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Contact: [Adam Summers](#) (IAFC) – 773.564.8801

Child Advocates Call On Governor Rauner To Live Up To His Promise And *Fully* Restore Child Care Assistance

Chicago—Nearly two years ago, Governor Rauner promised to restore access to affordable child care for thousands of hard-working Illinois families once a state budget agreement was reached. The budget agreement was reached nearly two months ago.

30,000 fewer children have access to child care in Illinois today than in June 2015, when the Governor made dramatic and devastating changes to the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). A compromise was reached to bring income eligibility up to 162% of the Federal Poverty level – **and then return eligibility to the minimum statutory threshold of 185% of FPL when Illinois had a budget.**

We commend the Governor for signing HB 3213 on Friday, which restores CCAP eligibility for non-TANF families participating in education and training. **However, CCAP eligibility for families earning between 162-185% FPL (\$2,713 - \$3,100 per month for a family of 3) has yet to be restored.**

These families are right on the cusp of economic stability and independence. Research shows that access to affordable child care helps parents remain employed and advance in their careers while their children are cared for in safe, caring, and nurturing environments.

Denying these families child care assistance is counterproductive to our state's priorities and values.

In the time that has passed since these devastating cuts were first enacted, young children have become preschoolers and are now first graders. The new school year is getting underway. Children and their working parents need access to safe and affordable before- and after-school programs now that summer is over. Too much time has been lost. Too much remains at stake. The time to act is now.

We are calling on Governor Rauner to immediately live up to his November 2015 promise. The families affected by the Governor's restrictions have lost this crucial support for far too long. It's time for the

Governor to step up and fully restore CCAP eligibility without any further delay. Children cannot wait.

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