

**GENERAL CONVENTION OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH 2009
ARCHIVES' RESEARCH REPORT**

RESOLUTION NO.: 2009-D085
TITLE: Ministry of the Child
PROPOSER: Ms. Debbi Rodahaffer
COMMITTEE: Education

Directly Related: (attached)

2006-B018 Endorse the NCC Policy on the Rights of Children
2003-A077 Develop Strategies for Ministries with Children, Youth, and Young Adults
2000-D045 Affirm and Urge Consideration of the Centrality of Children to the Ministry of the Church
1997-B005 Adopt Statement "A Children's Charter for the Church"
1994-B017 Request Dioceses and Parishes to Initiate Ministries for Children at Risk
1991-A125 Renew Commitment and Ministry to Children

Indirectly Related:

None

In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions of General Convention for the period 1976 through 2006, selecting "direct" resolutions that have a substantive bearing on the proposed legislation. Committee members who are interested in obtaining copies of "indirectly related" resolutions, legislative history before 1976, or who require other research assistance should contact the Archives at 800-525-9329 before Convention or at Convention in the General Convention Secretariat.



Resolution Number: 2006-B018
Title: Endorse the NCC Policy on the Rights of Children
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention urge Episcopalians and The Episcopal Church at every level to work to ensure that governments provide adequate funding for programs that combat social and economic conditions that place children at risk or diminish children's ability to achieve their full potential in the world; and be it further

*Resolved, That the General Convention receive and endorse the National Council of Churches (NCC) comprehensive policy statement, entitled *The Church and Children: Vision and Goals for the 21st Century Policy*. The Episcopal Church is a member of the NCC whose governing body, the General Assembly, passed this statement on November 11, 2004 to ensure that all children have the opportunity to develop and flourish.*

THE CHURCH AND CHILDREN: VISION AND GOALS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY Policy Statement

As Christians, we are called to make a commitment to work together, as families, congregations, denominations and as an ecumenical community of member communions, to ensure that all children have the opportunity to develop and flourish. Therefore we, the member communions of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, working with others in communities of faith and concern, strive to achieve the following Vision and Goals for Children.

FAITH COMMUNITIES

All children need to be part of nurturing communities where they are included as full members and participants in the common life of worship, prayer, witness and service. Therefore, we commit to:

- **Ensure through leader development and assignment of resources that faith communities are places of joy, nurture and safety for children**
- **Nurture the spiritual life of children and teach them of the love, grace and fellowship of God**
- **Receive, nurture and treasure each child as a gift from God**
- **Give high priority to the quality of planning for children and the preparation and support of those who minister with them**
- **Foster community beyond the family unit, in which children, youth and adults know each other by name, minister to each other, and are partners together in serving Christ in the world**
- **Appreciate children's abilities and readiness to represent Christ and his Church, to bear witness to God's grace wherever that may be, and according to gifts given them, to carry on the faithful work of reconciliation in the world, and to take their place in the life, worship, ministry of the community of faith and governance according to each communion's distinctive polity.**

FAMILY

All children have a right to be a part of loving and safe families. All segments of society share responsibility for supporting families in raising their children and future generations. Therefore, we commit to:

- **Protect the dignity and value the diversity of every family**
- **Respect and preserve the child's bond and covenant with parents, family and community**
- **Ensure that families have the skills, knowledge and resources to develop, support and sustain loving homes**
- **Nurture families in recognizing and appreciating their children's abilities and their gifts for ministry and in supporting their spiritual development**
- **Provide families resources and systems that enable them to balance the demands of parenting, work and education and make time for recreation**
- **Encourage parents to be active in their communities, in the democratic process, and in the promotion of the interests of children and families**
- **Encourage adoption as a healthy and appropriate means of securing for children a permanent family structure**
- **Be intentional in providing church and community support in those kinship care situations when children are being cared for by relatives other than their parents**
- **Encourage congregations to become caring partners with institutions and systems providing care for children, and engage in advocacy for children in those settings.**

