

**Grow, strengthen the state's early care and education system through an FY23 budget that increases appropriations for core early childhood programs by 10% above FY22 levels.**

- **Increases, at a minimum, funding for the Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) by \$54.4 million**, with a significant portion of these funds to be used for increased workforce compensation. A 10% increase would allow ISBE to raise salaries for infant/toddler teachers in center-based programs (\$10 million); home visitors working in the Prevention Initiative program (\$10.7 million); and Preschool for All (PFA) teachers working in child care centers (\$7-\$13 million). Additional FY23 funding should prioritize quality improvements over program expansion.
- **Increases, at a minimum, funding for the Early Intervention (EI) program by \$10.9 million.** State GRF for the EI program was cut by \$7.0 million in the FY22 budget. Referrals into the program have rebounded significantly since the state's COVID-19 vaccine program rollout, meaning the statewide caseload will continue to increase over the coming months. Additional funds would allow IDHS to improve provider reimbursement rates (\$5-\$7 million); conduct public awareness campaigns for families and providers, support the implementation of telehealth; decrease caseloads and increase salaries for service coordinators; and support innovative service delivery models, like those included in the Early Education Act (325 ILCS 21).
- **Increases, at a minimum, funding for voluntary home visiting programs (Parents Too Soon, Healthy Families —Department of Human Services) by \$1.7 million.** These budget lines have not received an increased appropriation in well over a decade. Additional funds should be used move wages for home visitors closer to the state's recommended salary levels. Remaining funds could also be used to expand program access, particularly prenatal services.
- **Increases, at a minimum, funding for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) by \$41.1 million.** State GRF for the CCAP program was cut by \$20.0 million in the FY22 budget. The Pritzker administration and the ILGA directed considerable federal relief funds to the child care system over the last two years. Those federal dollars are temporary, unfortunately. Additional state funding should be used to extend child care assistance to child care staff and to increase funding to support outreach efforts, among other policy initiatives.

**Support legislation to codify into law existing timelines for the initiation of EI services.** Current Illinois law provides no timeline for the implementation of EI services following the development of an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). We support legislation that places the state's timeline into law, making clear for families that EI services must be initiated no later than 30 calendar days from when parental consent for the IFSP is received.

- HB4999 (Gabel)

**Support legislation to expand eligibility to CCAP and EI for kids involved in the child welfare system.** DCFS oversees the provision of child care for youth in care without the support of our state's child care infrastructure at IDHS. Moving this function to IDHS would improve the experience for providers and families. In addition, too many infants and toddlers involved in the child welfare system aren't reached by current EI enrollment efforts.

- HA1 to HB4242 (Collins) and SA1 and SA2 to SB3734 (Morrison)

**Support legislation to create the Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program.** Robust paid family leave polices afford parents the opportunity in the first weeks of life to focus on their role as a parent and on the well-being of their child, particularly when affordable, quality infant care is in low supply and licensed child care is not available until a baby is 6 weeks old.

- SB835 (Villivalam)