

1 By Supervisors Coggs-Jones & West  
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4 **A RESOLUTION**  
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6 Supporting the Milwaukee Center for Independence’s (MCFI) charge, mission,  
7 and report regarding Children with Disabilities, and urging the Governor, State of  
8 Wisconsin, and Milwaukee State Delegation to convene a task force to identify  
9 more funding mechanisms and initiatives to address increasing populations of  
10 children being born with or diagnosed with disabilities within Milwaukee County  
11 and southeastern Wisconsin, and provide them with more coordinated treatment  
12 improving cost effectiveness.  
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14 WHEREAS, the Milwaukee Center for Independence is a non-profit  
15 community-based organization responding to the increasing and changing needs  
16 of special needs populations since 1938; and  
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18 WHEREAS, MCFI’s mission is to assist families with special needs to  
19 better live and work in the community; and  
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21 WHEREAS, MCFI’s vision is to be the preferred expert rehabilitation  
22 resource for the community in assessment, treatment and planning to serve  
23 individuals and families with special needs across their life spans; and  
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25 WHEREAS, approximately half-million children under 18 years old live in  
26 the seven county region of southeastern Wisconsin; and  
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28 WHEREAS, more than 28,000 children are born in this region each year ;  
29 and  
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31 WHEREAS, it is estimated that on average more than 2,700 of these  
32 28,000 children will develop a lifetime disability; and  
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34 WHEREAS, the special needs population is defined as those who have “a  
35 chronic physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional condition and who also  
36 require health related services of a type or amount beyond that required by  
37 children generally”; and  
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39 WHEREAS, according to the National Survey of Children with Special  
40 Health Care Needs, over 60,000 children from birth to age 17 are in need of  
41 special health care in Wisconsin; and  
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43 WHEREAS, more than 21,00 children in Milwaukee and 44,000 children in  
44 Southeastern Wisconsin have been diagnosed with disabilities; and  
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46 WHEREAS, according to the Center for Urban Population Health, UW  
47 Medical School, the percentage of children who have special health care needs  
48 in Milwaukee is 23.5%, almost double the national average; and

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50 WHEREAS, according to the Center for Urban Population Health, UW  
51 Medical School, since 2001, diagnosed cases of autism have risen 68%, visual  
52 impairment 22%, traumatic brain injury 30%, and developmental delays 20%;  
53 and

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55 WHEREAS, all of these increases in disabilities, lack of funding, service  
56 gaps and lack of education and awareness of this rapidly growing epidemic have  
57 significantly contributed to increasing Milwaukee Public School failure rates  
58 according to the national Survey of Children with Special Care Needs; and

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60 WHEREAS, increasing numbers of children with disabilities represent a  
61 growing burden on government programs, school systems, families and  
62 taxpayers; and

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64 WHEREAS, to address this troubling trend, MCFI recommends that a  
65 regional diagnostic, treatment and resource center be developed in order to  
66 provide cost-effective, cross-disciplinary strategies for diagnosis, care and  
67 longitudinal treatment planning for families with children with disabilities; and

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69 WHEREAS, strong leadership has been demonstrated by a task force  
70 consisting of representatives from Milwaukee Public Schools, City of Milwaukee  
71 Health Department, Milwaukee County Health and Human Services, University of  
72 Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and the State Department of Health and Family Services  
73 in addressing the issue of children with disabilities in southeastern Wisconsin;  
74 and

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76 WHEREAS, Congress has designated the month of October as National  
77 Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), to increase public  
78 awareness of the contributions and skills of Americans with disabilities; and

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80 WHEREAS, according to MCFI's report on Children with Disabilities,  
81 significant cost savings can be achieved and compliance with treatment can be  
82 improved, resulting in better outcomes by reallocating current resources and  
83 coordinating treatment programs around the families of children with disabilities;  
84 and

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86 WHEREAS, more funding initiatives and leadership must be exercised to  
87 realize a vision of a central, coordinated resource center to facilitate improved  
88 diagnosis, coordinated treatment, and referral for this specific population of need,  
89 now, therefore,

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91 BE IT RESOLVED, the State of Wisconsin and members of the Milwaukee  
92 State Delegation of Senators and Representatives supports the urges the  
93 Governor, State of Wisconsin, and Milwaukee State Delegation to convene a  
94 task force with the set goal of identifying funding mechanisms and initiatives,  
95 such as partnerships with private and/or educational entities, for the development  
96 of a southeastern Wisconsin regional diagnostic, treatment and resource facility  
97 for children with disabilities, their families and associated issues; and  
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99 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this task force be convened no later  
100 than June 2008; and  
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102 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, upon adoption, the Milwaukee County  
103 Clerk is authorized and directed to send copies of this resolution to the Mayor,  
104 City of Milwaukee, the Governor, State of Wisconsin and members of the  
105 Milwaukee State Delegation of Senators and Representatives.