

## eAdvocate Newsletter April 2023



By [Karen Brown](#) posted 04-27-2023 11:00 PM

### Advocacy Day Recap

Early Learning Advocacy Day: Building Tomorrow, Together was a success! On April 18, more than 300 supporters of early childhood care and education (ECEC) boarded buses from their respective neighborhoods from across the state. We, the Village coalition joined forces with Raising Illinois and Child Care for All and issued our loudest rallying cry yet to urge legislators to prioritize our state's youngest residents.

The day's highlight was a rally in the Capitol where Illinois Action for Children CEO April Janney had the privilege of introducing Governor JB Pritzker and Lieutenant Governor Stratton who joined us to promote the Smart Start plan and other ECEC initiatives to rousing cheers from the crowd of advocates. Senator Christina Pacione-Zayas and Representatives Katie Stuart, Joyce Mason, and Mike Porfirio were present to voice their strong support for early learning. It was exciting to join with legislators, providers, teachers, advocates, and many more to say YES to early childhood investments and a better future for our families.



### Maria Whelan Emerging Leaders Fellowship Program

The Maria Whelan Leadership Institute's Emerging Leaders Fellowship is now accepting applications for its second cohort. The fellowship is seeking 20 diverse, mid-level early childhood professionals who are truly committed to advancing systemic change for Illinois' early childhood families and the adults who serve them. Do you fit the description or know a good candidate? Apply or nominate a fellow.

[Fellowship Application Form](#)  
[Fellowship Nomination Form](#)

Please forward this email to early childhood professionals in your network who may be interested.

### **Grant Opportunity: Smart Start Transition**

Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Early Childhood is excited to announce Smart Start Transition Grants. These grants will be administered by INCCRRA and will transition licensed child care programs from the Strengthen and Grow Child Care grants to Smart Start Child Care in the future. Smart Start Transition Grants focus on providing stable and predictable funding to improve quality care and support workforce development.

#### **Smart Start Transition Grant Schedule**

ROUND	APPLICATION PERIOD	PROGRAM PERIOD
ONE	July 1, 2023 – July 31, 2023	Oct. 2023 – Dec. 2023
TWO	Oct. 1, 2023 – Oct. 31, 2023	Jan. 2024 – Mar. 2024
THREE	Jan. 1, 2024 – Jan. 31, 2024	Apr. 2024 – June 2024
FOUR	Apr. 1, 2024 – Apr. 30, 2024	July 2024 – Sep. 2024

For more info, go to <https://www.ilgateways.com/smart-start/smart-start-transition-grants>.

### **Springfield Updates**

Yesterday, Illinois Action for Children Senior Vice President of Programs Shauna Ejeh testified at the last Joint Early Childhood Education Committee hearing, which focused on workforce compensation, benefits, pipeline, and retention. She discussed the need for prioritizing the early childhood worker pipeline, better access to professional development opportunities, and increased compensation and benefits for early care staff. To meet the urgent needs of our workforce, we must make the critical investments outlined in Smart Start IL, including workforce compensation contracts.

Thank you to all those who testified for Smart Start IL and uplifted our early childhood workforce.

### **Tell Your Legislators to Say “YES” to Smart Start IL**



**TAKE ACTION:**

**SUPPORT SMART START IL**



It's not too late to take action to secure the future of Illinois' children. Here's what's on the line for Smart Start IL:

- \$75 million to fund thousands of new preschool seats
- \$130 million to raise child care worker wages
- \$70 million to deliver more direct payments to parents & child care providers
- \$5 million to support 1,500 more families through home visiting
- \$40 million for early intervention programs
- \$100 million to improve and expand child care facilities

Spare two minutes to [email your legislators](#). Urge them to invest in early care and education by approving Smart Start Illinois.

### Federal Policy Updates

On April 18, President Biden announced the most comprehensive set of executive actions any president has ever taken to improve care for hard-working families and workers. He signed an executive order that includes more than 50 directives to nearly every cabinet-level agency to expand access to affordable, high-quality care and provide support for care workers and family caregivers.

Learn more:

- [NWLC Applauds Biden Administration's Executive Actions on Family Care](#)
- [Executive Order on Increasing Access to High-Quality Care and Supporting Caregivers | The White House](#)

### Take Action

- [A Day Without Child Care | Community Change Action](#)
- [Send a Message to the 118th Congress | Think Babies™ \(ZERO TO THREE\)](#)
- [Tell Congress to #SolveChildCare! \(NAEYC\)](#)
- [Take Action Now - Child Care Aware® of America](#)
- [Tell us your #Movement4Childcare experience! \(MomsRising\)](#)

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