



Early Childhood Advocacy Day (ECAD) Talking Points for Advocates

The following talking points are intended to help early childhood advocates speak with their legislators about Illinois funding needs. Please feel free to focus on any of the budget requests that are most important to you!

General Early Childhood

- Early childhood education and child care is vital for Illinois! Early childhood development lays the foundation for future academic success, social skills, and emotional well-being.
- Every dollar invested in high-quality early childhood education (ages birth to 5) for children from underserved communities delivers a bigger annual return on investment than preschool alone.
 - 10% Return on Investment for Preschool alone.
 - 13% Return on Investment for High-Quality Early Childhood Education.
- Research consistently shows that investments in early childhood education yield significant long-term benefits, including higher graduation rates, college attendance and higher lifetime earnings.

Legislator Ask: As a constituent, I urge you to consider the impact that early childhood programs have on the lives of children and families in your district and support full funding of early childhood education and child care programs in Illinois.

FY25 Early Childhood Budget

- Governor Pritzker's proposed FY25 budget includes important funding boosts for preschool, child care, and home visiting programs but underfunds Early Intervention (EI) and the Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity (ECACE), risking harm to Illinois' early childhood education and child care sectors.
- [SB3914/](#)[HB5782](#) are appropriations bills that support the governor's proposed budget and add additional funds for EI.

Legislator Ask: Will you support the Governor's proposed FY25 early childhood budget, with additional funding for EI and ECACE?

Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity (ECACE)

- The Governor's proposed \$5 million for ECACE would dramatically reduce the number of teachers who are receiving scholarships in order to be able to obtain their degree and serve the children we know need access to these critical services.
- These funds have made life changing impacts for hundreds of childcare providers who would not have otherwise been able to return to school and finish their degree. I strongly urge you to support \$60 million in new state funding for ECACE to continue the program in its current form.

Legislator Ask: Will you support restoring ECACE funds to \$60 million so that the program can continue in its current form?

Early Intervention (EI) Program

- Governor Pritzker's proposal for a \$6 million increase in the EI program falls significantly short of the \$40 million needed to ensure that infants and toddlers are getting timely services to which they are legally entitled.
- The number of families waiting for these services has doubled over the past 2 years and this is unacceptable. These delays are primarily due to provider shortages as a result of stagnant rates.

Legislator Ask: Will you support a \$40m increase for EI, ensure families and early intervention providers get what they need to succeed!



Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG)

- Governor Pritzker's proposed \$75 million increase to the Early Childhood Block Grant will establish 5,000 full and half day pre-k slots, invest in the home visiting workforce and increase the numbers of infants and toddlers being served through the prevention initiative.

Legislator Ask: Will you support Illinois' youngest children by supporting a \$75 million increase for the ECBG to expand preschool and infant/toddler services?

Child Care

- The Governor proposed a \$158.5 million increase in child care funding. This vital investment in Illinois families not only supports children in obtaining quality learning environments but also allows parents to work without concern for their children's care.
- These funds must be directed towards developing the Smart Start Workforce Compensation Grants to better compensate early childhood staff, expanding the Child Care Assistance Program to meet growing needs, and providing more support for child care teachers and assistants.

Legislator Ask: Will you support Illinois families by supporting \$158.5 million for child care?

Early Childhood Home Visiting Programs

- Governor Pritzker's proposed \$5 million for Home Visiting Programs will play a pivotal role in creating new opportunities for families.
- Home Visiting Program funding will enable the creation of 500-650 new slots and provide existing grantees with the means to increase compensation for home visitors and staff, ensuring quality and continuity in these vital programs.

Legislator Ask: Will you support the Illinois early childhood communities that need the most by supporting \$5 million for Home Visiting Programs?

Department of Early Childhood Act:

- Governor Pritzker has proposed the creation of a new unified early childhood state agency and has included in his proposed budget an initial investment of \$13.2 million in the Department of Early Childhood for FY25. This is a critical step towards streamlining early childhood services in Illinois.
- A well-structured department will improve the experiences of both families and programs, ensuring more efficient and effective delivery of early childhood education.

Legislator Ask: Will you support the new Department of Early Childhood Act ([SBI/HS5451](#)) AND would you like to be added as a bill co-sponsor AND will you support the proposed \$13.2 million for the creation of the agency?

Questions? Contact Us.

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