

Tips for Writing and/or Delivering Testimony

at ISBE's Fiscal Year 2025 (FY 2025) Budget Hearings

General Tips:

1. Oral testimony is being limited to three (3) minutes per person.
2. These notes are meant as a guide. Please be sure to personalize your own testimony with your own perspective.
3. Compose your testimony with an introduction, early childhood needs, the \$75 million increase budget ask and conclusion.
4. Integrate your own voice as much as possible, for variety and authenticity!

Introduction:

- *I would like to thank the Board for the opportunity to speak to you today about the FY25 budget.*
- *I'm a (parent, teacher, early childhood provider, etc.). I would like to address supports for our state's youngest learners — and how ISBE can meet their needs.*
- *Early childhood is important to me because _____.*

Early Childhood Needs and Budget Ask:

Talk about immediate needs, specific to the next Illinois state budget (FY 2025):

- *We are appreciative of the State Board's support for early childhood programs over the years. The block grant funds services for children prenatal to age five in schools and community-based programs.*
- *Unfortunately, we're still not close to equitably meeting the needs of kids and families across the state.*
- *We are asking ISBE to include in its FY25 budget proposal, at a minimum, a \$75 million increase for the Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG).*
- *We would also like to ask ISBE to continue and grow the \$5 million investment started in FY24 to improve inclusion supports for children with disabilities and developmental delays, particularly children in child care, Head Start or other community-based programs.*
- *It's important these new resources both expand and strengthen our programs. ISBE should prioritize the following needs for the \$75 million investment:*
 - *Reducing inequities in salaries experienced by current educators working for programs operated by community-based organizations, and those working with infants and toddlers.*
 - *Expanding more half-day preschool slots into full-day slots and directing a higher percentage of funding to these settings and to 0-3 services. Our preschool learners and their families benefit from a full-day of learning and infants and toddlers in center-based care deserve a wealth of resources and supports.*
 - *Ensuring programs have the supports and capacity to meet the diverse learning needs of young children.*

Additional Recommendations:

No need to include all of these points; pick and choose what feels right to you.

- *We need to commit far more resources and attention to early childhood, a system that helps our state's young children to enter school prepared for success.*
- *We need to improve our systems of equitably allocating early childhood funding with an eye toward reaching children in priority populations. Key to this is having transparent, data-informed funding decisions.*
- *As we work to respond to the challenges in the early childhood field, we also need to keep in mind the big picture of our state's system of early care and education – a system that includes not only the State Board and its Early Childhood Block Grant, but other state agencies, programs, and funding streams.*
- *The Governor's Funding Commission report should be the map that will lead us to an improved early care and education system for all.*

Conclusion:

- *The early years of a child's life are incredibly crucial and grounding. It is important that we invest money into programs that will support their optimal growth.*
- *We hope ISBE will act boldly when putting together its FY25 budget request and focus their attention on how we can best help young children's development in the coming years.*
- *Thank you for your consideration.*

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