

## Strengthen Early Care & Childhood Services in the FY2020 Budget

High-quality early childhood resources are essential for children and families to have the best possible long-term outcomes. To that end, advocates for young children's care and learning request the next state budget include the following priorities – several of which are reflected in Governor Pritzker's own, FY20 recommendations:

- **A \$100 million increase to ISBE's Early Childhood Block Grant**, as proposed by the Governor. There is a strong demand statewide and a need to commit to strengthening the quality of early childhood programs. This includes providing more full-school-day classrooms, more comprehensive services for children who need them, and movement toward best practices for at-risk infants and toddlers. Such an increase will ensure more children, ages birth to 5, are able to participate in high-quality early learning programs that meet their families' needs.
- **A \$30 million increase to the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)** in the DHS budget, as recommended by the Governor. Increasing CCAP appropriations is necessary to expand eligibility from 185% FPL to 200% FPL. Despite full eligibility restoration from deep cuts more than a year ago, the program still is serving 40,000 fewer children than before. The current statewide caseload should not be accepted as a new normal, ignoring working families' actual needs.
- **Increased funding for voluntary home-visiting programs** (Parents Too Soon and Healthy Families budget lines - DHS) to allow those programs to continue to recover from the budget impasse, supporting "coaching" for the parents of at-risk infants and toddlers.
- **A \$7 million increase for Early Intervention** (DHS) services for infants and toddlers with developmental delays and disabilities, per the Governor's proposal. This would better respond to their need for services and help support a pay increase to early intervention providers who have not had a rate increase in 11 years.
- **\$250 million in capital funding for new, improved early childhood facilities.** To ensure our most vulnerable infants, toddlers and preschoolers receive the best care, we must maintain high-quality physical environments. Our early childhood system cannot accommodate growth in programs if we don't invest in physical infrastructure and capital funds are the best mechanism through which to do this – building on the precedent set in the 2009 capital plan.

We must continue to invest in these indispensable programs to give children the best chance at success in school and in life. We believe the proposed budget is a step in the right direction and look forward to working with the General Assembly to move the work forward.

### For more information, please contact:

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