

NORTH
Dakota Be Legendary.

CHILDREN'S CABINET OPERATIONS MANUAL





CONTENTS

What is the Children’s Cabinet?	3
Our Purpose	4
Children’s Cabinet Membership	5
How We Work	6
Our Work Areas	7

About This Manual

This Operations Manual is intended to ensure continuity in advancing the mission, vision, and goals of the North Dakota Children’s Cabinet. It was developed collaboratively by the Cabinet, with facilitation and design support from the Forum for Youth Investment.





What is the Children's Cabinet?

The North Dakota Children's Cabinet is a group of leaders from across all 3 branches of government, tribal nations, and communities.

Our job: Make sure kids and families get the support they need when they need it.

Vision: The North Dakota Children's Cabinet ensures that all children are prepared and successful, equipped with the skills, knowledge, and resilience to thrive in an ever-changing world.

Mission: The North Dakota Children's Cabinet collaborates to elevate what works and drive towards a seamless network of services and supports that meet the needs of every child and family.

Authority

In 2019, Senate Bill 2313 established the North Dakota Children's Cabinet to assess, guide and coordinate care for children across North Dakota branches of government and tribal nations. This was initially placed in North Dakota Century Code 50-06-43.1 with administration held within the North Dakota Department Health and Human Services. In partnership with the Governor's Office, Senate Bill 2176 was proposed and passed during the 2025 North Dakota Legislative Session. While membership and authority for subcommittees were added, the bill also allowed for the Children's Cabinet to move under the administration of the Office of the Governor. This change repealed NDCC 50-06-43.1 and added a new section to chapter 54-07 to reflect the administrative adjustment.



