

# **Pritzker Administration Provides \$156 Million in Grants to 4,686 Child Care and Early Childhood Providers Amidst Ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic**

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Springfield, Ill. — Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) today announced that over \$156 million in BIG funding has been provided to 4,686 child care providers across Illinois facing challenges as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The first round of funding helped child care centers and homes in

95 counties across the state. Forty-seven percent of the grant funds were awarded to childcare programs located in areas that have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

“Anyone who knows anything about what it takes to raise a family knows that without quality, affordable child care, there is no economic opportunity for working parents, and especially working mothers. That’s why – even in these incredibly difficult economic times – Illinois directed federal pandemic response dollars to helping child care providers operate in safer, smaller group sizes without needing to impose large tuition increases on families,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “To date, I’m proud to say that over half of that funding has already been distributed – including over \$65,000 to Christian Child Care. Remaining on track to become the best state in the nation to raise young children is achievable, even in these difficult times. Holding ourselves to the highest standards when it comes to our youngest children is vital to strengthening the social and economic fabric of our state and our nation.”

“Governor Pritzker clearly recognizes the importance of investing in childcare, teachers, our children and caregivers, which are a top priority as we work toward economic recovery and getting families back to work. I am humbled to think of all the children who will benefit from this latest round of BIG grants. Working in conjunction with DCEO, we are fully committed to help childcare businesses across the state get every dollar possible to help rebuild after an unimaginable pandemic,” said Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Secretary Grace Hou.

“Under the leadership of Governor Pritzker, Illinois has acted swiftly to provide businesses across the state with supports needed to offset their losses, prepare for a safe reopening and put our state economy back on track,” said Erin Guthrie, Director of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) “These latest BIG grants for childcare providers are crucial as Illinois works to reopen our state safely, and bring more of our residents back to work. Working in partnership with IDHS and businesses across the state, we will continue to leverage the equity framework provided through these programs to ensure that businesses from every community across our state have a shot at emergency relief dollars that will help them make ends meet.”

“Christian Child Care is a licensed, nationally accredited, ExceleRate Illinois Gold Quality center. Proudly, CCC has been serving Logan County for over 30 years. 2020 has been a different year. Operating under a pandemic has thrown everyone a curveball, but CCC continues to serve Logan County with best practices and supports early childhood education efforts. As a recipient of the Illinois Child Care Restoration Grant,

we are pleased to host the Governor as he shares information regarding the Child Care Restoration Grant, and how it has impacted child care and early childhood education overall,” said Libby Canady, Christian Child Care Program Director.

In addition to BIG funding, the administration is utilizing federal relief dollars to support early childhood programs. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) dedicated \$10 million of Governor Pritzker’s Emergency Education Relief Fund to early childhood education providers. The funding includes \$9 million for Early Childhood Block Grant programs in Illinois communities that have been most heavily impacted by the pandemic. Programs can use the additional resources to supply parents and families with hands-on home learning materials, purchase technology to support remote learning, purchase personal protective equipment, provide staff members with stipends to work beyond contractual hours, and support the implementation of remote home visiting services.

“Every educator will tell you that these early years are profoundly important to long-term outcomes for our children,” said State Superintendent of Education Dr. Carmen I. Ayala. “These dollars represent an investment not only in the families of our essential workers, but also in the healthy future of our communities.”

ISBE also granted \$450,792 to the Pyramid Model Consortium, which supports a framework of evidence-based practices for early childhood educators and caregivers to promote young children’s healthy social and emotional development; \$182,258 to increase the Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health consultant workforce; and \$370,000 to the University of Chicago Behavioral Insights and Parenting Lab to create a text messaging program to deliver educational prompts and reminders to parents whose children are enrolled in Preschool for All and Preschool for All – Expansion programs.

In accordance with the latest guidelines from the Illinois Department of Public Health, all childcare programs must operate at approximately 30% reduced capacity in Phases 3 & 4 of Governor Pritzker’s Restore Illinois plan to allow for social distancing. Governor Pritzker and the Illinois General Assembly directed a minimum of \$270 million of the state’s Coronavirus Urgent Remediation Emergency (CURE) Fund to support the economic health of child care providers as the Illinois economy begins to safely reopen. established the Child Care Restoration Grants program to help businesses