



Winter 2026 Newsletter

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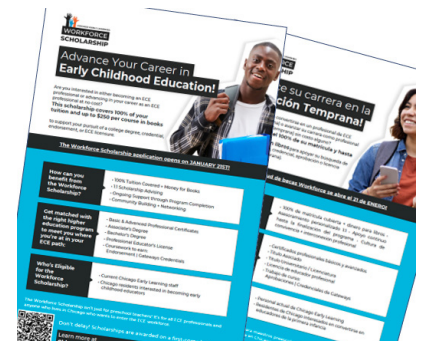
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Chicago Early Learning Workforce Scholarship

Advance your Career in Early Childhood Education!

Are you interested in either becoming an ECE professional or advancing in your career as an ECE professional at no cost? This scholarship covers 100% of your tuition and up to \$250 per course in books to support your pursuit of a college degree, credential, endorsement, or ECE licensure.

The Workforce Scholarship isn't just for preschool teachers! It's for all ECE professionals and anyone who lives in Chicago who wants to enter the ECE workforce.



CELW Scholarship applications for 2026-27 academic year opened Wednesday, January 21, 2026!

Applications are now open!

Illinois Department of Early Childhood's Newsletter

Sign up for the Illinois Department of Early Childhood's newsletter! This is the best way to get the most up to date information on IDEC's transition work, programs, and other general department updates that impact the early childhood community. You can sign up through the [signup form](#) on their [website](#).



Upcoming Registry-Verified Conferences

29th Annual Infant Toddler Conference

March 7, 2026 | Des Plaines, IL
Presented by: Oakton College

The 29th annual Infant Toddler Conference will have ten workshops for you to choose from, including two in Spanish.

You will be able to pre-register for one workshop in Session A and one in Session B, which means you can visit different classrooms instead of staying in one room all day.

Be sure to stop by the resource area to meet our vendors and see new materials and ideas for your work with infants and toddlers.

Lite snacks will be provided during the break, but please bring your own drink, as there will be no coffee or tea service this year.

Register!

IAN 40th Annual Conference 2026

March 7, 2026 | Normal, IL
Presented by: Illinois AfterSchool Network

For Established Organizational Leaders: Strengthen your impact and help cultivate the next generation of leaders to ensure lasting organizational sustainability.

For Program Managers: Discover innovative ways to expand your offerings and explore fresh opportunities for families.

For Youth Serving New Staff: Build a solid foundation with best practices that create enriching environments for youth to thrive.

Register!

Illinois Council on Family Relations Annual Conference 2026

April 23-24, 2026 | Naperville, IL
Presented by: Illinois Council on Family Relations

Illinois Council on Family Relations is excited to have Dr. Dan Wuori as our keynote speaker, expert on early childhood and author of *The Daycare Myth: What We Get Wrong About Early Care and Education (and What We Should Do About It)*!

Please share with your colleagues, students, and all who may be interested in submitting proposals and joining us!

There will also be having a pre-conference dinner on Thursday, April 23 from 6-8 pm in the NIU Naperville Atrium.

Register!

Credential Renewal Reminder!

Gateways to Opportunity® Credentials need to be renewed every 5 years to remain valid.

Apply online: <https://registry.ilgateways.com/login> or by a paper application, [click here](#). All Gateways Credential renewals are FREE.

For renewal information please visit www.ilgateways.com/credential-renewal. This link provides step-by-step instructions on how to renew a Gateways Credential(s).

Home Visiting Staffing and Salary Survey

The 2nd **Home Visiting** Staffing and Salary Survey will be sent to directors of home visiting programs in February. The information collected by the survey will be used to guide state agency partners to strengthen recruitment and retention of the home visiting workforce. **If your program provides home visiting services**, please keep an eye on your email to complete the survey!

WINTER SCIENCE EXPERIMENT

WHAT MAKES ICE MELT FASTEST?

Materials:

- Water
- Sugar
- Salt
- Jars
- Spoons
- A Timer
- Paper & Pen
- Ice Cubes

Directions:

1. Help the children pour the exact same amount of water in each jar.
2. Add the salt in one and sugar in the other. Use two tablespoons.
3. Ask the children to predict which of the solutions will melt ice fastest and record their prediction.
4. Have the children drop ice cubes in the jars.
5. Set the timer and stir all of the jars for a full minute.
6. After 9 minutes, the first ice cube should be dissolved. Was the children's predictions right? Record the results.



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