



GATEWAYS TO OPPORTUNITY®
Illinois Professional Development System



Director

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Winter 2022 Newsletter

In This Issue

Professional
Development
Advisor (PDA)
Program

Birth to Five
Illinois
New Website

Child Care
Workforce Bonus
Registration
Deadline

ECACE
Scholarship for
Early Childhood
Educators

DCFS
Guidance
Update

INVEST IN YOURSELF

Schedule a PDA meeting today!

Have you been working toward accomplishing your Early Childhood career or educational goals and need some help getting to the finish line? The Professional Development Advisor Program can help!

A Professional Development Advisor (PDA) can assist you with achieving your career and educational goals by working alongside you to create a Professional Development Plan. Assistance from a PDA includes sharing:

- Career opportunities in the field
- Field related training and professional certifications
- Colleges and universities in your area that offer Early Childhood or other related coursework

Once your Professional Development Plan has been developed, a PDA will check in with you periodically to discuss your goals and any obstacles you may be facing.

A PDA can work with you via phone or email, and now offer video chats! <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/requestPDA>.

Introducing Birth to Five Illinois

In 2019, Governor JB Pritzker established an Early Childhood Funding Commission charged with studying and making recommendations on funding goals and funding mechanisms that provide equitable access to high-quality early childhood education and care services for all children birth to age five. The resulting [report to the governor](#) and a companion [primer](#) made a set of recommendations to ensure all families in Illinois regardless of race, ethnicity, home language, and social circumstance have the services needed to prepare their children for school.



As a first step, Illinois has established an Early Childhood Transformation Team charged with: ensuring early childhood policy is influenced by community voice and data, building a structure for equitable allocation of current and anticipated funding, and making funding stable, predictable, and consistent for early childhood providers. As part of these transformation efforts, the State has also partnered with INCCRRA to develop a Statewide Regional Community Systems infrastructure (now named Birth to Five Illinois!) with the goal of ensuring parent, family, and provider voice is central to the transformation of our Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) system.

Birth to Five Illinois's website has officially launched – www.birhtofiveil.com! You can find links/icons to our Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn at the bottom of any website page, and sign up for our email communications at the bottom of our homepage. Visit the site to meet our growing team and learn more about our goal of creating Birth to Five Action Councils in each of [39 regions](#), built upon the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Regional Offices of Education (ROE) statewide structure but operating independently. Birth to Five Action Councils will include child care directors, CCR&R staff, parents and families, early learning educators and advocates, school district and municipal officials, and business leaders who will be tasked with identifying and addressing the early childhood service needs in each region.

Join us for our Birth to Five Illinois virtual kick-off events!

English Sessions

- February 1, 2, and 3, 2022 | 6:00-7:00 pm

Spanish Session

- February 5, 2022 | 10:00-11:00 am

You can find your county's date on the [registration landing page](#). All are welcome to attend! **We encourage you to RSVP now, as registration closes on Thursday, January 27th at 4 pm.**

Please share [this news](#) throughout your networks.



Child Care Workforce Bonus Registration Deadline

The Child Care Workforce Bonus program is to recognize the efforts of child care staff who served and continue to serve children and families in person during the pandemic. **Licensed programs and license-exempt centers can apply now through March 11, 2022, to receive a bonus.** Pre-work must be done to update your staff listing within the Gateways Registry Portal before you apply.

For more information or to apply visit <https://www.ilgateways.com/financial-opportunities/child-care-workforce-bonus>.

Scholarship Funding for Early Childhood Educators

If you work or have worked in early childhood education and you are interested in getting additional credentials and/or a degree in the field, you may be eligible for an **Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity (ECACE) Scholarship!**

Scholarships are still available for this school year (2021-22) at participating Illinois colleges and universities and can cover up to the total cost of attendance after other financial aid is received.

You must be a member of the Gateways to Opportunity Registry and enrolled either full or part-time in a participating Illinois college or university, among other criteria.

The priority consideration date for the 2021-22 ECACE Scholarship application is March 1, 2022. Applications received after that date will be given consideration if funding remains available after all timely, qualified applicants have been awarded.

For more information about eligibility, a list of participating institutions, and to apply, visit <https://www.isac.org/ECACEscholarship>.

For help with the application process, watch this video <https://illinois2.webex.com/recordingervice>.



DCFS Guidance Update for Licensed Child Care and License-Exempt School-Age Programs

RESTORE ILLINOIS Licensed Day Care Guidance & Licensed Exempt School-Age Guidance, was updated January 21, 2022, and is intended to clarify the guidance that is currently in place. DCFS expects the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to issue updated child care guidance at which point this document will be amended.

If you have questions contact your DCFS licensing representative.

https://www2.illinois.gov/.../Docum.../Day_Care_Guidance.pdf



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Our mailing address is: INCCRRA • 1226 Towanda Plaza • Bloomington, IL 61701

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