“Illinois Action for Children is a catalyst for organizing, developing and supporting strong families and powerful communities where children matter most.”
IT STARTS WITH YOU.

Illinois Action for Children’s impact on children and families is a tribute to the support we receive from our donors and volunteers.

2019 marks our 50th year of serving Illinois’ children and families. As we reflect on our history and envision our future, we take this opportunity to review last year’s progress and achievements.

Thanks to you, our accomplishments have been many.

**Our Early Learning Programs** (Head Start, Early Head Start, Preschool for All, and Prevention Initiative) have filled a critical void in Chicago’s South Suburbs serving under-resourced children and families.

**Our Public Policy and Advocacy** efforts have expanded to include state, local, and federal campaigns designed to protect and grow the early care and education landscape, and encourage increased investments in all areas that impact the lives of children and families.

**Our Community Systems Development** work has strengthened the ties between the many resources that communities have to offer their residents—and now has expanded to a statewide initiative focusing on increasing early care and education enrollment and reducing chronic absenteeism from preschool through third grade.

While this report will tell you more about the work we’re doing, we hope you see it as we see it—as a grand “Thank You”, from all of us.

The work we do is important, and all of it is made possible by the support of our donors and volunteers—people like you.

Thank you again for helping to make the last year remarkable in every sense of the word. We hope you will join us in celebrating our 50th Anniversary in 2019, to ensure our best is yet to come.

Maria Whelan
President and CEO
Illinois Action for Children

Monica Moss
Chair (2018)
Illinois Action for Children Board of Directors
2018 YOUR IMPACT ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES — BY THE NUMBERS:

The impact of your gifts are deep and far reaching, spanning a broad range of vital programs and services that foster children’s growth and well-being during the most critical time in their development.

BUILDING A STRONGER EARLY CARE AND LEARNING SYSTEM IN ILLINOIS:

4,333
Advocates educating and empowering families, and the general public across Illinois.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT SERVICES IN NORTH LAWNDALE:

823
Connections and resources provided to North Lawndale Families as a result of support.

384
Children served.

133
Families receiving support.

EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS

1,106
Children (ages 0-5) receiving high-quality early care and education through IAFC’s Early Learning Programs.

EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH CONSULTATION SERVICES

93
Providers/centers supported with Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation services.

2,000
Children potentially impacted by Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation services.

Of chronically absent students at North Lawndale’s Sumner, Legacy and Kellman schools have improved their attendance after receiving family support.
OTHER WAYS YOUR GENEROSITY IMPACTS THE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IAFC SERVES:

HEALTHY NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

2,995,923 Meals and Snacks served through the Healthy Food Program.
1,658 Educational Home Visits to Providers Participating in the Healthy Food Program.
6,615 Children participating in the Healthy Food Program.

RACE/ETHNICITY

Black/African American (Non-Hispanic) 57%
Latino/Hispanic 23%
White/Caucasian (Non-Hispanic) 8%
Asian, Native American, Native Hawaiian, Alaskan, American Indian 3%
More than one race/other 9%

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVED:

 Mothers
 61,470
 Fathers
 4,967
 Number of Single Parent Families Served
 59,204
 Two-parent families
 3,836

OVERALL SERVICE NUMBERS

Includes children, families, and providers being served through all IAFC programs and services

Total Families Served 63,040
Total Children Served 113,823
Total Providers Served 36,142
Total Children, Families, and Providers Served 210,507
GIVING CHILDREN A HEAD START.

Illinois Action for Children’s Early Learning Programs seamlessly weave together the practices that have been proven effective in Head Start, Early Head Start, Preschool for All, and Prevention Initiative programs. Our unique approach is designed to locate and support the children and families who are most isolated from opportunities and resources. Launched in 2016, IAFC’s directly-operated Early Learning Centers have made a significant impact. That impact continues to grow.

We’re located where children need us most.

• Our Early Learning Centers are located in the southern Cook County, IL suburbs of Ford Heights, Chicago Heights, Dolton, and Harvey.
• A team of credentialed teachers enhance the quality of programming at 16 private early learning centers throughout the south and west suburbs of Cook County.

We’re committed to making a difference.

• Our Early Learning Program prioritizes the social, emotional, and cognitive development as well as the overall health and well-being of each child.
• We strongly support the role of parents as their child’s first and most important teacher and emphasize family engagement and education.
• We build strong relationships with other service agencies within our service area to connect families to additional supports they may need.
YOU HELPED GABRIEL FIND HIS VOICE—AND HIS CONFIDENCE.

Before starting at Illinois Action for Children’s Early Learning Program, Gabriel Alvarez was virtually silent at home and in school—he wouldn’t even communicate when he was hungry or needed to use the washroom.

