

e-Advocate Newsletter December 2022



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Health Insurance Open Enrollment

Are you, or someone you know, in need of health insurance? The open enrollment period for the Affordable Care Act (ACA) Health Insurance is open until January 15, 2023! This is the time of year to enroll in a new ACA Health Insurance Marketplace plan or to renew or change your current plan.

Who should enroll?

- Eligible Illinoisans who do not have health insurance coverage or are losing job-based coverage.
- Consumers currently enrolled in an ACA Marketplace plan who want to renew or change their existing plan.

[Learn More](#)

Providers In Action Survey

Providers in Action (PIA) is back and ready to advocate for Illinois' child care workforce, children, and families!

PIA is a group of child care professionals that advocate for policy changes to improve the quality of and access to child care services. In the past, they advocated for increased investments in the early childhood workforce, increased CCAP eligibility, and improvements with DCFS licensing.

The members of PIA are seeking input from other providers and child care professionals about their programs and top concerns at this time. If you are a child care provider – regardless of type – please fill out this survey. Your feedback is greatly appreciated!

If you'd like to learn more about Providers in Action, please email Susanne Beilmann at Susanne.beilmann@actforchildren.org.

COVID-19 Information and Resources

Did you miss last month's Town Hall meeting on the COVID-19 vaccine for children aged 0-5? Don't worry – you can learn about the resources shared by Dr. Felicia Scott-Wellington in the Zoom recording here. Remember, getting your child vaccinated is the best thing you can do for their health.

If you still have questions about the pediatric COVID vaccine, you can check out this sharing this handy [Q&A document](#) created by the Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Also, check out this [informative poster](#) that you can print and hang at your child care program!

Join the Public Policy & Advocacy Team!

Are you passionate about supporting the early childhood workforce and Illinois families, and collaborating in advocacy? If that's you, please consider the two open positions with our team!

- [VP of Public Policy, Research, and Advocacy Application](#)
- [Community Engagement Associate Application](#)

Federal Policy Updates

By Friday, December 16, Congress must decide on and reauthorize several key legislative measures essential to continuing many early childhood programs across the country. This includes:

1. Child Care and Development Block Grant Funding (CCDBG)- Congress is negotiating and making decisions right now about annual spending, and there is an opportunity to increase funding for child care. You can make a difference in less than 5 minutes! [Click here](#) to contact your Illinois elected officials and urge them to increase funding for child care.

In Illinois, CCDBG funds helped to sustain early childhood programs most affected by the pandemic, invest in increased compensation for the workforce, and provide financial assistance to those pursuing early childhood as a career.

2. Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV)- MIECHV supports pregnant people and parents with young children who live in communities that face greater risks and barriers to achieving positive maternal and child health outcomes. The bill would authorize and fund through fiscal year 2027 the Maternal, Infant, and Early childhood Home Visiting Program. [Learn more](#) about how we need to improve the program through reauthorization.

3. Child Tax Credit - Last year, families received monthly Child Tax Credit (CTC) payments between July and December, but Congress allowed the expanded CTC to expire—making it harder for families to pay for necessities and putting 3.7 million children in poverty. Congress has a chance to expand the Child Tax Credit before the end of the year. [Learn more about how you can take action.](#)

4. Child Nutrition Act- Part of this act reimburses care centers, Head Start Programs, family child care homes, homeless shelters, and after school programs for snacks and meals served to children. [Learn more about the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act](#) and how it serves our most vulnerable and food-insecure communities.

IL Veto Session Recap

In the past two weeks, IL state legislators gathered for a 5-day fall veto session in which they passed 12 bills. Among those bills include:

- Making changes to the SAFE-T Act criminal justice reform package
- Making available free hygiene products for state inmates
- Expanding incentives to promote electric vehicle manufacturing in IL
- Infusing \$1.8 billion into the state's Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund

Lawmakers will return to Springfield on January 4 for a five-day Lame-Duck session, a session that occurs before newly elected lawmakers are sworn in. Among the issues expected to be debated is a proposed ban on the sale or possession of assault-style weapons and high-capacity ammunition magazines.

Action Year-In-Review!

2022 was a busy year! There is so much work yet to be done to build a better early childhood care system in

IL, but we also have much to celebrate. Check out what our staff has to say about their favorite moments and wins from 2022. Our team includes Elizabeth Wilson (PPA Project Manager), Michael Kim (Director of Policy), Joselle Escobar (Policy Associate), Lilian Matsuda (Director of Advocacy), and Susanne Beilmann (Provider Advocacy Associate).



Year-In Review


The Public Policy & Advocacy team shares their favorite moments and wins from 2022!



Lilian Matsuda

"I'm most proud of our **Right to Care Campaign's 2022 Advocacy Day** and the heartfelt participation from our parent and early childhood provider advocates. I look forward to (hopefully) being in person for 2023!"

Elizabeth Wilson



"I'm most proud of **hosting a successful Fall into Action policy workshop this year!** We had over 150 parents, providers, and advocates register to hear about federal, state, and election updates as well as brand new research on Family Voice and the Initial Activity Search for CCAP. Thank you PPRA and advocates for a wonderful event!"

Susanne Beilmann



"I'm happy that I could **connect with so many providers and hear about all the work they put in day in and day out.** I loved learning about the strides that providers have made so far such as re-opening classrooms, increasing the number of children they serve, and providing a child with Early Intervention services. All these stories made my day - and my year!"

Michael Kim



One of the greatest moments from this year was **hosting the First Annual Early Childhood Resource Fair with State Senator Cristina Pacione-Zayas, State Senator Omar Aquino, and State Rep. Jaime Andrade.** This event brought hundreds of families together where they could access child care programs, resources, diapers, and coats for the winter. I was grateful to meet families in the Chicago area and provide them with the necessary resources they need."

Joselle Escobar



"I'm most proud of **relaunching the eAdvocate newsletter and helping to host policy trainings for our early childhood educators!** Connecting our communities to advocacy resources and ensuring everyone can stay in the loop of what happens in our government is important to me, and I'm thankful I can do that alongside an incredible team."

#eAdvocateNewsletter

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