



ILLINOIS

Pat Quinn, Governor

DEPARTMENT OF CENTRAL MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Malcolm Weems, Acting Director

January 2011

The Honorable Pat Quinn  
Governor of Illinois  
207 State House  
Springfield, Illinois 62706

Dear Governor Quinn:

I am pleased to submit the 2011 Annual Report on State Employees' Child Care Centers. Working parents are faced with the challenging task of finding quality child care at an affordable cost. The State of Illinois is demonstrating its commitment to the care of employees' children through the operation of two on-site child care centers located in Chicago and Springfield. Each of these centers provides a valuable service and benefit to state employees.

The State of Illinois remains committed to its employees by helping them meet their child care needs. The state will strive to provide employees with the most innovative and high-quality work environment possible.

Sincerely,

Malcolm Weems  
Acting Director



## **2011 Annual Report on State Employee Child Care Centers**

### **Overview**

Pursuant to 30 ILCS 590, known as the State Agency Employees Child Care Services Act, the Department of Central Management Services may authorize state agencies to contract for the provision of child care services for its employees. To that end, the State of Illinois presently operates two on-site child care centers, one located in Chicago and one in Springfield, as evidence of its commitment to provide a valuable service and benefit to state employees.

### **State of Illinois Child Development Center**

The State of Illinois Child Development Center, located in the Michael A. Bilandic Building, 160 N. LaSalle Street, Chicago, Illinois, celebrated its 19<sup>th</sup> successful year in September 2011. Early Child Care Services, Inc., Stacy Olszewski, Director, manages the Center. The Center was accredited in 2010 for the fourth time with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC); this accreditation will expire in 2013. Ms. Olszewski has also received her director's credential from NAEYC.

There are three full-time teachers in each of the four classrooms and an additional small classroom with one teacher and six five-year-old children. Children ages two through five are provided full-time care with priority enrollment given to children of state employees. The Center has been running at near capacity since 2001. When there is space available, the Center provides care on a day-to-day basis for children who are not enrolled full-time in the center and a primary care giver is unavailable. The center prides itself with very low turnover of teachers with the average length of employment of five years for lead teachers. Four out of five lead teachers have bachelor's degrees in Early Childhood Education.

In 2004, the Center began providing care for six and seven-year-old students with a cultural summer program. The children are able to take full advantage of the museums, libraries and special events located in the Chicago area. The summer program has proven to be a huge success as parents are offered high quality summer child care that includes fun and educational opportunities for their children.

The Center offers spacious classrooms, a separate Discovery Room designed by Kohl Museum, and a large outdoor playground located on the deck of the 21<sup>st</sup> floor of the Bilandic Building. The Center is staffed by dedicated and highly qualified early childhood teachers who provide a developmentally appropriate curriculum in a safe and nurturing environment. The innovative curriculum, based on the belief that children learn through play, includes whole language, math their way, science, social studies, art, music, movement, and computers. The children grow and develop socially, emotionally, cognitively, and physically during their time in the Center.

In 2008, the Center became part of the Chicago Public Schools in the Community Partnership Program which has enabled the Center to:

1. Increase the employees' salaries based on their educational qualifications;
2. Financially assist Center employees to earn bachelor's degrees; and
3. Increase training opportunities for the staff.

By taking advantage of the program's opportunities to better educate, train, and compensate the Center's employees, the Center's children and parents are afforded higher quality child care and education.

### **Bright Horizons Child Care Center, Department of Revenue**

Bright Horizons celebrated its 17<sup>th</sup> year at the Department of Revenue with the Director and Toddler Teacher, Tracy Tisckos, also celebrating her 17<sup>th</sup> year. The staff consists of six full time teachers who either have associate's degrees or bachelor's degrees, and they continue to strive to make this program strong.

Bright Horizons has long viewed its responsibility to ensure that the children they care for have all the benefits of a curriculum that incorporates activities and programs focused on healthy habits and overall well-being. This is evidenced through their Well Aware and Movement Matters programs; however, this year, the Center's commitment to healthy children and families was further strengthened by joining First Lady Michelle Obama's *Let's Move* campaign. The Center has always provided healthy menus but is working to improve them further for the health of the children. Furthermore, programs including Yoga are in place to help the children recognize the importance of exercise and body/mind health.

Another initiative implemented at Bright Horizons is Jr. Kindergarten full circle. The Jr. K room came about when the Center added the infant room and decreased the preschool openings. The classroom space left vacant was then dedicated to a room for the children who were in their last year of the program before kindergarten. The educational focus is on *Math Counts*, *Language Works*, *Science Rocks* and *Art Smart* daily. This August, the addition of Spanish words to the curriculum coupled with word

families and sight word learning has provided an even stronger curriculum. While the Center has always had a great success rate for the students entering the public/private schools, the compliments received regarding this new dedicated classroom have been overwhelming.

The Center has had a long-standing relationship with community service, and this year and the upcoming year will be no different. The Jr. Kindergarten is working on helping others, and starting in December 2011, the children will collect coins to buy *Toys for Tots*. In 2012, the children will continue with the community service by hosting a project each month of the year.

With the Center's renewed commitment to excellence for all ages, the Center instituted new trainings for staff. The toddler teachers have been attending trainings on this unique age group. The Center is ensuring that the teachers are working with the parents of the infants to ease the transition of their little ones into child care. The staff attended training for *Teaching Strategies Gold*, a new web-based assessment and portfolio for parents. The program allows the parents to access their child's work at home.

By taking advantage of the opportunities to better educate and train the Center's employees, the Center's children and parents are afforded higher quality child care and education.

### **Dependent Care Assistance Program**

State of Illinois employees can pay for the care of their dependent children with tax-free dollars by utilizing flexible spending accounts. Employees may set aside up to \$5,000 annually through payroll deduction for this purpose.

The Illinois Department of Central Management Services reports strong employee participation since the program's inception in 1987. In calendar year 2011, 1,621 employees statewide participated in the program with contributions totaling \$6,308,945.99.

### **Flexible Work Schedules**

The Illinois Personnel Code was amended in July 1992 to be in compliance with Public Act 87-552. The Act requires each department to develop a plan of flexible work schedules designed to reduce the need for employees to find child care outside the home and to help balance time spent with family and work. A 2011 review of the plans submitted biennially by each agency to the Illinois Department of Central Management Services and the Illinois General Assembly indicate that all agencies are offering flexible work schedules to assist employees in meeting child care needs.