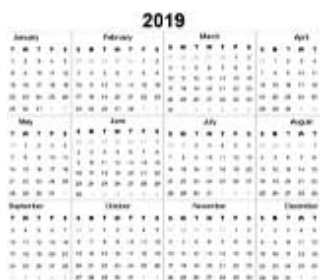


(<https://www.actforchildren.org/champion/join-movement/e-advocate>)

## This Issue: 2019 Year in Review



Our December issue of eAdvocate highlights important policy and advocacy victories resulting from the hard work of Illinois Action for Children and our partners! There is much to celebrate that will further strengthen our efforts as we move into 2020.



## Building Investments and Upholding Standards

### Budget success in Illinois

Fiscal Year (FY) 2020, which began in July 2019, has seen significant investments in the state's early childhood system, including:

- \$28.8 million increase to the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), which the Department of Human Services used to increase income eligibility to 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) from 185 percent of FPL and for much needed program outreach and recruitment.
- \$50 million increase to the Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) at the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to expand and improve birth-to-five early childhood services, including Prevention Initiative and Preschool for All.
- \$12 million increase to the Early Intervention (EI) to accommodate the state's growing caseload and other opportunities to strengthen the EI system.
- Level funding for Illinois Department of Human Services' (IDHS) evidence-based home visiting programs for expectant and new parents through Healthy Families and Parents Too Soon.

- \$100 million for the Early Childhood Construction Grant (ECCG) program in the state's new capital bill. This will provide a grant opportunity for school districts and child care centers to build new or update existing classrooms for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers across the state.

### More families eligible for CCAP

Effective October 1, 2019, income eligibility for CCAP increased from 185 percent of FPL to 200 percent of FPL! Now, a family of four earning up to \$4,292/month (instead of \$3,970/month) is eligible for benefits.

What has also changed is CCAP eligibility at *redetermination*. At the time of redetermination, families may now earn up to 225 percent of FPL (for the same family of four, this would be \$4,829/month) and continue receiving CCAP services. This means families can receive raises or take better jobs while maintaining this critical support.

If a family's income increases above 225 percent of FPL (\$4,829/month), but is still below 85 percent of state median income (\$6,333/month for a family of four), they will receive a graduated phase-out of CCAP for 3 additional months, easing the burden of immediately having to pay full freight for child care.

### Expulsion standards

In 2017, IAFC and advocacy partners worked to pass Public Act 100-105, which ensures early childhood programs engage in best practices in their disciplinary actions by prohibiting expulsions of young children due to child behavior. Expulsion and suspension practices are associated with negative educational, health, and developmental outcomes for children. This legislation was an important first step for children, families, and providers— IAFC has and will continue to work on the implementation of these program standards and practices.

IAFC worked to ensure that agency rules continue to be aligned in support of providers and children so both have the best outcomes. We have submitted comments to DCFS and ISBE on the rules, but neither has adopted final rules yet.

We will send an alert when DCFS posts second notice for their rules, and you can make your voice heard with comments as well.

### Additional Updates

Governor Pritzker established an Illinois Commission on Equitable Early Childhood Education and Care Funding. Read the full statement ([https://www.actforchildren.org/news\\_post/early-childhood-advocates-support-illinois-commission-equitable-funding-early-childhood-education-care/](https://www.actforchildren.org/news_post/early-childhood-advocates-support-illinois-commission-equitable-funding-early-childhood-education-care/)) from Illinois Action for Children and our partners.

IDHS has announced changes to CCAP provider reimbursement rates and parent co-pays. For more information, check out Illinois Action for Children's statement ([https://www.actforchildren.org/news\\_post/governor-announces-ccap-increase-investment-ece-workforce/](https://www.actforchildren.org/news_post/governor-announces-ccap-increase-investment-ece-workforce/)).

## Early Childhood Legislation



Several important early childhood bills were approved by the legislature and signed by Governor Pritzker, including:

- SB 1952 – eliminates the Basic Skills Test requirement for future teachers and allows for the payment of student teachers in schools and child care centers
- HB 2237 – creates a Children's Savings Account (CSA) program, which would automatically open an account for every child born or adopted in Illinois

Illinois Action for Children applauds the Illinois General Assembly, its leaders, and the Governor for working together to develop a full-year, fully-funded budget that invests in critical supports for Illinois' youngest children and their families. We encourage you to call and thank your

legislators as well!



## Coming up in 2020

### **SAVE THE DATE for Spring into Action**

Our two-day agenda in Springfield, IL will include policy workshops and time to meet with your legislator. Dates are April 28 and 29, 2020. Additional details forthcoming.

### **2020 Census**

In order to ensure every resident is counted in the 2020 Census, Illinois is investing more per capita than any other state—\$29 million. The Census happens every 10 years, determining the number of seats for each state in the U.S. House of Representatives as well as how much funding each state will receive. All communities benefit from receiving federal dollars as they help support public schools, road and highway construction, and programs such as SNAP, CCAP, and WIC.

The most undercounted age group is children between 0-5 years old. Please read our Myths and Facts (<https://go.actforchildren.org/1/471011/2019-11-15/dkt3z>) eAdvocate for strategies to make sure all children are counted in the 2020 Census!

Illinois Action for Children will be hosting trainings and other events for the Census, and we will keep you updated on ways to participate and engage families.

If you have questions regarding the 2020 Census, please contact us at [census2020@actforchildren.org](mailto:census2020@actforchildren.org) (<mailto:census2020@actforchildren.org>).