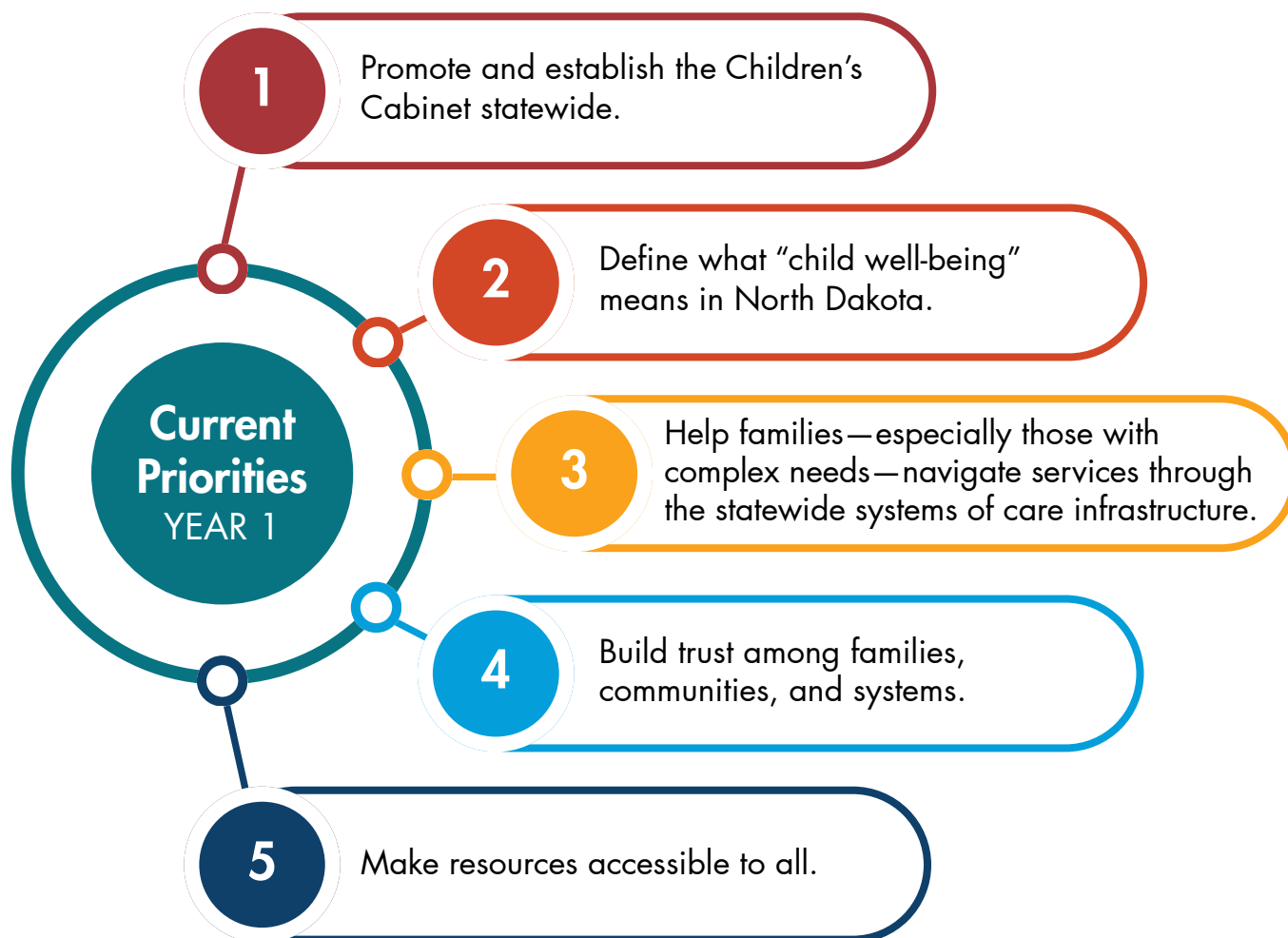
Our Purpose

We focus on improving outcomes for children and families by:

- Developing a strategic plan to prioritize efforts to improve child well-being.
- Working across agencies and communities to avoid duplication and strengthen partnerships.
- Strengthening the continuum of care:



The following priorities have been set by the Cabinet:





Children's Cabinet Membership

By law, members include:

- Governor (or designee)
- Chief Justice of ND Supreme Court (or designee)
- 2 House members (appointed by House Majority Leader, 2-year term)
- 2 Senate members (appointed by Senate Majority Leader, 2-year term)
- State Superintendent of Public Instruction (or designee)
- Director of Protection & Advocacy (or designee)
- Commissioner of Health & Human Services (or designee)
- 1 Tribal Nation representative (appointed by Governor)
- 5 Governor-appointed members (2-year terms), including:
 - Local school representative
 - Local special education representative
 - Human service zone director
 - Private agency representative (direct services to kids)
 - Parent representative

The office of the Governor shall provide staffing and administrative services for the Children's Cabinet and coordinate with other designated working groups on children and family issues.

The Governor or the Governor's designee serving on the cabinet may appoint a representative to serve in that official's capacity at a meeting if the Governor or Governor's designee is unable to attend.

LEADERSHIP

The Governor, in collaboration with the chairman of the Legislature Management, Governor's Cabinet, or a legislator on the cabinet shall appoint the presiding chair.

The Cabinet shall elect a Vice Presiding Officer from among its members.

How We Work

Meetings

The Cabinet meets quarterly at a minimum by law. The Cabinet has chosen to meet monthly, usually on the 3rd Tuesday of the month.

Decision-Making

- Subcommittees may vote on recommendations they wish to bring to the full Cabinet; however, final decisions will require a vote by the full Cabinet during scheduled meetings.
- A quorum of the cabinet is necessary to take action (vote) on agenda items.

Communication Tools

- Shared digital folders/Teams
- Email/text
- Minutes must be kept of all meetings in accordance with ND open records law (44-04-21).

Working Groups

- The Presiding Officer may create working groups to focus on specific children and family issues.
- Membership of these groups can be Cabinet members or outside experts.
- Travel costs reimbursed for non-state employees; legislators receive per diem.

Accountability

We keep ourselves on track by:

- Reviewing progress at each meeting.
- Keeping agendas clear (discussion vs. action).
- Reviewing all required reports from state agencies/partners.
- Documenting processes for how outside members can get involved.

Process for Stakeholder Input/Feedback

We want to be transparent and community-driven:

- The Cabinet desires to facilitate listening sessions across North Dakota to hear directly from families and communities.
- All meetings are open to the public.
- Agendas and minutes must be published in line with ND open meetings law (44-04-20).

Amending our Rules

- Any member can propose an amendment.
- Amendments require a two-thirds vote of members present to make a change.
- Proposals must be sent at least 2 weeks in advance of the vote.



Our Work Areas

According to the statute, the Cabinet must:

1. Coordinate leadership across agencies, branches of government, and tribal nations to meet the needs of children.
2. Develop strategies to address gaps in:
 - Early care & education
 - Health (physical & behavioral)
 - Community supports
 - Child welfare
 - Juvenile justice
3. Develop strategies to provide for the full continuum of care (promotion → prevention → intervention → recovery).
4. Partner with public and private service providers.
5. Provide a comprehensive vision for how and where kids are best served, attending to children in a respectful and relevant manner.
6. Seek strategies to provide services to children without consideration of prior juvenile system involvement.
7. Provide for the active participation of consumers and providers statewide on advisory committees.
8. Receive information and recommendations from the Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, and other state agencies. For example, HEA 1095-2025 requires CPS Liaison Data to be reported to the Children's Cabinet.
9. Provide an annual report to the legislative management and Governor regarding the activities and finds of the cabinet.

