

For immediate release: 12.16.19

Contact:

[Adam Summers](#), IAFC

773.564.8801

EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVOCATES SUPPORT IL COMMISSION ON EQUITABLE FUNDING FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

We applaud Governor Pritzker for his commitment to young children and their families, as demonstrated by the launching of the Illinois Commission on Equitable Funding for Early Childhood Education and Care.

As longtime advocates for the education and healthy development of infants, toddlers and preschoolers, we greatly appreciate the recent investments made by the Pritzker administration and the General Assembly to improve early childhood services for kids and families across Illinois, investments that are key to securing the state's future. We also welcome the formation of this Commission, which holds the potential to imagine and then help Illinois implement new and innovative strategies to grow and strengthen the education, health and well-being of children through the state's early care and education system. We stand ready to support the Commission's efforts.

As is the case in many other states, the Illinois early childhood system is complex, with several agencies administering a myriad of funding streams to different types of public and private providers. Even with the state's longstanding and significant commitment to these services, our current efforts fall short of providing the investments necessary to best support and care for our young children and their families.

We urge the Funding Commission to confront three major challenges facing our early childhood system, relating to:

- **Adequacy:** Even with investments from both the state and federal government, the Illinois early childhood system is dramatically underfunded. Too many children are left unserved. There are major gaps in funding quality care and education programs, which we know lead to school readiness. Additionally, the workforce is greatly underpaid as compared to other similar professions. We urge the Commission to ensure full funding of high-quality care and early learning.
- **Equity:** Far too many kids living in underserved communities, particularly children of color, lack access to high-quality early learning supports. Similarly, some areas of rural Illinois still face troubling service gaps. We must prioritize meeting the needs of children of color, low-income and rural children with increased access to high-quality early learning supports.
- **Stability and transparency:** Early childhood funding is complex, and the burden to make sense of it often falls to providers and families. We urge the Commission to establish a system that provides greater financial stability and accountability to ensure funding is meeting the needs of children. Currently, funding unpredictability for providers and families fuels uncertainty and a lack of confidence in the system.

We are committed to helping see this work through, for the good of young children, families and communities throughout Illinois.

Erickson Institute, Fight Crime Invest In Kids, Illinois Action for Children, Latino Policy Forum, Mission Ready, The Ounce of Prevention, Ready Nation, Shriver Center for Poverty Law, Voices for Illinois Children

###