



POLICY PRIORITY: STRONG INFRASTRUCTURE

Cross-system Preparation, Professional Development & Support and Strong State & Community Structures



Local, State & Federal Budgets

- Advocate for **state investment in FY 2025 to sustain the Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity (ECACE) scholarship program** once federal American Rescue Plan Act funds are exhausted
- Advocate to ensure that any **changes to governance and funding for early childhood regional infrastructure** do not draw resources away from programs that serve expecting families, infants, or toddlers



Legislation

- Support the passage of legislation establishing a **new state early childhood agency** and partner with the transition team on effective design and implementation



Administration & Implementation

- Advance opportunities to **leverage the ECACE program to expand degree pathways for students interested in working with infants and toddlers**, so as to strengthen the infant-toddler educator pipeline
- Sustain, strengthen, and expand workforce **utilization of Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (I/ECMHC) services** and identify additional opportunities to improve accessibility
- Advance identified recommendations from the **Illinois I/ECMHC equity analysis**
- Collaborate with the Governor's staff, state agency leaders, and the Early Learning Council to continue developing and advancing recommendations to improve delivery of prenatal-to-three services and supports through **integration and alignment of functions of regional intermediaries**



Public Awareness & Engagement

- Complete an **Illinois I/ECMHC equity analysis**
- Elevate and disseminate the **I/ECMHC public awareness campaign materials** to diverse audiences statewide
- Uplift the **Birth to Five Illinois Early Childhood Regional Needs Assessments**, identifying key trends related to the needs of expecting families, infants, and toddlers
- Increase awareness of the **Illinois Cares for Kids web portal** as a tool for collaborative referrals across family-serving systems

