



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

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



## Local, State & Federal Budgets

- Commitment of a **41.4% increase (\$170M) in FY 2024 to the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) for child care system investments**, including:
  - ◊ \$40M to expand the Child Care Assistance Program, meet growing caseload demands, and modernize the Child Care Management System
  - ◊ \$130M to increase wages for early childhood educators through the creation of the Smart Start Child Care Workforce Compensation Contracts program
- Commitment of a 12.5% increase (\$18.75M) in FY 2024 to the Prevention Initiative set-aside in the Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG), to fund and expand center-based infant-toddler child care slots
- Commitment of \$2M in FY 2024 to the Off-Hours Child Care Program, to help first responders and third shift workers identify and access child care during nontraditional work hours



## Legislation

- Passage of the FY 2024 Budget Implementation Act (HB 3817; Pub. Act 103-8), **making permanent the income threshold of 225% of the federal poverty level for eligibility to participate in the Child Care Assistance Program**
- **Testimony from numerous Coalition supporters, including three Family Leaders and two rural Family Child Care providers**, before joint committees of the Illinois General Assembly in support of Smart Start's proposed investments



## Administration & Implementation

- Award of **\$4.38M in FY 2023 for Prevention Initiative center-based programs** to serve infants and toddlers
- Submission of formal recommendations on behalf of the Coalition to ISBE to **inform the development of the FY 2024 ECBG Request for Proposals and improve Prevention Initiative's center-based child care model**
- Establishment of the **ECBG Family Child Care Model** for FY 2024, creating a pathway for home-based providers to receive a new funding stream for their programs
- Inclusion of an **increased award amount for infant-toddler classrooms** in the proposed **Smart Start Transition Grants**, beginning in FY 2024
- **Federal issuance of Executive Order 14095** to increase access to affordable and high-quality early care and learning by, in part, making **changes to the Child Care and Development Block Grant program**



## Public Awareness & Engagement

- Engagement of **300+ parents, providers, and other advocates for a public all-Coalition event**, "Child Care: Correcting Perception by Acknowledging Impact," highlighting the recommendations from the Infant and Toddler Child Care Roadmap
- Launch of the Coalition's **Family Child Care Provider Committee** with equitable representation from educators across the state, to explore challenges in quality improvement, facilities, and access to resources

# 2023 Accomplishments

## on Behalf of Expecting Families, Infants & Toddlers



### POLICY PRIORITY: HIGH-QUALITY EARLY LEARNING

## Optimized Early Intervention



#### Local, State & Federal Budgets

- Commitment of a **34.5% increase (\$40M) in FY 2024 to the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Early Intervention (EI) program** to increase reimbursement rates by 10% for providers and service coordinators, address service coordination challenges, and accommodate growing caseloads



#### Legislation

- Passage of HR 86 and SR 36, requesting the **allocation of a portion of the state's opioid lawsuit settlement funds to EI**
- **Testimony from numerous Coalition supporters, including a Family Leader**, before a joint committee of the Illinois General Assembly in support of increased funding for EI



#### Administration & Implementation

- Award of **\$200K from the federal Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5)** for the IDHS Bureau of Intervention to conduct multi-state research on EI models to inform future improvements to service delivery and workforce supports
- Finalization of contract to develop a **new data management system** to improve EI data collection, tracking, and reporting
- Implementation of **strategies to address existing disparities in EI access for underserved populations** identified in the Education and Workforce Equity Act (HB 2170; Pub. Act 101-654):
  - ◊ The Illinois Interagency Council on Early Intervention's Equity and Access Workgroup developed and gained approval of recommendations for proposed demonstration sites that would **pilot modifications to EI service delivery** to better meet the needs of families with complex needs
  - ◊ The divisions of neonatology at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital, Northwestern Prentice Women's Hospital, University of Chicago Hospital, and the University of Illinois at Chicago Hospital, and EI providers collaborated to launch Project INITIATE, a **NICU-to-Home service delivery model** that seeks to seamlessly transition high-risk, Medicaid-eligible infants to home-based services immediately after NICU discharge and follows them through the process to begin EI services



#### Public Awareness & Engagement

- Collection of **100+ family testimonials** about the impact of EI through the Coalition's "Babies Can't Wait" campaign
- Participation by **50+ people in 2 bilingual "know your rights" workshops** for families experiencing service delivery delays, organized by the Coalition, Equip for Equality, Start Early, COFI, and the Illinois EI Clearinghouse
- Convening of **2 family town halls** co-hosted by the EI Bureau and the Illinois EI Clearinghouse
- Completion of a **statewide survey of pediatricians' engagement with the EI program**, conducted by the Illinois Chapter of the American Association of Pediatrics
- Release of the **Center for Equity and Excellence Early Intervention Equity Pilot report** by the EI Training Program and EI Bureau with recommendations to address disparities in access, participation, and support
- Launch of the **EI Parent Leadership Training Program** by the Illinois EI Clearinghouse, focusing on training parents on advocacy skills, EI principles, and leadership opportunities
- Formation of the **Illinois EI Grassroots Alliance**, which obtained **nearly 3,000 signatories** on a petition advocating for greater state investment in EI