



OUR MISSION

Illinois Action for Children is a catalyst for organizing, developing and supporting strong families and powerful communities where children matter most.

OUR VISION

A future in which all children and families, especially those most vulnerable, have the opportunities and resources they need.

OUR HISTORY

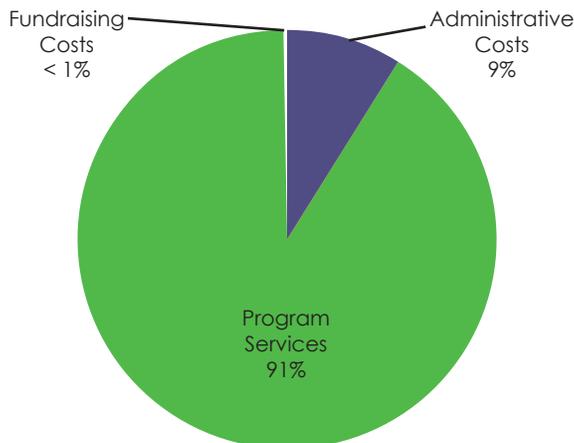
While many things have changed – families, our nation, the state – our commitment to children and families has not. For more than four decades, we have helped working families find child care and access early learning opportunities as we advocate for them.

“What about the children?” This is the question. The Day Care Crisis Council was created at a time when women were joining the workforce, often to help make ends meet. It was 1969 and a small group of smart, politically active women came together to advocate on behalf of these working women and fight for better, and more affordable, child care options. Led by Sylvia Cotton, the Day Care Crisis Council evolved into what became Illinois Action for Children.

We are focused on the future. High-quality early care and education prepares the next generation of community leaders and learners. What inspires and moves our work forward comes from a single question asked by a small group of committed citizens nearly 50 years ago. Today, with more than 400 employees and strong, diverse leadership, our response to that question continues to make a difference in the lives of families and their children.



FY16 BUDGET OF \$45M



OUR IMPACT

We serve **150,000 children and families** annually

We provide almost **10,000 families** with child care referrals annually

We train more than **23,000 early care and education professionals** at **2,185 workshops** annually

OUR WORK

As a state and national leader in the early care and education community, Illinois Action for Children stands distinguished by its "Strong Families, Powerful Communities" approach to child development, Pre-K and Head Start education, and other family and community supports. We believe that these supports work best to ensure school and life success when administered as part of a comprehensive system that includes parents and communities. This broad approach to supporting children by supporting families is a proven and effective means to address overarching issues of endemic poverty, which is the root cause of the educational failure of America's poorest children.

Our Public Policy & Advocacy program organizes to expand access to child care and early education, and other supports.

The focus of our policy and advocacy work is on young children within the context of their families. Issues we work on include early care and education, child safety, budget reform and other critical areas. We work with thousands of "member advocates" to advance this agenda. Our advocates work to ensure that public policies support the needs of families and their communities. Through comprehensive local systems involving community leaders and families, we strengthen support networks that serve all children. Working together, we create access to high-quality early care and education for families who need it most.

Our Early Learning Programs make early education available to young children so they will be ready to succeed when they start school.

Our early learning programs include Pre-K and Head Start, and a national model for providing preschool to children in family child care homes who would otherwise not have access to this classroom-based program. We train child care providers to be more empowered in their work and professional development. We bring certified teachers, child development experts, nutrition and literacy training, and thousands of books and resources into family child care homes. We work with parents, community groups, and local governments to identify the best ways to connect children with early learning opportunities. And we engage and train parents to help them build and strengthen leadership in their families and communities.

In July 2015, Illinois Action for Children was awarded a \$6.4 million federal grant by the Department of Health and Human Services to provide comprehensive Head Start and Early Head Start. This grant allows us to provide Head Start and Early Head Start Services to 400 economically-disadvantaged and high-risk children and their families in Chicago's South Suburban communities of Burnham, Harvey, Ford Heights, and Chicago Heights.

Our Child Care Resource and Referral Program connects providers, parents, and employers with resources such as child care referrals, professional development, health services and community supports.

Our Resource and Referral Program provides professional development opportunities for thousands of early care and education providers each year. It provides child care referrals for almost 10,000 families each year and represents the specialized needs of teen and foster parents. It connects thousands of families with literacy, mental health, and nutrition resources. And it administers the Illinois Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) in Cook County, helping more than 76,000 families access child care each year.

OUR ALLIES

Our program partners include Erikson Institute, National Louis University, the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) and many others. We work with numerous community-based entities in both program, policy and direct service areas. We also partner with over 6,000 state-wide organizations and individuals that share our vision for children and their families and act accordingly.

OUR ANNUAL DONOR PARTNERS

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