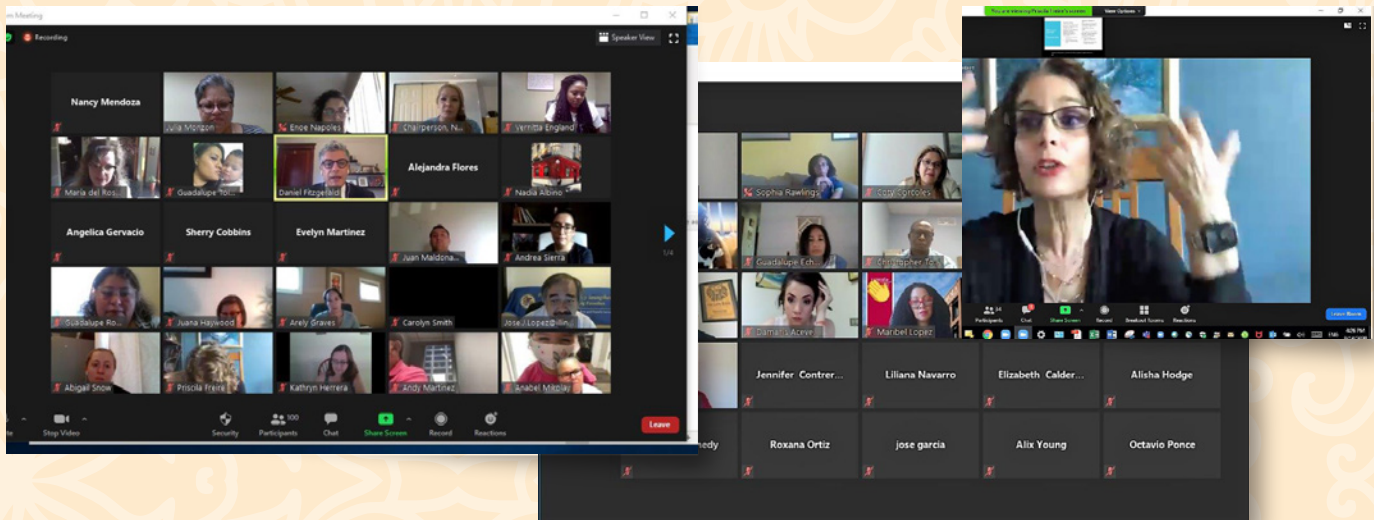




Celebrating the 4th Annual LAC Professional Development Day



August 2020, Latino Advisory Council members and participants met safely online during the COVID-19 pandemic.



GREETINGS AND SALUTATIONS!

I'm so excited to be serving as the Chairperson of the Latino Advisory Council this year. Even in a world that has drastically changed and has presented seemingly insurmountable obstacles I see hope all around me. I see it in the sun that shines and in the rain that pours. I see it in the faces of all of us as we doggedly go forth with grit and determination to make a difference in the lives of the children and families we serve. Many of us have experienced loss: material, emotional, spiritual and physical. I do not know of one person who has not been touched by some degree by the pandemic and yet here we are, ready to do our jobs. Ready to fight the good fight for social justice, for inclusion of all people and for meaningful services to alleviate the burden of stress and strengthen the families in our communities even as we do the same for own families.

I feel proud and privileged to stand among you!

Con Cariño,

Julia Monzón, LCSW

2021 LAC Chairperson

Congratulations to the Winners

The LAC 2020 Latino Institute Award Winners are:

SONIA A. ZUNIGA
CELESTE PEÑA AWARD WINNER

ALEJANDRO VALDEZ
DCFS OUTSTANDING EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

**MARISOL MOMBELA,
VILMA LOPEZ**
POS OUTSTANDING EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR

MERCEDES RAMOS
DCFS OUTSTANDING SUPPORT STAFF OF THE YEAR

DESTINEE MELTON
POS OUTSTANDING SUPPORT STAFF OF THE YEAR

**TERRANCE WYNNE,
FLOR ARGUETA FUENTES**
POS OUTSTANDING YOUTH OF THE YEAR

LUZ & OMAR DIAZ
POS OUTSTANDING FOSTER PARENTS OF THE YEAR



LAC MEMBERSHIP

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julia.monzon@illinois.gov

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Nancy Rodríguez
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Co-Scribes
Vanessa Castro
Daizy Salgado

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Olivia Chavez
Coty Corcoles
José R. García
Sydnie Juárez
Juan Maldonado
Evelyn Martínez
Azalea Mejía
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Beatriz Ramírez
Liliana Romero

POS Members:

Patricia Aguilar
Jennifer Contreras
Dennis Delgado

Director's Liason:

José J. López
Office of Latino Services

Committees:

Child Safety & Permanency
Community Risk Reduction & Staffing
Data Validity & Disproportionality
Strategic Communications
POS Committee
Latino Family Institute
Professional Development Day

Contact Julia Monzón at
julia.monzon@illinois.gov
if interested in becoming a member.

