



February 4, 2022

We, the Village Coalition Responds to Governor Pritzker's Proposed FY23 Budget

While Governor Pritzker maintains commitment to early childhood programs, more sustainable resources are needed.

This week, Governor Pritzker signaled support for the state's early childhood system by introducing a Fiscal Year 2023 budget proposal that includes a 10% increase in funding for the Early Childhood Block Grant (\$54 million), a priority of the We, the Village Coalition. We thank the governor for dedicating significant education funding to our youngest learners this year following two years of flat funding for the grant's birth to three and preschool services.

We also appreciate that the administration had previously expressed its commitment to supporting our state's early childhood workforce by directing one-time federal dollars to important initiatives such as the Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity and Strengthen and Grow Child Care Grants. We, the Village look forward to following these efforts in 2022 and beyond.

While we are grateful for the investments of the governor's proposed budget, we recognize the budget outline does not increase funding for other crucial early childhood programs, such as the Child Care Assistance Program, Early Intervention, and Evidence-Based Home Visiting Services. These programs will need further funding as well.

According to the Illinois Risk and Reach Report, children ages 0-5 make up 7 percent of the population (916,880 children); 19 percent are living below the 100% Federal Poverty Level with deep disparities among Black and Latinx children. At the same time funding remains

an issue: a 2021 report from the Governor's Early Childhood Funding Commission revealed the state is spending only \$2 billion of \$14 billion needed for a truly equitable, accessible, high-quality system of early care and education. We remain committed to reaching this goal, which would ensure that Illinois becomes the best state in the nation for raising young children.

We look forward to advocating further with Illinois policymakers for a 10% increase in resources for all key early childhood programs in the final FY23 state budget that will be approved this spring.

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We, the Village Coalition is a group of advocates, non-profit organizations, child care providers, school districts, parents and others who have come together to fight for the well-being of Illinois' youngest children. We seek adequate, equitable, sustainable, reliable funding for children's services from birth through age 5.

We want to ensure all children can access quality education and care, as their parents choose. We want resources to be invested in the children and communities that need it most, in order to eliminate racial, socio-economic, and other disparities. We are working together to make sure that ALL families and early childhood providers have the resources they need to help children succeed.