EDUCATION

All children have a right to quality public education that fosters their intellectual, social, emotional, physical, cultural and creative development. Therefore, we commit to:

- **Respect and support family as the child's first teacher, recognizing that learning begins at birth**
- **Value and invest in teachers as a key component of every child's development**
- **Create an educational system that is a partnership of family, community, and school**
- **Respect and provide for each child's differences and capacities to learn, recognizing the needs of those children with disabilities and with special gifts**
- **Ensure the availability of remedial education for children and their adult caregivers who need special help to be ready for further education and eventually to become employable**
- **Support an equitable, fully-funded system that prepares every child for life-long learning**
- **Ensure that every community provides safe, excellent, well-funded public schools for all their children**
- **Develop the use of schools as community resources during and beyond school hours**
- **Teach children to understand, respect, and celebrate diversity, multiple cultures and languages, and a global perspective**

SAFETY

Every child has a right to live in a physically and emotionally safe environment that cultivates acceptance and peace and in which they are protected from the myriad of dangers confronting them. Therefore, we commit to:

- Provide child protection policies, safe church training and other resources that promote and ensure safe, non-violent family and community environments
- Promote legislation that eliminates children's access to handguns
- Teach and practice healthy conflict resolution in all segments of society
- Promote social justice through the elimination of prejudice and discrimination
- Promote non-violent, positive images and language that respect the dignity of every human being
- Advocate for reducing violence on TV, in movies, video games and on the Internet
- Ensure equal protection and due process of law for all children and youth in a system, which recognizes their differing capacities and promotes rehabilitation and learning.

ARTS, RECREATION AND CULTURE

All children have a right to express and celebrate their souls and spirits through arts, culture and recreation. Children need to have open time to dream, play and create. Therefore, we commit to:

- Advocate for the integration of arts, culture and recreation into the core curriculum of education
- Provide access to a wide variety of affordable, quality arts, cultural and recreational programs for children of all ages
- Promote an increase in safe indoor and outdoor neighborhood recreational activities
- Create ongoing opportunities in congregations, schools, and before and after-school programs to discover, recover, preserve and celebrate traditions across cultures
- Ensure that museums, libraries, parks and diverse cultural resources are supported as vital parts of our communities.

ECONOMIC SECURITY

All children have a right to economic security and economic justice: meaning that all families have access to food, clothing, transportation and safe, affordable housing, and that all families have equal opportunities to provide these basic economic needs. Therefore, we commit to:

- Continue to strengthen the commitment to overcome poverty
- Promote family-friendly policies in the workplace
- Actively pursue a just tax policy
- Cultivate marketable job skills through providing congregational and community models of training and education
- Provide accessible, affordable, high-quality child care
- Promote corporate partnerships that strengthen communities
- Provide economic security through government initiatives for the children whose parents cannot support them
- Enhance access to jobs through sound policies for housing and transportation.

HEALTH

Every child and family has a right to guaranteed quality, comprehensive health care. All children deserve to live in a healthy environment that allows them to thrive. Therefore, we commit to:

- Ensure quality pre-natal care is available for all
- Focus on prevention as a key to preserving the health and well-being of children
- Ensure that no children go hungry
- Implement an effective health and nutrition education curriculum

- **Work for publicly funded, integrated, accessible and high quality mental health care**
- **Develop partnerships for clean air, water, land and a healthy ecosystem.**

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Columbus, 2006* (New York: General Convention, 2007), pp. 658-661.



