

CLAIM
Early Childhood Subcommittee

Legislative Focus for 2016:

The most urgent priority continues to be to urge state legislators to resolve Illinois' unprecedented budget impasse, using a holistic approach (instead of a piecemeal approach) that considers the impact on families with children and includes new revenues.

Informally, it has been said that Governor Rauner's proposed budget includes potential new funding for early childhood concerns. However, there are no revenues attached to the budget framework, making it hard to evaluate this proposed budget concept.

FYI: The Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development has a new, recently appointed Executive Director (Kelley Washington). Oak Park resident Kathy Stohr has been appointed Deputy Director. It might be worthwhile to contact Kathy Stohr for updated information about Governor Rauner's priorities.

Additionally, we can continue to monitor future developments in IL (DHS) Dept. of Human Services' previously proposed regional hub model for statewide Early Childhood System; the implications for District 97 unknown at this point.

Also of note: Speaker Madigan and the Democrats in the General Assembly should have a working supermajority in the next session of the General Assembly. (Representative Ken Dunkin, an ally of Governor Rauner, faced a primary challenger and was defeated.)

One of the piecemeal concerns for the early childhood community was the status of the Child Care Assistance Subsidy (CCAP), which was previously at 185% of the poverty level, had at one point been cut to 50% of the poverty level by Governor Rauner, and has since been restored to 162%. The early childhood community would strongly prefer to see funding restored to the 185% level, because that increment correlates to the likelihood of economic stability and independence for working class families with children.