



**POLICY PRIORITY: HIGH-QUALITY EARLY LEARNING**

# Accessible Family- and Center-based Early Learning & Care



## Administration & Implementation

- Implementation of Public Act 102-926, which **codifies the extension of automatic Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) eligibility for parenting youth in foster care and families in the Department of Children & Family Services (DCFS) Extending Family Support Program**, as well as provider reimbursement rate equivalency
- Ongoing administration of the Early Childhood Construction Grant (ECCG) to provide capital **improvements to infant/toddler child care facilities**
- Development and implementation of the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) **apprenticeship program for child care providers**
- Advocate for IDHS's **child care contracting model** to incentivize the creation of additional infant/toddler slots and inclusion of children with disabilities
- Implement the **early childhood workforce salary scale** developed by the Center for Early Learning Funding Equity (CELFE)
- Continued development of DCFS's **background check portal**
- Inform administrative changes to **address challenges of DCFS' child care licensing processes**



## Legislation

- Explore the possibility of **expanding CCAP income eligibility threshold** through new legislation



## Local, State & Federal Budgets

- Advocate for a **20% increase (\$82.1 million)** in Fiscal Year 2024 (FY 2024) state funding to CCAP, with a significant portion supporting programs that serve infants and toddlers



## Public Awareness & Engagement

- Increase CCAP uptake of **families experiencing homelessness**
- Convene family child care providers to identify resource barriers for making **non-capital facilities improvements to family child care homes**
- Convene parents and providers for **multiple engagement and advocacy opportunities** throughout the year



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**Optimized Early Intervention**



**Administration & Implementation**

- Implement the **Modified Service Delivery Pilot**
- Inform launch of a new **Early Intervention data management system**
- Advocate for implementation of **actions urged by the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus** in the Early Education Act, focused on:
  - Increasing the number of **children under age 1** receiving Early Intervention services
  - Addressing **racial disparities for children on wait list** to receive Early Intervention services
  - Increasing engagement of **children experiencing homelessness and/or are involved in child welfare** to receive Early Intervention services
- Track implementation of passed legislation to ensure **equitable access for those affected by reforms**, which include telehealth coverage, extended services for children who turn age 3 during summer, adherence to a 30-day timeline for service delivery and informing families of their rights



**Local, State & Federal Budgets**

- Advocate for a **20% increase (\$23.2 million)** in FY 2024 state funding for the state's Early Intervention program, paired with a **sizeable rate increase** for providers and service coordinators



**Public Awareness & Engagement**

- Increase **direct communication between providers, families, IDHS Bureau of Early Intervention and state legislators** to support active engagement and awareness in improving the Early Intervention system and families' ability to advocate for their children
- Improve **public awareness** on Early Intervention referrals, access timelines and complaint processes - targeting families and potential referral sources, including pediatricians, home visitors, Early Head Start and child care personnel

