the Children’s Cabinet Vice Chair. “Providing our children with safe and secure learning environments and with the knowledge, skills, and support they need for future success is the right thing to do for our families and for our state.”

The outcome-driven plan focuses on five areas that are critical to child well-being and development:

- physical health and safety
- behavioral and emotional security
- academic empowerment and career readiness
- social, cultural, and civic engagement, and
- family and community stability.

The plan identifies 12 objectives critical to achieving these desired outcomes, as well as potential indicators and baseline data for use in measuring progress.

The Children’s Cabinet is already taking swift action to improve outcomes for children and youth by identifying three specific initiatives for the new year. An interagency triage effort is underway to support the youngest children in the care of the Department of Children, Youth and Families and help them become ready for kindergarten. The Children’s Cabinet is also planning to look closely at the state’s behavioral health system for children and to leverage federal Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act funds to coordinate workforce development programs for youth who are out of work and school.

Raimondo convened the Children’s Cabinet in July for the first time in eight years as part of her efforts to strengthen and grow opportunities for children and their families.

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