

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

This Issue:

In this month's issue of eAdvocate, we highlight two urgent and important ways that you can take action in support of children this summer: the Illinois Family Advisory Committee and the Illinois Early Childhood Funding Coalition.

Join us in the Illinois Early Childhood Funding Coalition!



A coalition of advocates, families, educators, and child care providers.

Equitable access to critically important resources is necessary for Illinois' children and families to thrive. Stable, transparent, full funding for early childhood programs is the goal of the Illinois Early Childhood Funding Coalition!

([https://go.actforchildren.org/l/471011/2020-07-](https://go.actforchildren.org/l/471011/2020-07-28/nxb2p/471011/111244/ECFC_Guiding_Principles_one_pager_Final.pdf)

28/nxb2p/471011/111244/ECFC_Guiding_Principles_one_pager_Final.pdf) Join

(https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfdfoxokZYbKSEuPodS63JHIRttGkfQCFIIQdgVo_pT7MumQaw/viewform)

over 100 statewide advocates and community members in this unique opportunity to make a difference in 2020!

Our next meeting is August 6th, and we hope to see you there. Please contact Stefi Hernandez (<mailto:estefantia.hernandez@actforchildren.org>) for the virtual meeting details.

Follow the action on social media with #AllInForEarlyEd !

Coming soon! Join the Family Advisory Committee (FAC)

The Family Advisory Committee (FAC) will serve as a systematic vehicle for the voices of families in communities and programs to be raised up to the state level. The FAC will be a **parent-led committee** that guides early childhood policy development and works to increase family engagement in early learning systems across Illinois. Be on the lookout for more about this opportunity!



CCAP Update, Reopening, and More

As the state moves into Phase 4 of Governor's reopening plan, there have been several changes to the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) for licensed child care homes

(https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/OECD/Documents/FAQ_Reopening%20Licensed%20Child%20Care%20Homes.pdf) and child care centers

(https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/OECD/Documents/FAQ_Reopening%20Child%20Care%20Centers.pdf), including a return of parent copayments and the discontinuing of the attendance exemption.

Every July, at the start of the new state fiscal year, the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) updates the CCAP income eligibility (to match the new Federal Poverty Level), updates parent copayments and, when possible, makes changes to CCAP reimbursement rates. This year is no different. Please see the links below to review the new guidelines.

New CCAP Reimbursement Rates: (<https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=121213>) There are several large increases, including a 10 percent increase for infants and toddlers in Group 1A, a 16 percent increase for preschoolers in Group 1B and a 13 percent increase for infants and toddlers in Group 2.

New Income Eligibility and Copayment Rates: (<https://www.dhs.state.il.us/onenetlibrary/12/documents/Forms/IL444-3455B.pdf>) While income eligibility remains at 200 percent of FPL, the actual monthly income for families has increased slightly to keep up with the annual increase in the federal poverty line. Additionally, the new parent copayment scale caps payments at 7 percent of a parent's income, aligning Illinois with the federally recommended level.



Home Provider Spotlight: Pat Twymon, Owner of Wee Are The World Home Daycare

1. In what ways has COVID-19 affected your business the most?

The biggest difference has been the number of children I have in my care; I did have 16 children prior to COVID-19, and now at most I have nine. Of course, it varies from day to day; today I have seven. A lot of parents are still working at home. If they're not busy, they tend to keep the children at home with them. A few of the parents of my children work in what I would call high risk environments. It's a big concern because I've

lost a colleague [to COVID-19], and so it's scary. I'm a part of an association of providers and at least two have contracted it. One was on a ventilator for a long time and had to learn to walk again. It's like a wait-and-see game.

I have three sons and they all wanted me to remain closed, but I never closed. I was open and cared for essential worker's children, but it was a struggle. I'm usually very affectionate with my children (we do a lot of hugging, I pat their backs, they can see my smile)...but now that has changed, they can't even see my smile. It was the fear that kept me from getting too close.

Some days I was the only playmate to one or the other children. I did my best to interact but did it from a far. [It was important] to let the child know I was there, "I'm here for you." That social emotional piece [for the children] has been my biggest concern: what is it doing to the children? This is already overwhelming as there's less time for teaching because we have to clean every hour, make sure things are safe, clean after meals, etc.

One parent knew her child had COVID-19 but still brought her to day care because she said she had to work... how honest are the parents going to be with us?

2. What made you want to join the Early Childhood Funding Coalition?

Any committee I'm part of, whether it's Providers in Action, DCFS (Department of Children and Family Services) Advisory...the reason I do it is that I want to see change. And every time I say that I get emotional, tears literally come to my eyes. I want to make a difference.

Sometimes being the only home- based provider in the room can be brutal; you get talked over... but over time our voices are heard, and we are being represented at more tables. You need somebody [at the table] who can say, "That's not going to work and here's why." I'm going to keep using my voice. Any provider that I can reach to say, "Get involved, learn your standards, don't be afraid to ask questions of your licensing representative."

There are a lot of providers who won't return [due to closure]: both centers and homes. I've had discussions with my own family; if we shut down again, I won't reopen. As a provider, I don't know I will be able to do that.

3. What are some things you are doing for self-care during this time?

I try to steal a little quiet time. A family member is a psychiatrist and I call her to talk- she lets me talk and gives me advice on things I can do. I believe in the power of prayer, and I believe that nothing will happen to me that isn't supposed to happen to me, and I will deal with it the best I can. I make an effort not to worry. I think what's stressing me right now is that my eldest son is turning 40, and he and [my other two sons] are all meeting in Louisiana this weekend. They rented an AirBNB, and they have promised me they're not going out [of the house]. They're not youngsters, so I can't tell them to not go anywhere. I just want them to be safe.

Sometimes I'll take a long bath until the water runs cold! I'll have a glass of wine here and there, I try to stay away from too much news, I do a lot of reading, but some days I have to shut it all down and go watch a movie with my husband and play a card game.