Mental health and basketball event for youth in care

By Jennifer Contreras

Mental Health and Basketball was an event put together by treatment advocate Elia Qasim. The idea came about due to his youth enjoying basketball and wanting to hang around with other youth their age. Elia brought the idea to the other treatment advocates of our foster care program who then decided to work together to make it a great event for the youth.

The main purpose of the event was to allow the youth to have fun in a safe environment but also to focus on their mental health. The goal was to gather diverse youth with different backgrounds so that they could come together and meet new people. Mental health is



something that is very important for the youth and the treatment advocates pride themselves in helping the youth reach those mental health goals that they have set for themselves.

Mental Health Advocate Paxton Collins chose Jackie Robinson Park in Chicago for the event venue. Melvetta Buckley, Charlene Carter and Donisha Plair created a menu for food and drinks. Elia designed a mental health activity for the youth. Youth were very respectful to the treatment advocates. They were able to engage and communicate with each treatment advocate on a new level that would not have been possible without this event. A total of 13 youth attended and we received positive reviews with youth reporting in the post event survey that they would like to do it again with even more youth to have fun with.

Learn more: 773-526-3349

www.nyap.org

Get to know Casa Central

*Information provided
by Connie Esparza*

Casa Central is one of the largest Hispanic social service agencies in the Midwest. Since 1954, Casa Central has delivered evidenced based, award winning programming in response to the needs of the Hispanic community. Through comprehensive, family-centered programming, Casa Central is the conduit through which thousands of individuals build hope for the future while equipping themselves to achieve a sustainable, higher quality of life for the benefit of self, family, community and society. Casa Central delivers an innovative spectrum of services, strengthening families and supporting growth at every stage, from children to seniors.

info@casacentral.org



Preventing expulsion of children



P.A. 100-0105: Preventing Expulsion of Children Birth to Five – Frequently Asked Questions

What does Public Act 100-0105 do? P.A. 100-0105 prohibits early care and education (ECE) providers from expelling young children (ages 0-5) from their program because of the child's behavior. Providers must take documented steps to address the child's behavioral and other needs in order to keep the child in care, and if ultimately necessary, providers can work with the family on a 'planned transition' to a more appropriate setting; this 'planned transition' process is not considered an expulsion. Providers also have to report data related to transitions. More specific guidelines will be clarified through the rulemaking process.

Who has to comply with this requirement? Effective January 2018, this applies to the following early childhood programs:

- School- and community-based programs receiving Early Childhood Block Grant funds (PFA, PI)
- Licensed child care providers serving children ages 0-5
- Note: Expulsions are already prohibited for Head Start and Early Head Start programs

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and State Board of Education (ISBE) will put forth administrative rules with uniform guidance and requirements to ensure continuity across programs.

What documentation is required? When a child shows consistently challenging behaviors, the ECE provider must document their efforts to address the child's needs and keep him or her in the program, including but not limited to:

- Initial observations of challenging behaviors
- Communication with the family, family's input in any intervention, and family consent for or refusal of services
- Plan for addressing issues with the child, including resources/services/interventions contacted and used
- If and how the child is transitioned out of program (in situations where this is determined to be most appropriate)

What resources are available to help me address children's needs and behaviors? How do I find them?

Resources are available to help providers address the needs of a specific child and support the healthy development of all children in their program. Resources include:

- **Developmental and social emotional screenings for the child**
 - More information: [ExceleRate Illinois](#); [Child Find Project](#)
- **Consultation services from an infant/toddler specialist or infant/early childhood mental health consultant**
 - Contact: [Child Care Resource & Referral agency](#) or [ISBE](#)
- **Referrals to Early Intervention (0-3) or Early Childhood Special Education (3-5)**
 - Referral forms and information: [Early Intervention Clearinghouse](#); [ExceleRate Illinois](#)
- **Professional development trainings and other resources**
 - [CCR&R](#), [Gateways to Opportunity](#), [Early Intervention Training Program](#), [Early Choices](#), [STARnet](#)
- **Consultation with child's primary care physician**

Some resources may require parental consent. What if the parent does not consent to services? Providers should document when they talk to families about interventions and services, and whether or not the family agreed to services. If the family does not consent, and the provider is unable to effectively care for the child without those interventions, the provider may start the 'planned transition' process. At enrollment into the ECE program, it is important for providers to tell families about the program's discipline policy, including what steps they will take and resources they will use to address the child's needs. This helps families know what resources are available and how the family can get the services if they need them.

