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All Children, All Families: A proactive and aggressive policy agenda for ECE in Illinois

Chicago - The Sylvia Cotton Center for Research and Policy Innovation powered by Illinois Action for Children is pleased to announce the release of [*All Children, All Families: A proactive and aggressive policy agenda for child care and early education in Illinois*](#). This first-ever policy agenda is released as the organization moves intentionally to address racial, economic, and gender inequity in Illinois' early childhood system.

"We know that this agenda is bold and ambitious—that is by design," said Teresa Ramos, Illinois Action for Children's VP of Policy and Advocacy. "Improving the early care and education system in Illinois will be messy, but we know that ECE is critically-important to creating a foundation for racial equity in all future learning—and that is absolutely worth fighting for."

Currently, just one out of every four children in Illinois enter school kindergarten-ready, according to the most recent state Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS). The long-term goals detailed in All Children, All Families designed to alleviate this issue among others are:

- The elimination of race- and income-based gaps in comprehensive supports and kindergarten-readiness.
- Having Illinois children developmentally on-track by 18 months old.
- Getting all children in Illinois kindergarten-ready (state goal).
- Improving readiness by 50 percent in 5 years (also part of the Illinois Prenatal to Three Agenda).

The Sylvia Cotton Center for Research and Policy Innovation spoke to hundreds of providers, advocates, and families across Illinois to find out how the ECE system in Illinois does and does not work for them. These discussions, along with IAFCs on-the-ground experiences, research, and advocacy, inform the recommendations and goals described in All Children, All Families.

"Even before COVID-19, deep cracks threatened many of the key foundations of child care and early education in Illinois and across the nation—insufficient funding and governance, lack of convenience and affordability for families, inequitable support for low-income and middle-class families, and a workforce in dire straits," said David Alexander, Director of Research for the Sylvia Cotton Center for Research and Policy Innovation powered by Illinois Action for Children. "The pandemic makes rebuilding these foundations more urgent than ever."



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All Children, All Families lays out, in detail, IAFCs four main policy objectives to achieve these goals. They are to:

- Strengthen governance and funding to lay the foundation of systemic equity.
- Support early childhood teachers and caregivers to support children.
- Achieve program excellence for Black, Latinx, low-income, and rural children.
- Expand family access and choice to excellent services.

Read the full policy agenda to learn more about these goals and policy objectives. The Sylvia Cotton Center for Research and Policy Innovation powered by Illinois Action for Children has experts available for more in-depth discussion on this report and the path forward.

About the Sylvia Cotton Center for Research and Policy Innovation

The Sylvia Cotton Center for Research and Policy Innovation (SCCRPI) powered by [Illinois Action for Children](#) is a vehicle that will deeply embed the legacy and point of view IAFCs founder, Sylvia Cotton, into the work of the agency; promote and support research around the most critical issues of child care and early childhood education; and identify and pursue innovation in public policy.