



Winter 2025 Newsletter

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Little Minds BIG FEELINGS:

Building Social-Emotional Success for ALL Children

 An Illinois Pyramid Model Event

Mark your calendars and Save the Dates! *The Little Minds, Big Feelings: Building Social-Emotional Success for ALL Children* conference will be held **in-person** June 3-4, 2025, at the NIU Conference Center in Naperville, IL.

Join us for an enriching and transformative conference designed for all early childhood professionals who are dedicated to nurturing the next generation. With over 45 sessions available, this event will focus on the critical importance of fostering social-emotional development in young children, a key factor in setting the stage for lifelong learning, success, and well-being. At the heart of the conference is the belief that every child deserves the opportunity to build strong emotional foundations, and every caregiver plays a critical role in that process. Throughout the conference, participants will explore evidence-based strategies, innovative approaches, and practical tools to support social-emotional growth in all children, with an emphasis on inclusivity and equity. This conference is an opportunity for participants to connect with a community of professionals, deepen their knowledge, and leave with actionable tools and resources. Together, we can build a brighter, more emotionally resilient future for all children by nurturing their social-emotional success from the very start.

Watch for more information coming soon!



The Gateways Scholarship Program pays up to 100% of tuition at participating colleges for Early Childhood Education and Child Development (ECE/CD) coursework and degrees.

Visit us at www.ilgateways.com and read the Gateways Scholarship Program Frequently Asked Questions or email scholarship@ilgateways.com.

See How Far We Have Come, Thanks to You

From participating on Birth to Five Illinois Councils, making introductions, co-hosting community meetings, providing feedback (including helping to create and update [Regional Action Plans](#)), and so much more, it is the community partners like you that have made any wins possible. We thank you. Please view our timeline to see how far we have come together.



[Birth to Five Illinois Timeline](#)

Chicago Early Learning Workforce Scholarship

Do you want to advance your career as an early childhood educator, or become an early childhood professional to work with young children (birth through Pre-K)?

Apply for the **Chicago Early Learning Workforce Scholarship** for the 2025-2026 school year.

Who is Eligible?

1. Current [Chicago Early Learning program](#) staff employed at a CPS Pre-K or Head Start/Early Head Start/PFA/PI funded Community-Based program
2. Chicago-based individuals interested in becoming early childhood educators



To learn more, visit their [website](#) ,or if you have questions, email scholarships@chilearn.org.



ECEC Workforce Recruitment

Are you hiring for an Early Childhood Education and Care position? Do you know someone else who is?

Help support our newest campaign by posting open jobs in Child Care, Home Visiting, Early Intervention & and more, on the Gateways to Opportunity Job Board. It takes 10 minutes or less.

We appreciate your support in helping grow the ECEC field!

[Post a job on our website!](#)

The 2025 Statewide Training Needs Assessment Survey is Coming!

The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Division of Early Childhood is working with the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) and Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Agencies to conduct a statewide training needs assessment of the early child care workforce. The information collected by this new survey will be used to guide local CCR&R Agencies on what training curriculum is needed and required for child care staff. Additionally, this survey will inform the local CCR&R Agencies on what forms of training methods, and the times of availability, that would be best suited for training participation of the early child care employee. Providing your feedback will assist CCR&R Agency programs in gathering the necessary information for the coordination and implementation of Early Childhood Education and Care training within the State of Illinois.

Be sure to keep an eye on your email for more information that will be sent to you in early February! We cannot emphasize enough how important your participation is to IDHS, INCCRRA, and your local CCR&R Agencies to best inform them of the training needs within your child care community. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to Jenny Martin, Research Associate, at jmartin@inccrra.org.



Gateways to Opportunity offers a FREE service to help with planning and achieving career goals!

A Professional Development Advisor (PDA) is an experienced professional that can help inform and connect individuals with Early Childhood and School-Age career goals by:

- Working with you to plan career and professional development goals
- Offering guidance on how to achieve various professional credentials
- Helping you choose a degree program when returning to school
- Identifying scholarship and financial aid opportunities to help support taking college coursework

Request a Professional Development Advisor today! Visit us at www.ilgateways.com!

Protecting Our Children: Free Lead-in-Water Solutions for Chicago Child Care Providers

LeadCare Complete supports a safe and healthy learning environment by offering Chicago child care providers free lead-in-water testing and plumbing upgrades to reduce lead in drinking water. LeadCare Complete serves licensed facility and home-based child care providers in Chicago with a lead-in-water result of 2.01 ppb or higher. We also help providers if they have not completed their initial lead-in-water testing.

The program covers the costs of conducting initial lead-in-water testing, a plumbing assessment, installing filters, and removing and replacing plumbing containing lead, such as faucets and water fountains. After installing plumbing upgrades, LeadCare Complete helps with follow-up lead-in-water testing to ensure that lead levels go down.

For more information or to enroll today, visit LeadCareComplete.org/ActToday.

LeadCare Complete is made possible through a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency grant and support from the City of Chicago.



HOW TO MAKE Snow Paint

Making two-ingredient snow paint is such a fun craft and sensory activity for kids! The craft is not only a boredom-buster winter activity but is also a great way to open up a conversation with your kids about the changing weather and snow in winter.

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED:

- School glue
- Shaving cream
- Container for mixing
- Paintbrush
- Dark construction paper

1. Mix 1 part school glue with 2 parts shaving cream in the mixing container.
2. Once the snow paint is mixed, spoon into a bowl if that makes it easier for your little one.
3. Dip your paintbrush into the mixture and paint your masterpiece on the dark construction paper.



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