I requested a mental health consultant, but there is a long wait time before the visit. What do I do? Providers should document that they made a request and how long until the consultant can visit. In the meantime,

Preventing expulsion of children

providers should try to get other resources, if available, and keep working with the family. If the provider decides they are unable to wait for the consultant's visit, they may start the 'planned transition' process.

I referred a child to EI and/or Special Education, but they did not qualify for services. What do I do? Providers should document the referral and any result. They should also work to ensure that parents are aware of their right to appeal a decision if they have concerns. Providers should also work to engage other available resources, including but not limited to, a local health department, the child's pediatrician, a mental health consultant, a local mental health provider, or the Child Care Resource and Referral Agency.

What is a planned transition? If the provider has tried many times to use all available resources and has come to a decision that keeping the child in the program is not in the best interest of the child or the child's peers, the provider should work with the family to transition the child out of the program. Providers should work with families to find a more appropriate setting by making referrals to other programs. If possible, the provider should work with the new provider to help plan a smooth transition.

Where will children be transitioned to? What if there is not another program available? ECE providers should offer referrals to other early childhood settings in the community, and work with families to identify the best setting for the child. If the family (with provider's help) does not identify an alternative center or home provider, the intent is not to require the current provider to continue caring for the child. The provider should still document their efforts to work with the family on the transition.

What if the child is an immediate threat to the safety of him/herself or others? In the case of serious safety threat, the child may be temporarily removed from the group setting. Providers should document the incident, and work with the family and available resources to return the child to a group setting as soon as possible. If the provider's professional judgment is to transition the child out of the program, they should start the process.

What is a temporary removal? The state agencies may choose to specify these terms in the administrative rules, but the legislation does not explicitly define temporary removals or where children should go. The intent is to allow providers to use their discretion based on the situation at hand. Therefore, temporary removal can be a range of things, such as taking a break from the classroom or being sent home. However, best practice is that any intervention be developmentally appropriate and the goal is for the child to return to the group setting as quickly as possible.

How will this new law be enforced? The monitoring process for licensed child care and ISBE-funded early childhood programs will be decided by DCFS, ISBE, and other state agencies, including the Office of Early Childhood Development. The state agencies are working together to develop these specifics through administrative rule. When the proposed rules are posted, providers and all those interested may submit public comments to weigh in on the proposed rules, including any specifics on enforcement.

How will data be collected? DCFS and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) are currently working on the process for providers to report data related to this new law. The legislation called for reporting to begin July 2018; providers should look for further guidance from state agencies coming soon.

The Latino Advisory Council is always looking for new members and writers for *Noticias*.

Please drop us a line if you're passionate about providing bilingual services for participants and staff that make a difference!

Contact: julia.monzon@illinois.gov



A safe place for unaccompanied minors



by Jennifer M. Contreras

La Jornada, is a new initiative sponsored by the National Youth Advocate Program under the Office of Refugees and Resettlement (ORR). The goal of the “La Jornada” program is to reunify unaccompanied minors with their families or identified sponsors. The “La Jornada” office in Chicago has been working on the recruitment of resource parents for unaccompanied minors since August 2019.

Miriam Mojica has been part of the program since it launched in 2019 and is the recruiter, licensing manager and PRIDE trainer for the Chicagoland area. Miriam retired from DCFS in 2017 after 37 years of service with the Department of Children and Family Services. Miriam has been placement caseworker, foster care licensing, day care licensing, placement supervisor, clinical manager and lastly as the Cook Region recruitment & resource supervisor. She also served as field instructor at Chicago State University and Governor State University.

Miriam has seen a lot of positive change and success within the program since 2019 and she continues to strive to ensure that most, if not all, unaccompanied children are successfully placed with resource parents.

As a resource recruiter, Miriam conducts monthly orientation presentations to prospective resource parents. Since it’s inception through November of 2020, Miriam and the “La Jornada” team have licensed 22 Spanish speaking and bilingual resource parents. The team has licensed 25 homes and the process is ongoing.

Currently, several recruitment efforts are scheduled within the Latino community including other organizations and broadcasting agencies.

