§ 990. Legislative findings. 1. The legislature finds that the children of this state are at the same time both our most important resource and our most vulnerable citizens. Children best develop their unique potential in a caring and healthy family environment either with their birth parents or other relatives or in an adoptive family, with support from other nurturing environments, especially the schools and the community. As such, children need a special state policy to ensure the strength and viability of their families.

2. The legislature further finds that there is a critical lack of services available to families and that the shortage of such services is exacerbated by a lack of coordination of the many existing programs and policies of state and local governments that impact on children and families. The legislature also finds that the planning and provision of services for children and their families would be enhanced by the establishment of a family policy to ensure that all state and local planning and provision of services are effectuated in a manner that maximizes support and strengthening of the family structure. Such actions also must be directed toward stemming the human and financial costs of the unnecessary placement of children outside their homes, while ensuring the safety and well-being of children by providing needed services to them and their families and, when appropriate, toward supporting permanency planning for children through adoption or other means.