Resolution Number: 2003-A077
Title: Develop Strategies for Ministries with Children, Youth, and Young Adults
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Substituted
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 74th General Convention adopt a vision as part of the 20/20 initiative that there shall be effective, well-organized ministries with children, youth, and young adults in every congregation where appropriate; and there shall be campus ministries in all colleges and universities where appropriate; and be it further

Resolved, That the 74th General Convention commend the work of the Ministries with Young People Cluster, which has three networks: (1) youth ministries, (2) Christian education ministries, and (3) higher education ministries; and be it further

Resolved, That the 74th General Convention direct the Ministries with Young People Cluster to create an additional network for young adult ministries; and be it further

Resolved, That in order to accomplish these training goals by 2009 the Youth Ministries Cluster, in coordination with the Standing Commission on Domestic Mission and Evangelism, call upon their provincial networks to develop and implement in the dioceses, training strategies that include, but are not limited to:

- **education in leadership development;**
- **sharing of technology, training resources, curricula, theological, and multicultural resources;**
- **practical application for life-long Christian formation;**
- **the strengthening of the existing networks in dioceses and provinces; and be it further**

Resolved, That the 74th General Convention request the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance to consider a budget allocation of \$250,000 per year for each of the four ministry networks (1) youth ministries, (2) Christian education ministries, (3) higher education ministries, and (4) young adult ministries for a budget allocation of \$3,000,000 for implementation of this resolution; and be it further

Resolved, That the office of the Treasurer of the Episcopal Church Center in cooperation with the various dioceses as facilitated by the Provincial Leadership Conference establish a fair share strategy for fund distribution to be reported to the 75th General Convention.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Minneapolis, 2003* (New York: General Convention, 2004), p. 313f.



Resolution Number: 2000-D045
Title: Affirm and Urge Consideration of the Centrality of Children to the Ministry of the Church
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 73rd General Convention affirm that children are central to the mission of the Episcopal Church and ask each committee, commission, and program of the Episcopal Church, as it plans for the future, to consider how its ministry will positively impact the lives of children in the church and in the world, how it will be impacted by children, and how it will encourage children's full participation in the worship and mission of the church; and be it further

Resolved, That the 73rd General Convention affirm and lift up "A Children's Charter for the Church" as a continuing vision of The Episcopal Church's ministry in nurturing children, ministering to and advocating on behalf of children, and supporting children in their ministries, remembering that "it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs" (Mark 10:14 NRSV); and be it further

Resolved, That the 73rd General Convention ask each diocese to continue to build awareness and increase implementation of "A Children's Charter for the Church," and live out its vision locally.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Denver, 2000* (New York: General Convention, 2001), p. 297.



Resolution Number: 1997-B005
Title: Adopt Statement "A Children's Charter for the Church"
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Submitted
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 72nd General Convention of The Episcopal Church adopt "A Children's Charter for the Church" as a vision of children's ministries; and be it further

Resolved, That the 72nd General Convention request that each diocese study "A Children's Charter for the Church," and live out its vision locally.

A CHILDREN'S CHARTER FOR THE CHURCH

Nurture of the child

Children are a heritage from the LORD, and the fruit of the womb is a gift. Psalm 127:4

The church is called to

- receive, nurture and treasure each child as a gift from God;
- proclaim the Gospel to children, in ways that empower them to receive and respond to God's love;
- give high priority to the quality of planning for children and the preparation and support of those who minister with them;
- include children, in fulfillment of the Baptismal Covenant, as members and full participants in the Eucharistic community and in the church's common life of prayer, witness and service.

Ministry to the child

Then Jesus took the children in his arms, placed his hands on each of them and blessed them. Mark 10:16

The church is called to

- love, shelter, protect and defend children within its own community and in the world, especially those who are abused, neglected or in danger;
- nurture and support families in caring for their children, acting in their children's best interest, and recognizing and fostering their children's spirituality and unique gifts;
- embrace children who seek Christian nurture independently of their parents' participation in the Church;
- advocate for the integrity of childhood and the dignity of all children at every level of our religious, civic and political structures.

Ministry of the child

A little child shall lead them. Isaiah 11:6

The church is called to

- **receive children's special gifts as signs of the Reign of God;**
- **foster community beyond the family unit, in which children, youth and adults know each other by name, minister to each other, and are partners together in serving Christ in the world;**
- **appreciate children's abilities and readiness to represent Christ and his Church, to bear witness to him wherever they may be, and according to gifts given them, to carry on Christ's work of reconciliation in the world, and to take their place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church. (Ministry of the Laity BCP p.855)**

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Philadelphia, 1997* (New York: General Convention, 1998), p. 744.