The program has successfully reunified 73 unaccompanied minors. The success of these reunifications has stemmed from offering meaningful services such as education, therapeutic–individual and group therapy, before and after school care, food and medical follow up as needed to unaccompanied minors in the center. COVID testing and quarantine is also conducted at the center.

The “La Jornada” program is different from the DCFS & POS foster care programs as all, if not most children are considered specialized based on the trauma of separation from parents and caregivers at the border, poor health due to lack of previous medical attention, behavior issues, PTSD, domestic violence, human trafficking and a lack of resources such as food, shelter and care in their country of origin.

The challenge of retaining “La Jornada” resource parents is due to the intensity of the program and maintaining daily attendance for the children at the center. The ongoing trainings are also demanding for the resource parents as they have to

La
JORNADA

FIND THEM HOMES.
THE NEED IS URGENT.

**NATIONAL YOUTH
ADVOCATE PROGRAM**

Caring for People. Connecting Communities. Promoting Peace

meet the State of Illinois licensure policies as well as Refugees and Resettlement (ORR) policies.

The families that have taken the steps to complete licensures and allow the unaccompanied minors into their homes have testified how rewarding it is to have the children under their care and to provide them a safe and stable environment.

The children also feel a sense of peace and show their appreciation to their resource parents by displaying affection on a daily basis and making cards to thank them for their love and care.

The “La Jornada” program is the hub of the Chicago location and Miriam and the staff at the “La Jornada,” will continue to work hard to recruit and license homes and to ensure that the children have a safe center to go to daily to receive necessary service and the end of the day they have a safe environment to go home to and rest their heads.

Learn more:

Miriam Mojica: 312-508-3116
www.nyap.org

Upcoming Latino events

DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION	ORGANIZER/CONTACT
AUG 20-22	6 pm	5th Anniversary Ruido Fest	Union Park -Pilsen	Union Park -Pilsen
AUG 21	10 am	Back to School Fair	McKinley Park	Alderman George Cardenas
AUG 21	12 pm	Little Village Back to School	Saucedo School	Jesus Garcia/Marshall Square Resource Network
AUG 22	12 pm	Little Village Back to School	Piotrowski Park	Jesus Garcia/Marshall Square Resource Network
AUG 27	11 am	Vaccine and Community Health Fair	1915-17 W Roosevelt Rd, Broadview, IL	HAS
AUG 27-29	12 pm	Milwaukee Mexican Festival	Lakefront Park, Milwaukee, WI	City of Milwaukee
AUG 28	10 am	Back to School Health Fair	Jose De Diego Community Center 2300 W Potomac Ave Chicago, IL	Senator Aquino
OCT 8	8:30 am	IAHSE Conference	TBD	Illinois Association of Hispanic State Employees

'Work for Illinois' website redesign

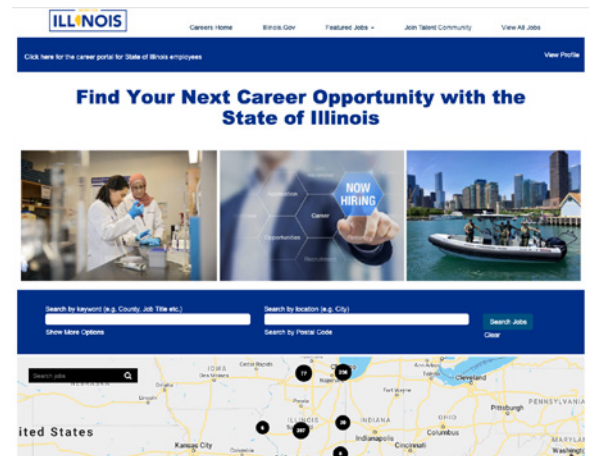
By Julia Monzon

The new Work for Illinois website has a user-friendly landing page and a special portal for State of Illinois employees. The days of the CMS 100 job application and 110B promotional application are almost gone for good.

The new website allows you to enter everything online into an employee or applicant profile. You can also upload your resume. If your resume follows a logical sequence of positions and dates the application will automatically populate into the job experience section or you can do it yourself or modify the download.

It's a good idea to make sure that your job experience sections are detailed and comprehensive because when you actually fill out a job application, you are only allowed 200 characters to answer the questions.

Check it out here <https://illinois.jobs2web.com>



Office of Education and Transition Services virtual office hours

By Vanessa Castro

The Office of Education and Transition Services (OETS) is offering virtual office hours for school aged and post-secondary students. Case managers can speak to OETS staff live for answers to educational questions for youth in care.

