



Raising Illinois

2022 Accomplishments on Behalf of Expecting Families, Infants & Toddlers

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

Despite an ongoing pandemic and fluctuating economy, Raising Illinois' contributors and champions have a lot to be proud of as we reminisce on a collection of positive outcomes last year that support Illinois' youngest children and families.

This document outlines Raising Illinois' accomplishments for Fiscal Year 2022, from July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022, across the coalition's four priority areas and eight interconnected strategies within the [Illinois Prenatal-to-Age 3 Agenda](#). As organized in this document, work was done through federal, state and local budget advocacy, legislative advocacy, administrative and implementation advocacy and public awareness and engagement.

We encourage you to join us in advancing new and refreshed priorities, amplifying efforts and sharing information about our collective work. Visit www.raisingillinois.org/get-involved to join the Raising Illinois coalition and be a part of our robust and diverse advocacy efforts.



Our Mission

Together, we must address the root causes of disparities and create an equitable and cohesive early childhood development support system for expecting families, infants and toddlers and the communities in which they live. We believe race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status or ability should not determine the opportunities and, ultimately, the success a child experiences in life.

Our Vision

Every expecting family, infant and toddler in Illinois should have equitable access to affordable high-quality learning experiences, health services and economic supports that they need during their most formative years—creating the strongest foundation for their success in school and life.



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POLICY PRIORITY: HEALTHY PARENTS & BABIES

Comprehensive Perinatal Supports



Administration & Implementation

- Implementation of **\$25 million expansion to Family Connects Chicago**, a nurse home visiting program, to 12 additional sites in three new communities – serving **5,500+ families** in every region of the City of Chicago
- Implementation of implicit bias training for **health care provider licensure renewal**, to begin in January 2023, as mandated by the Health Care and Human Service Reform Act (HB 158)
- Federal approval of the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) State Plan Amendment to make the **extension of 12-month postpartum Medicaid coverage permanent**
- **Implementation of Medicaid coverage for 12 months of continuous postpartum care** to serve nearly **2,100 more people** who were previously ineligible due to income and nearly **10,000 more people** who were previously ineligible due to immigration status
- Implementation of **licensure and expansion of freestanding birth centers**, per the Birth Center Licensing Act (HB 3995) and Public Act 102-414 (HB 738)



Legislation

- Passage of **Medicaid coverage for a second postpartum visit** under Public Act 102-665 (SB 967)



Local, State & Federal Budgets

- Award of **\$255,600 annually for five-year funding period for federal Early Childhood Comprehensive Services (ECCS) grant** to scale Universal Newborn Support Services (UNSS) model to more communities statewide
- Application of federal COVID-19 relief funds to **grow the Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Database** to include **107 consultants in all 102 counties**, increasing access statewide



Public Awareness & Engagement

- Launch of the ECCS grant's cross-sector advisory council in collaboration with the Illinois Maternal Health Task Force, with **explicit community engagement deliverables** as part of UNSS expansion





POLICY PRIORITY: HEALTHY PARENTS & BABIES

Strengthened Home Visiting System



Administration & Implementation

- Advancement of Home Visiting Task Force recommendations to Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) regarding the **implementation of Medicaid coverage for home visiting services**, established by the Health Care and Human Service Reform Act (HB 158)
- Approval of Illinois' state plan under the federal Family First Prevention Services Act through the Illinois Department of Children & Family Services Home Visiting Steering Committee, clearing the way for **expansion of home visiting services for intact families involved in the child welfare system**
- Hiring of **two new state-level positions dedicated to home visiting services** of the Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Early Childhood (IDHS-DEC)
- Disbursement of nearly **\$11.3 million in state and federal dollars to 32 home visiting programs**, including five new applicants, through the IDHS-DEC Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) process



Legislation

- Ongoing advocacy for **federal reauthorization of the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program**, introduced in Fiscal Year 2023 (FY 2023) as the Jackie Walorski Maternal and Child Home Visiting Reauthorization Act of 2022 (H.R. 8876) with bipartisan support