Resolution Number: 1994-B017
Title: Request Dioceses and Parishes to Initiate Ministries for Children at Risk
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred As Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring, That the 71st General Convention requests each member diocese through its Diocesan Council or equivalent body to establish a Children's Ministry Fund, the proceeds of which shall be used as grants-in-aid for ministries carried out through the diocese, its parishes and institutions, to respond to the urgent needs of children through church-related ministries, especially in Christian education and formation and those which address issues of poverty, racism, and abuse in the wider society; and be it further

Resolved, That to initiate this effort, dioceses are urged to consider designating 50% or more of the money saved in 1994-95 through the Church Pension Fund waiver on pension assessments on bishops and other diocesan-paid clergy staff as an initial fund for this purpose, and establish criteria and develop a mechanism through which parishes may make decisions to accomplish the same end, in their own communities and urban or rural areas of special need; and be it further

Resolved, That at all levels of church life those responsible for the church's program devote a percentage of their personal time and resources to working directly with children and young people; and be it further

Resolved, That dioceses and parishes, in conjunction with other religious and community organizations, be urged to conduct public hearings in or in relationship to public schools, encouraging children and young people to speak out on the issues and problems facing them, calling on the Church Center staff for children and youth ministries to assist in the development and dissemination of a model for accomplishing such hearings; and be it further

Resolved, That in their efforts to become significant advocates for the needs of children and youth, parishes and dioceses be urged to seek out and align themselves with community and national organizations already serving the needs of children, such as the Children's Defense Fund and Bread for the World, and to support existing government and voluntary programs such as the WIC program and Head Start by making available space and volunteers as appropriate and feasible; and be it further

Resolved, That the Feast of the Holy Innocents or other appropriate date be observed as a time of prayer for children at risk and remembrance of those who have been victims of violence and that the Standing Liturgical Commission be asked to create resources to assist congregations and dioceses in such an observance.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, 1994* (New York: General Convention, 1995), pp. 321-22.



Resolution Number: 1991-A125
Title: Renew Commitment and Ministry to Children
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred As Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, the House of Bishops concurring, **That the Church be called upon to renew this Church's commitment to God's gift of children;** and be it further

Resolved, **That a high priority be given to ministry with and on behalf of children and youth, particularly those at risk;** and be it further

Resolved, **That each congregation provide an environment in which children and young people, regardless of social or economic status, may be encouraged and enabled to grow to the fullness of their potential.**

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Phoenix, 1991* (New York: General Convention, 1992), p. 252.

15 - Education: HD

D085

TOPIC/TITLE: Children: Ministry of the Child

PROPOSER: Ms. Debbi Rodahaffer

C&C PAGE:

BB PAGE:

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- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the 76th General Convention applaud
2 the work of the Children's Charter for the Church and calls for the next phase of the work
3 of the Children's Charter for the Church by requesting the Center for Evangelism and
4 Congregational Life, lift up the stories of the ministry of the child in order to educate and
5 transform the Church; and be it further
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7 *Resolved*, That the 76th General Convention request the Joint Standing Committee on
8 Program, Budget and Finance consider a budget allocation of \$40,000 for the
9 implementation of the Resolution during the 2010-2012 triennium; and be it further
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11 *Resolved*, That the 76th General Convention request the Center for Evangelism and
12 Congregational Life report to the Standing Commission on Lifelong Christian Formation
13 and Education before the 77th General Convention on the status of the continued
14 implementation of the Children's Charter for the Church.
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EXPLANATION:

The Children's Charter for the Church was passed in 1997 by the 72nd General Convention of The Episcopal Church with the hope for the Church to see children as full members of the body of Christ. While we see great strides in areas of nurture of the child and ministry to the child we are just beginning to see children as ministers in their own right. In order to live.

*Endorser(s):*Rev. J. Philip Purser, The Rev. Kathy M. Lutes

*Review Status:*Not Yet Reviewed by PB&F