

Provide Families With Equal Access to Quality Child Care

Adjust reimbursement rates and expand the availability of high-quality programs

The Problem

Low reimbursement rates negatively impact a program's ability to provide high-quality services. Research tells us that the quality and stability of child care is largely determined by the rate paid to providers delivering the care. Despite some progress since 2005, the reimbursement rate paid to providers is still not adequate to provide high-quality, stable care for the children of Illinois' low-income working parents. As a result, the system falls short of meeting the needs of children and families.

A low and outdated rate is causing center-based programs to take drastic steps. Many programs are reducing quality, eliminating staff, no longer caring for low-income children, or closing their child care programs altogether due to rising costs for essentials such as heat, staff, and supplies. The CCAP is designed to help parents work, and it does. However, we know Illinois is falling short of ensuring that all child care is of high quality. We must, and can do better.

The Solutions:

Provide a 3% Cost of Living Adjustment to center-based child care providers, on par with the increase family child care providers will receive in FY09.

Improve quality care for children in child care by investing in the Quality Counts: Quality Rating System.

Background

Illinois' Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) helps approximately 100,000 low-income families pay for child care so parents can work and children can learn.

Approximately 50 percent of these children are cared for in community-based child care centers as one of the variety of options parents have that fits with their life and work realities.

Providers caring for children in the CCAP are reimbursed by the state to provide these services. In 2006, the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) entered into a collective bargaining agreement with SEIU local 880, who represents home-based child care providers. The agreement provides Family Child Care Providers investments in a quality rating system, access to health insurance, and a series of rate increases to support quality and access, over the course of the three-year contract.

Center-based providers are not included in this agreement, but they have received fairly apportioned rate increases on schedule with family child care providers in order to maintain parents' options for care. Without parity, families choosing center-based child care lose out.

For more information:

Sean Noble,
**Voices for
Illinois
Children**
(312) 502-5566

Ireta Gasner,
**Ounce of
Prevention
Fund**
(312) 922-3863

Sessy Nyman,
**Illinois Action
for Children**
(773) 315-1309

Dan Lesser,
**Shriver Center
on Poverty
Law**
(312) 368-2005

Maricela Garcia,
**Latinos
United**
(773) 209-8967