

e-Advocate Newsletter January 2023



By Karen Brown posted 01-30-2023 11:00 PM

2023 Chicago Municipal Elections

If you live in Chicago, municipal elections take place on Tuesday, February 28. This includes the elections for Mayor and City Council Alderperson. Several dates to remember:

- Mail-in ballots began being distributed on Thursday, January 19.
- Early voting begins on Monday, February 13.

[Click here for more voting information](#)

Child Care Advocates United is holding an in-person forum on Wednesday, February 8 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. CT. [Register here](#) to attend and learn more about each candidate and their stance on important issues affecting early childhood care and education.

Free Lead in Water Testing for Child Care Providers

LeadCare Illinois empowers child care providers to give safe drinking water to the children in their care. In Illinois, certain child care facilities are required to test their water for lead and mitigate, if necessary.

LeadCare Illinois offers FREE lead in water testing, training, and support to help child care providers address water safety and meet testing requirements.

[Learn more and request a free test kit](#)

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.

PIA members 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 the survey linked below. Your feedback is greatly appreciated! We've heard from 300 providers so far.

Last year was big for Illinois' infants, toddlers and families. Advocates across the state informed and championed historic investments and implementations, noteworthy legislation and system improvements that support the most critical years of a child's life – the first three.

Illinois Action for Children is proud to be a member of the **Raising Illinois coalition, and Raising Illinois' contributors and champions have a lot to be proud of as we reminisce about actions taken last year.**

[Read about Raising Illinois's 2022 Accomplishments](#)

Strolling Thunder

On Wednesday, June 21, families and their babies from all 50 states and the District of Columbia will meet with their Members of Congress as part of ZERO TO THREE's national Strolling Thunder event. These families will come to Capitol Hill to remind their policymakers to Think Babies and invest in their youngest constituents. **Do you know a family with a story about raising a young child who may want to represent their state and urge Congress to be champions for babies?**

No experience is necessary. ZERO TO THREE will provide training and support to families before, during, and after their meetings. Travel expenses will be paid.

[Learn more](#)

If you know a family in Illinois with a child under age three who may be interested, please have them fill out the below interest form and forward them this flyer. For questions, please read the [FAQ](#) or feel free to contact aperez@zerotothree.org. ZERO TO THREE will follow up with those who express interest by late March to let them know if they have been selected.

[Strolling Thunder Interest Survey](#)

2023 Federal Funding Omnibus Package

We're starting the new year off strong! On Thursday, Dec. 29, President Biden signed the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023, appropriating a **\$2.8 billion increase in funding for federal child care and early learning programs. This includes a 30% increase in funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), the second largest increase in funds in the program's history.** We celebrate this as well as the reauthorization of the Jackie Walorski Maternal and Child Home Visiting (MEICV) program.

We'd like to thank everyone who responded to our calls to action and contacted their legislators about increasing investments into ECE! However, there is still work to be done to ensure the enhanced Child Tax Credit and The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) receive the funding and support they need.

State Policy Updates

- After the holidays from, Illinois state legislators gathered for a lame duck session from January 3-7 and passed several bills that await Governor Pritzker's signature. This includes passing legislation to ban assault weapons, expanding reproductive rights, and guaranteeing five days of paid leave for all employees.
- On Monday, January 9, Governor Pritzker mentioned several key priorities for the early care and education community during his inauguration into his second term. He proposed to make preschool available to every family throughout the state with more economic security for families by eliminating childcare deserts and expanding childcare options.
- The Illinois State Board of Education submitted its Fiscal Year 2024 budget proposal and recommended a 10% increase in all early childhood program funds. Although the community is grateful, we need to go bolder! To fully support Illinois' youngest students and the workforce that educates and cares for them, Illinois must increase funding by at least 20%. IAFC will continue advocating for a

budget increase in the General Assembly and look forward to Gov. Pritzker's budget proposal address on Wednesday, Feb. 15.

- WIN! Illinois was awarded a one-year planning grant of four million dollars under the Preschool Development Grant Birth-Five (PDG B-5). PDG B-5 grants support improved collaboration among existing programs as well as a mixed delivery system that includes child care and family child care providers, Head Start, state pre-kindergarten, and home visiting.

[Read IAFCs response to Gov. JB Pritzker's 2023 inaugural address](#)

IAFCs 2023 Policy Agenda

Illinois Action for Children is proud to present its 2023 Policy Agenda to support the great improvements to the child care and early learning systems in Illinois. Our policy priorities seek to create a just system for child care and early education that ensures racially and economically equitable outcomes for all children. [Click here to view the infographic.](#)



Illinois Action for Children 2023 Policy Agenda

Our policy priorities seek to create a just system for child care and early education that ensures racially and economically equitable outcomes for all children.

Ensure the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) reaches all the families who need care



Pass legislation to **increase CCAP income eligibility by increasing the FPL maximum by 25%**. Ensure equity by increasing income eligibility as enrollment for the previous income bracket rises.

Eliminate additional burden on families and providers who use CCAP

Extend the CCAP eligibility period from 12 months to 24 months before requiring redetermination through the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS).



Lower the cost of child care co-payment for more families



Pass legislation to **expand the \$1.00 CCAP co-payment maximum to all families at 185% FPL and below** by increasing eligibility starting in FY2024.

Expand the eligible duration of the Initial Activity Search Program (IAS) and make it permanent

Extend the Initial Activity Search CCAP eligibility beyond the June 2023 deadline and **expand the eligible duration of care to up to at least 6 months**.



Give working families comprehensive paid leave



Support the Illinois Family Medical Leave Insurance Act. This program creates a state-run insurance program that **allows Illinois workers to use up to 26 weeks of job-protected leave a year**.

#newsletter

#eAdvocateNewsletter

0 comments

35 views

Permalink

<https://www.actforchildren.org/blogs/karen-brown/2023/01/31/eadvocate-newsletter-january-2023>