



NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACT: Amy Kobeta
(602) 266-0707 x202
akobeta@azchildren.org

Statement from Dana Wolfe Naimark, President and CEO

The legislature's budget decisions are extremely destructive to Arizona's present and future.

While state lawmakers head home to celebrate Arizona's statehood day, children and families in every legislative district face the devastating real-life impacts of the budget cuts for the Fiscal Year 2009 budget. Since the revised budget was adopted by the legislature and signed by the Governor, state agencies have been working to determine how to implement the lump sum cuts and fund sweeps.

The cuts to direct services for children are dramatic and immediate and cut into the very fabric of community and family life. The legislature's budget decisions are extremely destructive to Arizona's present and future.

Some of the budget cuts that have been announced so far mean that:

- Mandatory furloughs for Child Protective Services staff that mean that Arizona will NOT investigate all reports of child abuse and neglect.
- As families face overwhelming stress and already high CPS caseloads grow, CPS staff will not be able to regularly see the children under their responsibility or provide the oversight and services to help children move into safe and permanent homes.
- A \$26 million cut in child care will mean that thousands of children will be left in dangerous situations while their parents are at work and other parents will be forced to cut their work hours or quit their jobs.
- Thousands of children and parents will be left without help or hope as prevention and support services are cut. This means that more children will need foster care.
- The very poorest children in our state will face higher risks of hunger and homelessness as TANF cash assistance benefits are cut.
- More private sector jobs will be lost as private agencies deal with immediate cuts to their contracts for services to children and families.

We call on Governor Brewer and state lawmakers to reduce the damage from this new budget. The first step is to appropriate the federal economic stimulus funds fully and responsibly to restore some of the services that were cut. The next step is to put on the table all of the fiscal options – including temporary budget strategies and revenue increases.

With leadership and a broader range of strategies, Arizona can build a budget that better reflects our priorities and values.

Children's Action Alliance is a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to promoting the well-being of all of Arizona's children and their families through research, policy development, media campaigns and advocacy. For more information, please visit the CAA website at www.azchildren.org.