

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

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## This Issue: June 2020 eAdvocate

We are heartbroken that our beloved leader, Maria Whelan, passed away unexpectedly on June 10, 2020. Maria was a fiercely powerful voice for children and families who inspired all of us with her determination, kindness, and empathy. We will miss her every day. We continue to press on in our advocacy in celebration of Maria's life, as she would have done.

In this month's issue of eAdvocate, we include highlights from the state budget, an important advocacy opportunity, and a conversation with House Majority Leader Greg Harris.

## State budget and child care re-opening

### Illinois budget

In May, the Illinois legislature approved a \$42.8 billion budget for Fiscal Year 21 (FY21), and we are pleased that early childhood programs continue to be supported as outlined below. You may read our full statement on the budget here ([https://www.actforchildren.org/news\\_post/iafc-statement-illinois-general-assembly-passing-state-budget/](https://www.actforchildren.org/news_post/iafc-statement-illinois-general-assembly-passing-state-budget/)).

**Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG):** remains level to FY20 at \$543.8 million

**Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP):** increased to \$428.8 million The amendment accounts for a federal \$20 million base funding increase and \$118 million in federal CARES Act funding.

**Parents Too Soon/Healthy Families:** remains level to FY20 at \$6,870,300 and \$10,040,000, respectively

**Early Intervention (EI):** received a \$7 million increase above FY20 at \$115.9 million The amendment increases the EI Revolving Fund appropriation to \$185 million in FY20 and \$195 million in FY21

**Early Childhood Construction Grant (ECCG):** capital funding of \$100 million is reappropriated

### Illinois Child Care Re- opening and more

The beginning of June marked an entrance into Phase 3 of the Restore Illinois Plan. Re-opening of child care guidelines from the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development can be found here ([https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/OECD/Documents/Centers%20-%20Reopening%20Quick%20Reference%205%2729%2720\\_Final.pdf](https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/OECD/Documents/Centers%20-%20Reopening%20Quick%20Reference%205%2729%2720_Final.pdf)).

Governor Pritzker announced a \$270 million grant program for Illinois child care providers. The Child Care Restoration grant program will dedicate at least \$270 million of the state's Coronavirus Urgent Remediation Emergency (CURE) Fund to support the economic health of child care providers as the state's economy continues

to reopen in the coming weeks and months. As part of CURE, the Business Interruption Grants (BIG) Program is specifically designed to support businesses who endure lost revenue due to the COVID-19 public health emergency.



## Join us in the Illinois Early Childhood Funding Coalition!

Do you think equitable resources are important for Illinois' children? Do you want stable, transparent, and full funding for early childhood programs? Advocates, parents, and partners across the state have a unique opportunity to make a difference this year. Learn more about the Illinois Early Childhood Funding Coalition

([https://go.actforchildren.org/l/471011/2020-06-](https://go.actforchildren.org/l/471011/2020-06-30/lrftj/471011/108279/ECFC_Guiding_Principles_one_pager_Final.pdf)

[30/lrftj/471011/108279/ECFC\\_Guiding\\_Principles\\_one\\_pager\\_Final.pdf](https://go.actforchildren.org/l/471011/2020-06-30/lrftj/471011/108279/ECFC_Guiding_Principles_one_pager_Final.pdf)) and join us here

([https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1bTlpmJTdVs\\_6mJ33s-v9mrlsBkmG6mYrC6mg2EcmSig/edit?ts=5ee7cc93](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1bTlpmJTdVs_6mJ33s-v9mrlsBkmG6mYrC6mg2EcmSig/edit?ts=5ee7cc93))!



## Policymaker Spotlight: House Majority Leader Greg Harris, Illinois State (Representative, 13th District)

1. **What made you want to become a lawmaker?** I wanted to make change for my community on a variety of fronts. One of the biggest things I wanted to do was to reduce disparities in healthcare, because of the struggles I had with issues like HIV, substance abuse, and mental health; when I had good access because of

private insurance while seeing so many friends struggle because of no insurance or inadequate insurance. There is still so much work to do because as we've seen emphasized by COVID-19, healthcare disparities are getting worse and not better - particularly in communities of color.

2. **What is one lesson you learned from your experience as chair of the Human Services Appropriations Committee?** I learned how vast, interconnected, and interdependent the things which we describe as "Social Influencers of Health" are. I also learned how traditional, siloed approaches to service delivery raised barriers for people and communities, how resistant to change they can be, and how important stakeholder involvement including those with lived experience is.
3. **Why are investments in early childhood programs (such as child care, home visiting, and Early Intervention) important to you?** All the research shows that early intervention and prevention are better for individual people, families, and the community.
4. **How has your time as House Majority Leader shaped your perspective on supporting Illinois children and families?** Illinois is a very big state with a very large and diverse population. It's a big challenge to develop policies and budgets that are inclusive and comprehensive and leave no one behind. Learning what makes families the same across the entire state, and also where they are different and why is a big challenge. It's more and more clear that even the distance of a few blocks can make a family's ability to thrive vastly different, and we need to tailor our programs accordingly to increase accessibility and reduce disparities.
5. **Who influenced your personal early childhood education and care the most? Are there any heroes that stand out?** It isn't that early, but my 6th grade teacher Mrs. Cessna helped open up the world to me and other kids and let us know that we could do or be anything we wanted and encouraged our class to grow and challenge ourselves. In junior high there was another event that changed me. There was a teacher at our school who died by suicide because he was gay. As a gay person I have never forgotten that and I want to help make a world where no one has to feel that much suffering about who they are or feel that they are alone.



(<https://www.actforchildren.org/census2020/>)