Local, State & Federal Budgets

- Commitment of **\$54.4 million (10%) increase, including \$13.6 million specifically for prenatal-to-age 3 programs**, to the Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG), which funds preschool, evidence-based home visiting and center-based infant-toddler programs and services
- Approval of a **6% increase, or \$1 million**, to the Illinois Department of Human Services' **evidence-based home visiting services**, the first new investment in these programs in nearly two decades
- Allocation of federal COVID-19 relief funds to support **increased salaries for home visitors** with the Maternal Child Home Visiting program (formerly Parents Too Soon)



Public Awareness & Engagement

- Continued **collaboration across stakeholder roundtables**, including the Home Visiting Task Force, the Illinois Association for Infant Mental Health and the Healthy Families Illinois Program Committee
- **Outreach and informational sessions** on MIECHV reauthorization and **advocacy to stakeholder groups**, including an early childhood collaborative in Peoria, *We, the Village* coalition and Healthy Families Illinois leadership
- Inclusion of **iGrow Illinois in the web and television content** for Illinois Cares for Kids, the statewide early learning and care enrollment campaign
- Completion of **statewide surveys of caregivers and providers** to better understand stakeholders' program needs, with over 260 responses



POLICY PRIORITY: HIGH-QUALITY EARLY LEARNING

Accessible Family- and Center-based Early Learning & Care



Administration & Implementation

- Implementation of **Fiscal Year 2022 (FY 2022) policy changes to the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)**, including increased reimbursement rates, reduced family copayments, increased income eligibility, a one-time payment to the child care workforce (“hero pay”) and further extension of child care eligibility for job search activities
- Advocacy for **FY 2023 policy changes to CCAP**, including increased rates, increased income levels for entry and exit eligibility, essentially no-cost child care for child care staff who are eligible for CCAP, elimination of copays for homeless families and continuation of job search time period



Legislation

- Passage of Public Act 102-912 (HB 1571), creating the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) **Off-Hours Child Care Program Fund** to help first responders and other workers identify and access off-hours, night or sleep time child care, including capital and operating expenses
- Passage of Public Act 102-926 (HB 4242), extending **automatic CCAP eligibility for parenting youth in foster care** and families in the Illinois Department of Children & Family Services’ (DCFS) Extended Family Support Program; also requires DCFS to reimburse child care providers at the same rates paid by IDHS



Local, State & Federal Budgets

- Commitment of **10% budget increase** to the Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) for FY 2023, including \$13.6 million specifically for prenatal-to-age 3 services, to **expand access and improve workforce compensation**
- Commitment of **5% cost-of-living adjustment** for the infant/toddler child care workforce
- Investment of **\$100 million** for the Early Childhood Construction Grant (ECCG) program to **improve child care facilities**, with specific emphasis on infant/toddler programs
- Allocation of **50% of all new investments** to the IDHS Strengthen and Grow Child Care Grants dedicated to increased **workforce compensation and development**
- Application of federal COVID-19 relief funds to provide **dedicated inclusion supports** to child care providers
- Extension of Child Care Restoration Grants in the amount of **\$60 million**
- Appropriation of **\$2 million** for the IDHS **Off-Hours Child Care Program Fund**

(Accessible Family- and Center-based Early Learning & Care Accomplishments continued on the next page.)





POLICY PRIORITY: HIGH-QUALITY EARLY LEARNING

Accessible Family- and Center-based Early Learning & Care (continued)



Public Awareness & Engagement

- Production and release of the **Infant & Toddler Child Care Roadmap**, which includes seven provider-informed recommendations to improve families' access to high-quality infant/toddler child care
- Survey of child care providers for **input on DCFS background check policy changes** and proposed recommended next steps
- Launch of Illinois Cares for Kids, a **\$12.7 million statewide campaign** to help increase early learning and care enrollment

