



## Critical priorities for children in FY 2012

Two years of deep budget cuts and a high stack of unpaid bills have wreaked havoc on many of Illinois' most vital public services. Paying most dearly for these troubles are children, families and communities who depend on these most basic supports – from schools and health care to mental health and after-school programs, among other crucial human services.

We can do better, and we must. The recent approval of significant new state revenues represents a critical step toward more balance and responsibility in solving Illinois' considerable fiscal challenges. These new resources will help begin to return our state – over the course of several years – to more sound fiscal footing. It's also important we strengthen this work by continuing to determine strategic spending restraints. Together, we can start to stabilize the most important of state investments in children, families, and our collective future – research-proven efforts that help people in need today, and often save money tomorrow.

Below are listed some of those vital investments. In each case, [Voices for Illinois Children](#) urges state leaders to

- **Protect these services from further cuts and payment delays,**
- **Pay the bills they're already owed and restore the cuts they've already sustained, and**
- **Put our state back on track toward filling children's most basic needs, represented in these and other services.**

<i>Priority</i>	<i>Supports</i>	<i>FY 2011 adopted budget (GRF only)</i>	<i>2-year change from FY2009*</i>	<i>Comments</i>
<b>Early Childhood Block Grant Programs</b>	Preschool services for 3- and 4-year-olds; developmental services for at-risk infants and toddlers	\$342.2 million in ISBE	<b>\$38.1 million cut (10 percent)</b>	About 5,000 children lost preschool services due to cuts and unpaid bills in FY 2010; in FY 2011, payment delays were largely responsible for program closures that stripped preK services from more than 2,600 kids and took birth-to-3 services from about 10,000 even younger, at-risk children across the state
<b>Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership initiatives</b>	Prevention, early intervention and treatment services to strengthen kids' social and emotional well-being	\$1.6 million in ISBE \$2.38 million in DHS**	<b>\$1.4 million cut (46 percent)</b> <b>\$558,600 cut (19 percent)</b>	About one in 10 Illinois children suffers from a mental illness severe enough to cause impairment – yet up to 80 percent of children and youth who need mental health services do not receive them. Budget cuts and delays mean we're falling shorter of meeting needs

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<b>Home-visiting programs</b>	Healthy Families Illinois (HFI) & Parents Too Soon (PTS): “Parent-coaching” for new moms and dads of at-risk children from birth to age 3	\$10.1 million for HFI in DHS**  \$6.9 million for PTS in DHS**	<b>\$1.1 million cut (10 percent)</b>  <b>\$771,100 cut (10 percent)</b>	Home-visiting programs reach less than 5 percent of the at-risk infants and toddlers who need help to ensure their optimal growth and safety – needs that can increase dramatically during times of economic stress on their families
<b>Child care assistance</b>	State-assisted child care for low-income, working parents – an integral part of many children’s early learning experiences	\$620 million in DHS**	<b>\$21 million cut (3 percent)</b>	Thousands of parents depend on child care as a job support, providing a dependable, affordable place for their children to learn while mom and dad are at work. But those parents already must brace for April 2011 increases in their co-pay fees for care, due to the loss of some federal funding. Further cuts would unduly add to these pressures
<b>Teen REACH after-school programs</b>	Help with homework, enrichment activities and healthy alternatives to the streets for children outside school hours	\$15.7 million in DHS**	<b>\$4.6 million cut (21.7 percent)</b>	More children and youths will be left to risky behaviors – including violence, alcohol and drug abuse – during “prime time for juvenile crime.” These behaviors carry an enormous cost to teens – and to society as a whole
<b>Bilingual education</b>	Second-language educational help for 190,000 children, for whom English is not the first language	\$63.4 million in ISBE	<b>\$12.3 million cut (16 percent)</b>	A growing population of English-language learners is too often left to struggle without the help they need to thrive inside and outside the classroom – with local schools left to pick-up many of the costs

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<b>Early Intervention</b>	For children birth to 3 with diagnosed developmental delays; provides therapies, counseling, social work and other services	\$69.1 million in DHS**	<b>\$10 million cut (12.6 percent)</b>	Budget cuts and unpaid bills mean more young children go undiagnosed and untreated for developmental delays or disabilities until they enter school – despite research showing early childhood is the most effective and important time to intervene in such challenges
<b>Mental health – community services</b>	Mental health services for both children and adults; many of the adults in question are parents, whose conditions affect entire families	\$231 million in DHS**	<b>\$116.9 million cut (33.6 percent)</b>	The Governor’s budget proposal for FY 2011 had forecast dire consequences: At least 4,200 non-Medicaid children were projected to lose mental health services, as well as at least 70,000 adults. Non-Medicaid, community-based services were to be slashed, and capacity grants significantly reduced

**IMPORTANT NOTES**

**\* Figures reflect only budget cuts, and do not take into account the effects of long payment delays and unpaid bills that are often as or even more harmful to vital services**

**\*\* Preliminary budget details are given for most DHS programs; final FY 12 details for that department remained unavailable in January 2011 – meaning service cuts could run even more deeply than reflected here**

**For more information, please visit Voices online at [www.voices4kids.org](http://www.voices4kids.org) or contact:**

- Policy Director Sean Noble (312-516-5566 or [snoble@voices4kids.org](mailto:snoble@voices4kids.org))
- Assistant Policy Director Kelley Talbot (312-516-5572 or [ktalbot@voices4kids.org](mailto:ktalbot@voices4kids.org))
- Policy Outreach Director Dawn Melchiorre (312-516-5557, [dmelchiorre@voices4kids.org](mailto:dmelchiorre@voices4kids.org))

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