Illinois Action for Children’s Early Learning teachers and staff worked closely with Gabriel in order to identify the root cause of his reluctance to speak. The teachers assessed the situation and discovered that Gabriel had a speech impediment. They quickly informed Gabriel’s parents and assisted the family in finding a speech therapist to help the preschooler overcome his impediment.

Today, Gabriel is making friends, he’s active in the classroom, and he’s well on his way to a much brighter future.

Celebrating — 1969–2019 —

50 Illinois Action for Children

Early Learning Programs

1,106 Children (ages 0-5) received high-quality early care and education through IAFC’s Early Learning Programs.

We count on donors like you to help us expand beyond the limits of federal and state funding to provide the children and families we serve with the best-in-class services they need and deserve.
BECAUSE FAMILY ENGAGEMENT MATTERS.

The parents we serve typically have not had access to the resources that are often taken for granted.

As a result, these parents are often faced with numerous challenges that come with financial insecurity which in turn, diminishes their ability to fully focus on the long-term success of their children.

That’s why Illinois Action for Children was eager to partner with the Steans Family Foundation on their North Lawndale READS pilot program.

Thanks to the generosity of additional individual donors and foundations, we’re making significant gains in removing the barriers that make it challenging for parents to get their children to school each day.

From simply engaging with other families, to having access to food, housing, and employment, the North Lawndale READS program is making a meaningful impact.

Your support allows us to help parents find transportation, stable housing, health care, adequate food, and employment, so they can help their children get the quality education they deserve.
YOU HELPED TANZANIA GET TO SCHOOL EACH DAY.

Tanzania Vaughn was chronically absent from school in second grade and was on the verge of being declared chronically absent in third grade. Fortunately, her mom began working with North Lawndale READS, a pilot program launched in 2016 to address issues of chronic absenteeism, Pre-K through third grade.

That’s when everything changed for the better.

Tanzania didn’t want to miss school but she had Sickle Cell Anemia, a serious and potentially life-threatening disease. In the winter, the cold temperatures would literally lock her bones making a walk to school impossible.

Tanzania’s mom worked two jobs and couldn’t drive her to school on a daily basis. With close ties to the community, the North Lawndale READS staff knew there was a solution right in the neighborhood.

By simply bringing parents together, Tanzania’s mom soon made a connection with another mom who agreed to drive Tanzania to school during the winter.

Tanzania hasn’t missed a day of school due to weather since.

74% Chronically absent students at North Lawndale’s Sumner, Legacy and Kellman schools that have improved their attendance after receiving family support.

823 Connections and resources provided to North Lawndale Families as a result of support.

384 Children served.

133 Families receiving support.
PUBLIC POLICY AND ADVOCACY

Since our earliest days, Illinois Action for Children has been a powerful leader in building essential, accessible and equitable systems for high-quality child care, early learning, and school-age education, especially in communities that are the most isolated from resources and opportunities.

Across the state, our growing force of more than 4,000 advocates are constantly working with our advocacy team and mobilizing to foster policy changes that improve access, quality and equity for children, families, communities and early childhood providers.

Last year, the team was instrumental in securing the passage of a critical Illinois law preventing the suspension and expulsion of children attending state funded preschools. Preschool suspension and expulsion is a pervasive national issue that propagates educational and racial inequity by disproportionally affecting children of color—particularly 4 year-old African-American boys. As a result of this law, young brown and black boys throughout the state will be able to stay in school, increasing their chances of entering kindergarten “ready” to learn and thrive. Other top priorities include educating early childhood providers about the dangers of lead exposure and the steps to test and reduce high lead levels often present in older buildings, boosting voter turnout during election years and increasing the number of hard-to-reach, typically under-represented individuals counted in the 2020 census.

Additionally, Illinois Action for Children continues to:

• Host conferences and workshops to educate, train, and inform individuals and groups, and build advocacy and leadership skills; and
• Speak at a variety of local, state, regional, and national conferences to provide vital information on pressing topics and trending issues in the field.

Illinois Action for Children is grateful to long-time funding partners including the Robert R. McCormick Foundation, Grand Victoria Foundation, Irving Harris Foundation, W. Clement & Jessie V. Stone Foundation and generous individual donors, for their essential investment and meaningful commitment to driving organizational and systems improvement so that we may better facilitate quality and access for all families and children.

These experiences have elevated Illinois Action for Children to become nationally renowned as a highly respected leader in early childhood Community Systems Development work.
Community Systems Development (CSD)

Communities often face a variety of challenges that are not easily addressed with simple solutions or solved by one organization alone. A community systems development (CSD) approach is an effective way to counter these issues.

