

eAdvocate Newsletter - January



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In this Issue

of eAdvocate we welcome you to a new year and a new administration in Washington, D.C. We are also excited to share [registration information](#) for our upcoming Spring into Action 2021!

We Want to Hear From You!

If you are reading this, thank you! We hope you enjoy receiving these newsletters from our policy team. We are always looking for ways to improve our communications to you, and we would appreciate a few minutes of your time to fill out [this short three-question survey](#).

President Biden's American Rescue Plan

This month was truly historic, as Joseph R. Biden was sworn in as our 46th President and Kamala Harris became our nation's first black, South Asian, female Vice President. President Biden and Vice President Harris have a tough road ahead in uniting the nation through the numerous crises we face. We are hopeful that they are up to the task.

First on their agenda is robust economic relief to carry us all through the end of the pandemic. President Biden's plan provides substantial support to low-income children and families, including \$40 billion for child care, increased and extended unemployment insurance, paid sick days and family leave, \$15 minimum wage, and stabilization funds for state and local governments.

We celebrate the support in [President Biden's American Rescue Plan](#) for children and families. Additional details of the plan include:

- \$40 billion in dedicated relief for child care providers including \$25 billion for an Emergency Stabilization Fund for child care providers and an additional \$15 billion to the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG)
- An increase to the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), a benefit for workers, from \$530 to \$1,500
- Increasing direct payments to families from \$600 to \$1,400
- Raising the minimum wage to \$15 per hour
- Expansion of the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit (CDCTC) to cover up to half of a family's spending on child care, up to \$4,000 for one child and \$8,000 for two or more children. The CDCTC would be made refundable so families with lower or no taxable income are eligible.

Spring into Action 2021 – Register, Today!

The time for [Spring into Action](#) has arrived! Though we still cannot meet in person, we are thrilled to offer a new schedule of Friday-only free virtual events beginning February 5 through May 28.

Join Illinois Action for Children (IAFC) for virtual weekly presentations, [Friday Action Hour](#), throughout the spring culminating in virtual Early Childhood Advocacy Day with Start Early at the end of the Illinois Legislative Session in May.

Participants will have access to a variety of workshops presented by IAFC and our partner organizations. Topics include early childhood funding reform, COVID-19 updates, state and federal policy updates, workforce reform and much more!

Keep an eye on our [agenda page](#) for workshop and Early Childhood Advocacy Day updates! Questions: Email us at elizabeth.wilson@actforchildren.org

Early Childhood Successes!

In early January, the Illinois General Assembly considered a bold, comprehensive legislative agenda created by the Black Caucus. As the events of 2020 brought to the forefront the many racial inequities in our society and government, the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus created an agenda to advance racial equity. Each bill package represents one of the four pillars of the Black Caucus agenda – Education, Health and Human Services, Criminal Justice and Economic Opportunity. Early Childhood Advocates provided context for these bills.

While all the full agenda did not pass, we are heartened to see wide ranging support for many of the provisions. Below is a list of items we supported that passed in the Education Pillar:

- Extend Early Intervention (EI) services to three-year-olds until their next school year begins.
- Establish in state law a kindergarten readiness assessment.
- Establish the Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultations Act.
- Require behavioral health services providers for children under 5 to use a developmentally appropriate

diagnostic assessment and billing system.

- Establish the Early Childhood Workforce Act.
- Establish the Equitable Early Childhood Education and Care Act.
- Expand the Minority Teacher of Illinois Scholarship Program.

You can find more information in our [fact sheet](#).

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