

eAdvocate Newsletter March 2023



By Karen Brown posted 03-30-2023 11:00 PM

Advocacy Day 2023: Updates

Advocacy Day 2023 will take place on Tuesday, April 18 in Springfield. We are excited to see how eager early childhood advocates are to tell Illinois legislators to support child care.

Registration has reached capacity. However, you can still [sign up for the waitlist](#). Please email elizabeth.wilson@actforchildren.org with any questions.

If you'd like to brush up on your advocacy skills, please register for the training that COFI, Latino Policy Forum, and We, the Village are hosting over the next two weeks. Anyone can attend this training. You don't have to be registered for Advocacy Day.

[April 5 at 6 p.m. CDT](#)

Enrollment Outreach & Workforce Development Funds Available

If you're having trouble staffing your Chicago-based early learning center, we can help. You may qualify for up to \$10,000. Funding is available for enrollment outreach, workforce development, community events, hiring bonuses, and awareness raising. The application deadline is April 17 at 5 p.m.

The program is brought to you by Illinois Action for Children, in partnership with the IDHS Department of Early Childhood and the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies.

[More information](#)

2023 Chicago Runoff Election: Make a Plan to Vote

If you live in Chicago, runoff elections are taking place on April 4. Runoffs are a second round of voting that take place when no single candidate obtains a majority of the votes during the first round. Use the resources below to determine how you'll vote.

[Early voting](#) is now open until election day. Find your nearest [polling precinct place](#). Additional [voting information](#).

Introducing IAFCs New Vice President of Public Policy, Research & Advocacy



We're excited to welcome Angela Farwig as our new vice president of public policy, research and advocacy. Angela will oversee all aspects of our policy, research, and advocacy programs and lead the execution of our [All Children, All Families agenda](#).

In her role, Angela will continue improving public policy in early childcare and education and building organizational capacity at the grassroots level. Additionally, she will serve as the key policy leader for IAFC with multiple constituencies, including other nonprofit organizations, foundations, agency staff and leadership, and statewide county and locally elected officials.

Welcome, Angela!

Tell Your Legislators to Say "YES" to Smart Start IL

Governor Pritzker's Smart Start IL proposal is gaining momentum across the state. IAFC CEO April Janney recently participated in a panel on [Chicago Tonight: Black Voices](#) to advocate for the Governor's proposal and other early learning initiatives.

But Smart Start IL hasn't passed the state legislature yet.

Help it become a reality. Tell your state legislator to include Smart Start IL in the final Fiscal Year 2024 Budget.

[Contact your legislator](#)

More information on Smart Start IL

On February 15, Governor Pritzker unveiled Smart Start IL, a historic investment plan that increases workforce compensation, provides stability to early care programs, and increases funding for early childhood programs for years to come.

[Read IAFCs Full Response to Governor Pritzker's Budget Address](#)

State Senators Highlight Child Care Accessibility & Affordability in Recent Press Conference



“We had a family who paid a \$1 copayment, but now their copayment is \$216... It’s time to fix a system that will better assist our youngest and most vulnerable children. We need policymakers to realize how important it is to make sure that every child has access to high-quality child care,” said Penny Driver, the director of the Teddy Bear Christian Development Center.

This statement was made at a press conference held by State Senator Cristina H Pacione-Zayas, State Senator Ram Villivalam, Senate Leader Kimberly Lightford and State Senator Omar Aquino. They joined parents and child care providers from central Illinois to highlight the importance of increasing income eligibility for the Child Care Assistance Program and expanding the \$1 copayment for more families.

Let’s continue to push for more accessible and affordable child care to ensure stability for our families and improve outcomes for our youngest children!

State Legislative Update

March was a busy month in Springfield. The Joint Early Childhood Education Committee led by State Senator Cristina Pacione-Zayas and Representative Joyce Mason is holding five subject matter hearings on the state of early childhood investments and the importance of a robust, overarching system that ensures quality care for all children. We need your expertise and experience in these conversations as there are two more hearings left. Please sign up if you are interested in testifying:

April 19: Child Care Affordability & Accessibility April 27: Early Childhood Workforce

[Sign up](#)

In other news, several bills impacting early childhood and education services made significant progress. This includes bills to establish full-day kindergarten ([HB2396](#)) and expand group day care home capacity ([HB2474](#)). Both passed the House and now moves to the Senate. In addition, a bill that extends the application for the 5-year Short-Term Substitute Teaching License ([SB2390](#)) passed the Senate and is now in the House. We’ll keep you updated on their progress.

Federal Policy Updates

It’s that time of year again when Congress is working hard to pass a budget for Fiscal Year 2024. And it’s important to remind legislators that making significant and sustained investments for our children and families matters. **Urge your members of Congress to build on the bipartisan progress made in the Fiscal Year 2023 omnibus by investing in programs families need to thrive.**

Take action now and send a message to Congress to:

Prioritize funding for infant and toddlers | [Think Babies \(Zero TO THREE\)](#) Boost funding for early care and education programs | [\(NAEYC\)](#) and [Child Care Aware of America](#)

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We, the Village seeks to ensure all Illinois children can receive the child care and early education they need, and parents want, from birth to kindergarten.