POLICY PRIORITY: HIGH-QUALITY EARLY LEARNING

Optimized Early Intervention



Administration & Implementation

- Implementation of Public Act 102-209 (SB 820), **extending Early Intervention services** for children turning age 3 with summer birthdays, reaching nearly **2,300 children**
- Ongoing **Early Intervention system transformation efforts** focused on workforce compensation, caseloads and equitable access to services
- Advocacy for implementation of **modified service delivery sites**



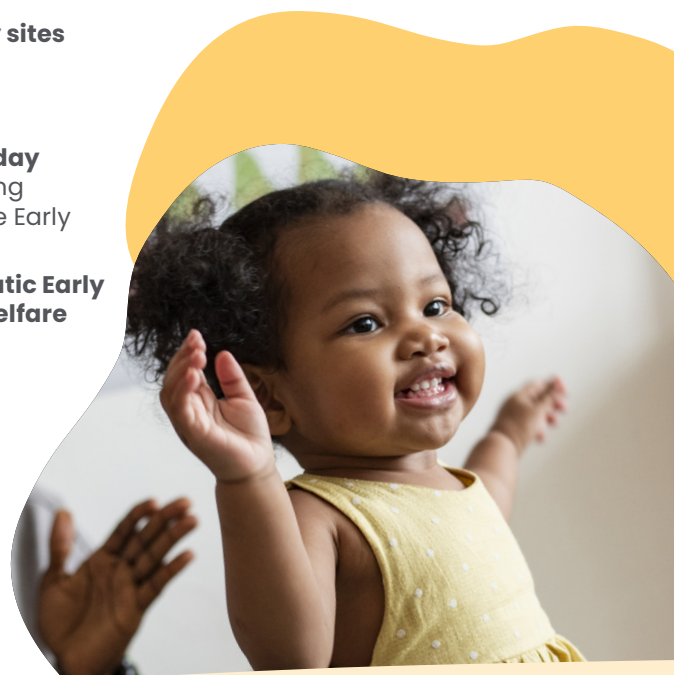
Legislation

- Passage of Public Act 102-962 (HB 4999), codifying the **30-day timeline for Early Intervention service delivery** and creating greater transparency for families and accountability for the Early Intervention system
- Passage of Public Act 102-926 (HB 4242), extending **automatic Early Intervention eligibility for children involved in the child welfare system**



Local, State & Federal Budgets

- Investment of **\$7 million increase** for Early Intervention services, restoring a previous cut to the program and ensuring a 3% rate increase for providers and service coordinators



2022 Accomplishments on Behalf of Expecting Families, Infants & Toddlers



POLICY PRIORITY: FINANCIALLY SECURE FAMILIES

Family-friendly Work Policies & Income Supports for Families



Administration & Implementation

- Full implementation of the **City of Chicago Fair Workweek Ordinance**, ensuring that covered workers cannot be forced to work hours for which they didn't receive 14 days notice and predictability pay
- Expansion of the **City of Chicago's paid parental leave policy** to 12 weeks for both the birthing or non-birthing parent, with a projected impact of **32,000 city employees** in Fiscal Year 2023 (FY 2023)
- Ongoing support for inclusion of extended **job search as a criterion for Child Care Assistance Program eligibility**, anticipated through FY 2023

Legislation



- Passage of Public Act 102-700 (SB 157), expanding **Earned Income Credit (EIC) eligibility** for priority populations, providing an income boost to EIC recipients, and offering cash relief for most families statewide
- The Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program Act (HB 5029), although not yet passed, garnered over **300 witness slips** in support, compared with five witness slips in opposition
- Passage of Public Act 102-1050 (SB 3120), **expanding the Child Bereavement Leave Act** to cover additional family members, as well as to cover miscarriages, unsuccessful fertility treatments, failed adoptions or surrogacy agreements, a negative pregnancy or fertility diagnosis or a stillbirth

