



## What Does Smart Start Illinois Mean for Families?

Smart Start Illinois represents an historic opportunity for families with children under five in the state. The plan, proposed by Governor Pritzker in February 2023, would **invest an initial \$250 million** in pre-K, child care, early intervention, and home visiting.

The investments include:

- **\$75 million more for the Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG)**, creating 5,000 new pre-K slots
- **\$130 million for Child Care Workforce Compensation Contracts** that will give child care providers stability and increase funding for wages
- **\$40 million for Early Intervention (EI) programs** to increase provider reimbursement rates
- **\$5 million for IDHS' Home Visiting Program (HV)** to serve an additional 500-650 families

Governor Pritzker's proposed budget for FY24 includes other important ECEC investments, including \$100 M for new and existing facilities, \$70 M for the Child Care Assistance Program, \$12 M in funding for scholarships for the child care workforce, and \$1.6 M for the Dolly Parton Imagination Library.

### How will Smart Start benefit early childhood professionals?

- Additional funds for ECBG will dramatically increase the supply of pre-K slots, making it easier for some families to access quality care.
- The Workforce Compensation Contracts will bring stable funding to child care programs, thereby decreasing turnover and increasing the quality and continuity of care in programs.
- Increased investments in EI will make it easier and faster for families with infants and children with developmental delays to get important services such as speech, developmental, physical, or occupational therapy, nutrition support, and others.
- Increased funding for HV will make it possible for more families to receive planned, regular visits from professionals who help improve child development, parenting skills, family health, and others.

### How can families take action?

- Send a letter to your lawmakers urging them to support Smart Start Illinois! Click [here](#).
- Become a #SmartStartNow Champion! Email We, the Village's Organizing Committee Co-Chair, Sinthu Ramalingam at [sramalingam@teachplus.org](mailto:sramalingam@teachplus.org) to learn how you can join other advocates in the fight for increased investments for child care!

Follow We, the Village on social media and help us raise awareness online! **#RightToCareIL**

**#SmartStartNow**   