Community Systems Development is a process that engages numerous organizations within a community in identifying and problem-solving systemic local issues. Working collaboratively, the group determines root causes and develops and tests potential solutions until they succeed in resolving the issue and improve the lives of their residents.

Illinois Action for Children uses a CSD approach to counter the complex and multifaceted issues persisting within Illinois’ early childhood system, involving a variety of organizations that serve disadvantaged children and families, (i.e. Social service agencies, health and mental health services, schools, etc.) in this vital process.

Over the past decade, Individual, corporate, and foundation donors have been instrumental in advancing our CSD initiatives since 2009, following a grant from the Grand Victoria Foundation. IAFC has led several CSD initiatives focused on building local capacity to 1) deliver high-quality early care and education and 2) create a strong, cohesive early childhood system in Illinois.

Since early 2018, Illinois Action for Children has been leading a new Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) funded initiative—designing and implementing a statewide CSD training and technical assistance program focused on developing collaborative strategies to increase the enrollment and reduce the absenteeism of children, in high-quality early learning programs—making sure every child starts kindergarten READY to succeed.

4,333
Advocates educate and empower families and the general public across Illinois
In 2018, Illinois Action for Children’s ECMHC team expanded its services to south suburban school districts with preschool programs. By every measure to-date, the implementation of the ECMHC is making a difference.
Child care providers are on the front line when it comes to recognizing, understanding, and responding to the social-emotional needs of the children in their care. However, the best course of action can be difficult to identify and complex to navigate.

With support from private and public funders including the Illinois Department of Human Services, Illinois Action for Children’s Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC) Program provides services that help early childhood education professionals identify and address behavioral issues before they become an obstacle to growth or develop into more serious mental health issues.

Our team of Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants work with child care providers to refer them to additional supports and help build their capacity to:

- Effectively support the healthy social emotional development of all children in their care;
- Create environments aimed at reducing disruptive behaviors;
- Understand screening tools and resources and use them effectively;
- Identify more severe issues that may require early intervention services and
- Problem-solve and build effective partnerships with parents.

Illinois Action for Children’s ECMHC Framework has been successfully implemented in nearly 100 community-based early childhood programs and is now expanding to school districts in south suburban Cook County.
WE’RE STRATEGICALLY FOCUSED ON THE FUTURE.

STRATEGIC PLAN.
While we’ve accomplished a great deal, there is still much to be done.

It continues with you.
Your ongoing support of Illinois Action for Children will allow us to continue to implement our Strategic Plan which will directly impact the futures of thousands of children and their families for generations to come.

Thanks to people like you...

We will continue to implement Responsive Programs and Public Policies to address the needs of children and their families in the context of their communities.

We will continue to create Compelling Messages that reach the communities we serve with clarity and conviction.

We will continue to engage Dynamic Leadership—our board, our staff and our field—in building the diverse guidance that is essential in our expanding, connected, and changing world.

We will continue to strive for Organizational Excellence to improve the programs, policies and services that impact the families and communities we serve.

It’s time to take action.
Working together, we can serve more families in more ways than ever before. It continues with you...
$.91 of every dollar you invest goes directly to IAFC’s programs and services that support children, families, and communities.

**2018 Revenue and Support Total:** $47,395,333*

- Government and Corporate Contracts - $38,964,320
- Conference Fees & Other - $291,135
- Grants & Contributions - $8,139,878

**2017 Revenue and Support Total:** $42,195,066*

- Government and Corporate Contracts - $35,240,705
- Conference Fees & Other - $372,441
- Grants & Contributions - $6,581,920

**2018 Expenses:** $47,307,827

- Program Services - $43,811,629
- Fundraising - $93,966
- Management & General - $3,402,232

**2017 Expenses:** $42,074,322

- Program Services - $38,742,662
- Fundraising - $82,906
- Management & General - $3,248,754

*Please note: Approximately 55% ($26,243,709) of Illinois Action for Children’s annual budget is restricted funding to administer Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) programming.*
YOU MAKE OUR WORK POSSIBLE

All of us at Illinois Action for Children extend our deep appreciation to the following individual, foundation, corporate, and other institutional donors and partners who have made our work building brighter futures for children, families and communities possible, through their generously gifted time, talent and treasure in fiscal years 2017 - 2019:

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Thank You for Helping to Build Brighter Futures for ALL of Illinois’ Children and Families
Mission – Our Purpose

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

Vision – Our Desired Future State

Illinois Action for Children envisions a future in which all children and families, especially those most vulnerable, have the opportunities and resources they need.

With your continued support we can continue to create a brighter future for children, for families, and for the communities we call home.

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