



October 27, 2023

We, the Village Coalition Responds to Governor Pritzker's Proposal to Create a Unified State Agency for Early Childhood

The We, the Village (WTV) coalition applauds Governor J.B. Pritzker for signing Executive Order 2023-09 to Manage Preparation for the Consolidation of Early Childhood Education and Care Programs into a new state agency. This decision is an important step towards the realization of a new early childhood agency that can provide more streamlined, accessible and equitable early childhood education and care (ECEC) for families and providers in Illinois.

Additionally, WTV warmly congratulates Ann Whalen on her new role as the Early Childhood Transition Director and Bela Moté on her new role chairing the external advisory committee. We have no doubt that Ann and Bela will successfully facilitate the consolidation of the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), the Department of Children & Family Services (DCFS), and the Department of Human Services (DHS) early childhood work into this new agency, centering the needs of ECEC providers and families across Illinois.

WTV began as the Early Childhood Funding Coalition (ECFC), helping to bring family and provider voices to [Illinois Commission on Equitable Early Childhood Education and Care Funding \(Early Childhood Funding Commission\) recommendations](#) and has worked since that time to provide guidance on and advocate for the implementation of early childhood recommendations from the Early Childhood Funding Commission. WTV will continue to partner in the planning, development and implementation of this ECEC multi-agency consolidation work WTV urges Governor Pritzker, current ECEC agencies, and the new ECEC consolidation team to continue to center family and provider voices as they move forward in this endeavor. In addition to ensuring the inclusion of provider and family voice, WTV encourages the transition planning team to continue focus on the needs of the early childhood workforce, balancing the needs of public and community-based providers, and centering healthy child development and learning.

WTV believes that consolidating existing early childhood services into a single agency will increase access to resources and support for early childhood providers and families across Illinois. By centralizing and simplifying these efforts, we anticipate increased efficiency, coordination and effectiveness in the administration of early childhood programs for providers and families in the state. WTV also recognizes the importance of

implementing the Funding Commission's two additional recommendations of fully funding the ECEC system and coordinating systems to equitably and transparently distribute those funds. Together, these recommendations ensure the full, stable, transparent, and equitable funding needed to realize Governor Pritzker's vision of making Illinois the "best state in the nation for families raising young children."

WTV firmly advocates for prioritizing diversity and inclusivity in the decision-making processes aimed at improving early childhood education and childcare services. We believe it is crucial to ensure that a wide range of voices is represented at the decision-making table to foster comprehensive and equitable outcomes. With this in mind, we respectfully urge all involved in this transition to continue to recognize the invaluable input and experiences of early childhood providers and families as key stakeholders in this ongoing process. We stand firmly behind this initiative and are fully committed to supporting all transition efforts that will exponentially improve early childhood education and childcare services across the state. We appreciate the opportunity to collaborate with our colleagues and allies in the ECEC sector who will lead this transition. Through our continued partnership, we aim to ensure that the consolidation process is guided by the insights and experiences of the communities we represent from across the state.

Thank you, Governor Pritzker, for your continued leadership and commitment to the well-being of Illinois' youngest residents. We look forward to supporting the success of this endeavor and will continue to collaborate with the transition team in the pursuit of accessible, high-quality early childhood education and childcare services for all.

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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 five. 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.