Local, State & Federal Budgets



- Investments of **\$42 million for the Cook County Guaranteed Income Pilot** and **\$31.5 million for the Chicago Resilient Communities Pilot**, with a projected combined reach of **8,250 residents**—many of whom have young children
- Allocation of **\$20 million in Job Training and Economic Development funds** through the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity that can be used for child care and family-related emergencies
- Appropriation of **\$2.5 million in seed deposits for child savings accounts** for every child born or adopted starting in calendar year 2023, fulfilling Public Act 101-466 (HB 2237)

Public Awareness & Engagement



- Local **outreach and engagement efforts** to key early childhood partners to encourage families to access available tax credits, including the Child Tax Credit
- Completion of **preliminary research report** by the Greater Chicago Food Depository to address statewide barriers to families' enrollment in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)





POLICY PRIORITY: STRONG INFRASTRUCTURE

Cross-system Preparation, Professional Development & Support



Administration & Implementation

- Implementation of the **English as a Second Language (ESL) & Bilingual Credential** through the Illinois Gateways to Opportunity network
- Successful advocacy for infant/toddler child care staff who hold or earn the **Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential** to receive six college credits, with full implementation by Fiscal Year 2024 (FY 2024)
- State waiver of the application fee for Gateways credentials with additional Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five (PDG B-5) funds, leading to an **increase in applicants for the Infant Toddler Credential**
- Continued administration of the **ExceleRate Child Care Center Pilot**, funded through PDG B-5, demonstrating a successful model for increasing workforce compensation and credentialing
- Launch of **Birth to Five Illinois Action Councils**, structured specifically to incorporate workforce voice in the decision-making process
- With PDG B-5 funding, the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development and the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies led the development of a **virtual reality-based Prior Learning Assessment** in which students can demonstrate Early Childhood Education Level 2 competencies and receive college credit for them



Legislation

- Passage of the Student Debt Assistance Act (SB 3032), **prohibiting the withholding of academic transcripts** by any institution of higher learning from a current or former student because the student owes a debt to the institution
- Passage of the Human Services Professional Loan Repayment Program Act (SB 3925), providing **loan repayment assistance** to human services professionals working in a community-based agency that contracts with or is grant-funded by a state agency
- Creation of the Holistic Mental Health Care for Youth in Care Task Force (HB 4306), which will make recommendations regarding **mental health and wellness services provided to youth in foster care**, including services for infants and toddlers

(Cross-system Preparation, Professional Development & Support Accomplishments continued on the next page.)



2022 Accomplishments on Behalf of Expecting Families, Infants & Toddlers



POLICY PRIORITY: STRONG INFRASTRUCTURE

Cross-system Preparation, Professional Development & Support (continued)



Local, State & Federal Budgets

- Advocacy to ensure increased allocations for **infant/toddler workforce compensation** as part of overall appropriations to the Early Childhood Block Grant and Early Intervention and home visiting programs
- Allocation of **\$110 million** in federal COVID-19 relief funds for the **Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity (ECACE)**
- Application of federal COVID-19 relief funds to **grow the Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Database** to include 107 consultants in all 102 counties, increasing access to mental health supports statewide
- Leveraging of the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER II) to hire **26 new infant/early childhood mental health consultants** for the Illinois Department of Human Services Caregiver Connections program



Public Awareness & Engagement

- Promotion of **infant/toddler workforce pipeline scholarships** through ECACE, with an increase in applications and over 1,000 students pursuing higher education opportunities



Strong State & Community Structures



Administration & Implementation

- Establishment and implementation of **Birth to Five Illinois Action Councils and Family Councils** through the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies
- Creation of the **Early Childhood Transformation Team** to continue advancing the recommendations from the Illinois Commission on Equitable Early Childhood Education and Care Funding
- Launch of the **Chicago Early Childhood Integrated Data System** to integrate data systems across services in the City of Chicago
- Establishment of **Early Learning Council committees** to support early childhood systems building efforts



Public Awareness & Engagement

- Promotion of Birth to Five Illinois and **recruitment of diverse stakeholders** as members of Birth to Five Illinois' community-level Action Councils and Family Councils