



BELIEVE! This is my word for the month. It's the holiday season and I can't think of a better time to **BELIEVE**. To **BELIEVE** in the spirit, wonder and joy of the season. My wonderful childhood memories are wrapped in the heart of family. A family that did not have money, a family that worked hard, a closeness that many described as similar to the television series, The Walton's. Some of my favorite memories are shopping for my Mom with my Dad. My Dad was a home body and for him to go shopping was a big deal. He would load all of us up and take us shopping and then to lunch. He must have saved all year for this one day. We never ate out and very seldom went shopping. It was one of the best days of the year. My Mom always made each of us our favorite cookies, and a big breakfast on Christmas morning and then a big dinner. I have tried to carry these values of family, a giving heart, and hard work forward into my work and personal life.

BELIEVE! Yes, it looks like Head Start will be getting an increase in funding. Especially nice is the quality improvement funding. Below is the bill language. Although, remember this has not been finalized until approved by Congress and signed by the President.

Quality Improvement Funding for Trauma-Informed Care.- The agreement provides \$250,000,000 in quality improvement funding, including a prioritization on addressing the rise of adverse childhood experiences attributable to increased prevalence of substance use, economic hardship, home and community violence, and other traumatic experiences that can negatively impact child development and lead to disruptions in classroom environments. The agreement directs the Administration to allow flexibility to meet local needs while focusing these funds on staff training for trauma-informed care and identification of signs of addiction and hardship; mental health consultation services to provide expert care and counseling to families and the Head Start workforce; and additional staffing to 113 Head Start classes in high-risk substance use communities to maintain high-quality learning environments while providing individualized care to children expressing disruptive and challenging behaviors. Designation Renewal System.-ACF is encouraged to continue to consider the unique challenges faced by Head Start grantees in remote and frontier areas when reviewing such grantees' compliance with health and dental screening requirements as part of the designation renewal system.

Early Head Start Expansion (EHS) and EHS-Child Care Partnerships.-The agreement modifies bill language to simplify the administration of EHS Expansion and EHS-Child Care Partnerships (EHS-CCP) grants, but does not otherwise change the use of funds provided for such purposes. The agreement continues to strongly support EHS Expansion and EHS-CCPs, and accordingly, the agreement includes at least \$905,000,000 for such purposes, an increase of \$100,000,000. Since fiscal year 2014, these funds have supported both the expansion of traditional EHS and the establishment of partnerships between EHS providers and local child care programs. The agreement directs ACF to continue to prioritize equally EHS Expansion and EHS-CCP, as determined by the needs of local communities. The agreement expects that any funds used for EHS Expansion and EHS-Child Care-Partnership grants that are re-competed would continue to be used for such purposes. Finally, the

agreement directs ACF to include in the fiscal year 2021 Congressional Justification and each Congressional Justification thereafter, the actual and estimated number of funded slots for each of the following: Head Start, EHS, and EHS-Child Care Partnerships.

COLA - 193 mil for cost of living adjustment (just under a 2% increase)

Preschool Development Grants - The agreement includes an increase of \$25,000,000 for Preschool Development Grants and expects these additional funds to be managed in conjunction with funds appropriated in fiscal year 2019 that will be awarded in December 2019.

BELIEVE! Gov. Pritzker Calls on Illinois to Become Best State in Nation for Families Raising Young Children - Governor Increases Reimbursements to Child Care Providers, Appoints 29 Members to Newly Created Illinois Commission on Equitable Early Childhood Education and Care Funding. George Davis, former Head Start Director, Executive Director and IHSA Board President set to co-chair Commission!

"I've asked you to join me today as we set an audacious goal: Illinois will become the best state in the nation for families raising young children, with the nation's best early childhood education and child care," said Governor JB Pritzker. "My promise is this: our work won't be complete until every child in this state enters kindergarten with the cognitive skills to think, learn, read, remember, pay attention, and solve problems, but also the social-emotional skills to communicate, connect with others, resolve conflict, self-regulate, display kindness and cope with challenges. These are the skills that high-quality early learning programs help young children develop, and I'm proud to say that many of the modern standards and model programs were conceived and developed right here in Illinois."

Gov. Pritzker created the Commission to improve access to quality early childhood programs for all Illinois families. Tasked with taking a fresh look at the state's entire ECEC system, the group met for the first time today, and its work will center around establishing funding goals and funding mechanisms to provide equitable access to high-quality early childhood education and care services for all children birth to age five.

Gov. Pritzker appointed the following child care providers, advocates, educators and legislators from around the state to serve on the Illinois Commission on Equitable Early Childhood Education and Care Funding:

Co-Chairs:

- Barbara Flynn Currie, Former House Democratic Majority Leader
- George Davis, Former Executive Director, Rockford Human Services Department
- Andy Manar, Illinois State Senator, D-Bunker Hill
- Jesse Ruiz, Deputy Governor for Education

BELIEVE! IHSA hired a powerful lobbying team who started on December 1st. J & J Legislative, LCC is a dynamic, hardworking legislative affairs and political consulting firm that excels in guiding

companies and organizations through the intricacies of Illinois state politics to achieve the goals of their clients. In 2011, Jenni Purdue and Jennifer Ross founded J & J in order to serve the needs of clients in Illinois. Their firm is composed of bi-partisan dedicated professionals providing consulting in the fields of governmental affairs and economic development with over 30 years of experience. Watch out! Head Start is “in the house.”

BELIEVE in the season! It is tenderness for the past. Courage for the present. Hope for the future. When you choose joy YOU feel good, and when YOU feel good, YOU do good, and when YOU do good, it reminds others of what JOY feels like, and it just might inspire them to do the same. Here’s to a joyous holiday season!

Take care,

Lauri

