

Early Childhood Educator Workforce Development

Vision

All Illinois children have access to high-quality early care and education services delivered by a qualified, valued, and supported workforce.

Project Goals

1. Build a pipeline to attract and retain qualified, diverse caregivers.
2. Provide pathways to create career opportunity and promote movement.
3. Enhance cross-system data collection, usage, and analytic capacity.

Project Strategies

- Expand access to coursework through dual credit and dual enrollment.
- Recommend including Gateways ECE Credentials as a way to meet DCFS job requirements.
- Strengthen the pathway to a Professional Educator License with endorsements.
- Develop and disseminate messaging to encourage students to enter the field.
- Analyze outcomes of education financial support.
- Promote policy changes to address compensation adequacy and parity.
- Improve data systems to inform workforce development efforts.

Project Accomplishments

- Integrated *Transforming the Illinois Early Childhood Workforce* into project strategies
- Analyzed outcomes of education reimbursements for educator candidates and developed guidance documents to support replication
- Received National Governors Association grant to improve compensation adequacy and parity
- Supported development of SB 1829 (PA 100-0645) and SB 3536 (PA 100-0822), laws that expand the pipeline of school-based early childhood educators and strengthen the pathway to career advancement for community-based early childhood educators.
- Supported publication of various ECE workforce reports

Project Membership

- *Lead Agency:* Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development
- *Other State Agencies:* Office of the Governor, Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), Department of Human Services (DHS), Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT), Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), Illinois School Board of Education (ISBE)
- *External Partners:* City Colleges of Chicago, City of Chicago, Heartland Community College, Illinois Action for Children, Illinois Head Start Association, Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, Latino Policy Forum, Lewis University, Lincoln Land Community College, National Louis University, Northern Illinois University, Ounce of Prevention Fund, SAL Family and Community Services, Southeastern Illinois College, University of Illinois at Chicago
- *Advisory Team:* Early Learning Council Quality Committee