



BUILDING BETTER LIVES

Early Learning Talking Points

Use these talking points to advocate for measures that support Illinois' youngest learners and to ensure that they get the best possible start in learning and life—recognizing that protecting the well-being of children should be our state's top priority.

- Illinois has become a national leader in early childhood education. We've worked hard to **invest wisely in a wide range of programs** to meet the needs and wishes of parents who want help ensuring their young children get the best possible start in learning and life.
- Our efforts reflect years of research demonstrating that early education **improves children's learning and strengthens our future workforce**—and brings a return of up to \$7 for every \$1 invested in high-quality early learning efforts.
- It's important that policymakers **avoid painful budget cuts** that have been proposed in services crucial to young children's learning and development. These include:
 - **Child care** for working families
 - "Parent-coaching" programs (such as **Healthy Families Illinois and Parents Too Soon**)
 - **Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership** priorities
- State leaders should **bolster preschool and developmental services** for at-risk infants and toddlers, by growing the Early Childhood Block Grant.
- Young children can't afford for us to roll back progress toward helping them enter kindergarten ready for success; they won't get a second chance. We should maintain and strengthen our investments in young children's learning by **raising the new revenues that are necessary** through an income tax increase that includes fairness protections for low- and middle-income families.