School Aged: Preschool – 12th grade

VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS

Tuesdays and Wednesdays 10 a.m. to noon

To join, click here: <https://illinois.webex.com/illinois/j.php?MTID=mf6c1722d5322ca2cef644b68833e7e2f>

Meeting number (access code): 133 900 0032

Meeting password: xiZ5jhsJ7m9

Note: All sessions will be recorded for training purposes and to identify trends and data collection.

Post-Secondary Education

For information about the Education and Training Voucher Program (ETV), the Youth in College Program/Placement (YIC), the DCFS Scholarship, tuition waivers and more.

VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS

Tuesdays – 10 a.m. to noon (Pat Palmer, post sec. specialist)

Wednesdays – 3 to 5 p.m. (Laura Gutierrez, post sec. specialist)

To Join the meeting, click here:

<https://illinois.webex.com/illinois/j.php?MTID=m32c4e7e619de1abc0a9950ce1ff6f02c>

Meeting number (access code): 133 558 6730

Meeting password: KJvuU7jk7g2

Service Milestones

Congratulations

5 YEARS OF SERVICE

- Deisy Anaya, Chicago
- Gladys Boyt-Lopez, DeKalb
- Mariella Callegas, Maywood
- Juan Calvillo, Chicago
- Vanessa Flores, Maywood
- Narciso Mendoza, Danville
- David Muñoz, Deerfield
- Enrique Pimentel, Chicago
- Octavio Ponce, Chicago
- Jhomarie Ramos, Chicago
- Mercedes Ramos, Chicago
- Eulalia Rodríguez, Aurora
- Maribel Rodríguez, Chicago
- Sylvia Torres-Stephens, Chicago
- Marcelita Vargas, Chicago

10 YEARS OF SERVICE

- Hector García-González, Aurora
- Darcie Hernández, Aurora
- Sydnie Juárez, Maywood
- Theresa Reyes, Waukegan

15 YEARS OF SERVICE

- Miranda Arenibar, Woodstock

20 YEARS OF SERVICE

- Hermie Bautista, Lincoln
- Denise Flores, Ottawa
- Domillie García, Deerfield
- Emma González, Chicago
- Andrew Martínez, Chicago
- Yanira Sánchez, Chicago
- Desiree Silva (*separated*)

25 YEARS OF SERVICE

- Deborah Folga, Maywood
- Ana González, Chicago

30 YEARS OF SERVICE

- Rosamaria Molina-LaSalle, Maywood
- Maritza Rosario, Chicago

40 YEARS OF SERVICE!

- Hector Avilés, Chicago

To move forward...believe that

- Any policy, any perception, and any system can change. All are created by us...it can be dismantled and re-envisioned **by us**
- Hope is not a strategy - Be proactive and have a plan

– Goutham M. Menon, Ph.D., MA., MBA,
Dean of Social Work, Loyola University



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Printed by Authority of the State of Illinois
DCFS #000 • Aug 2021 • 000 copies • rev 8/24/2021



NOTICIAS is

brought to you by the Illinois Department of Children and Family

Services and the Latino Advisory Council. It is distributed to DCFS employees, POS agencies and agencies affiliated with DCFS. The newsletter includes articles pertinent to child welfare, Latino welfare issues and DCFS/POS programs, and strives to be an informative source for staff by providing updates on new child welfare initiatives as well as upcoming events.

It is our hope to continue providing staff with a vehicle for the sharing of information. A major part of this endeavor is you! We are asking for your input, submission of articles and suggestions for improving Noticias. Articles related to your experiences with families and personal stories are also greatly appreciated.

Please submit articles, information about incoming events or news to: Julia Camacho Monzón, Strategic Communications Committee Chair julia.monzon@illinois.gov
1911 S. Indiana Ave. Chicago, IL 60616

Or to any of the Strategic Communication Committee members:

Julia Camacho Monzón, Editor, Chair; José J. López, Final Editor; Deborah López, Co-Chair; Vanessa Castro, Scribe and Contributing Writer; Evelyn Martinez, Sidney Juárez, and Juanita Calderon, contributing writers and editors.

If you would like more information or would like to participate in one of the LAC subcommittees, please contact Julia Monzón, 2021 LAC Chair at julia.monzon@illinois.gov or any LAC member.

Special thanks to:

Daniel L. Fitzgerald, Deputy Director, Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; José J. López, DCFS Office of Latino Services; Bert Tijerina, graphic designer, Office of Communications