

SB3914/HB5782: Increase Funding for Early Childhood in FY25

Governor Pritzker demonstrated his continued commitment to young children and their families by proposing an FY25 state budget that includes funding increases for preschool, child care, Early Intervention, and evidence-based home visiting programs as part of his multi-year Smart Start Illinois initiative. He also asked the General Assembly to appropriate funding to establish the creation of the Department of Early Childhood, pending legislative approval this spring.

We support **SB3914** and **HB5782**, bills that include the governor's FY25 requests and additional funding for the Early Intervention (EI) program. Record levels of service delays continue to plague the program, delays linked inextricably to a shrinking workforce. \$40 million is needed to increase provider reimbursement rates in FY25

Department of Early Childhood

\$13.2M initial investment (included in Governor's budget proposal) ↗

The administration asked for \$13.2 million for staffing and operations support to start the Department of Early Childhood. We agree with the administration that, if done well, a consolidated early childhood state agency will improve the experiences for families and programs alike.

Early Childhood Block Grant (ISBE)

\$75 million increase (11.1%) ↗
(included in the Governor's budget proposal)

The administration intends to use new funding to establish 5,000 additional preschool slots and enhance the Prevention Initiative (PI) program. Advocates are calling for a focus on prioritizing full-day services for priority populations, bolstering support for the early childhood workforce, especially in infant and toddler care, and directing investments towards enhancing PI program quality.

Child Care (IDHS)

\$158.5 million increase (27.2%) ↗
(included in Governor's budget proposal)

Child care is paramount for the well-being of families. Investments in child care services provide children with supportive learning environments to thrive while their parents are at work. With the additional funding, IDHS could:

- Further develop and fund the Smart Start Workforce Compensation Grants to increase compensation for early childhood staff
- Accommodate the growing Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) caseload for FY25
- Expand CCAP for child care teachers and teacher assistants/aides

Home Visiting Programs (IDHS)

\$5 million increase (21.8%) ↗
(included in Governor's budget proposal)

With new funding, the administration plans to create 500-650 new slots and to increase funding to existing grantees so programs can raise compensation for home visitors and staff.

Early Intervention (IDHS)

\$40 million increase (25.7%) ↗
(only \$6.0 million increase included in governor's budget proposal)

Families are experiencing service delays at unprecedented levels. Service delays are largely caused by provider shortages. A significant percentage of providers have indicated they would leave the program if additional rate increases are not approved in FY25.

