Executive Summary
The Junior League of Chicago is committed to ensuring that all children are given the opportunity to receive the highest quality education and care necessary for their intellectual, emotional, mental, creative, physical, and social development. The JLC supports high quality education and care for all children through advocacy, training, and community projects.

Children's experiences in the first five years of life influence how they develop, learn, and interact with their world through late childhood/early adulthood. Research shows that children who participate in high quality, birth to five education programs have improved cognitive development and academic success, which will have an impact on their entire lives. Furthermore, those with a high school diploma are proven to have a higher overall lifetime earnings, less likely to spend time in prison, and live a longer life.

Nonetheless, thousands of children in the Chicagoland area do not have access to these programs. Expanded access and support for childhood education is essential in our community, and the Junior League of Chicago can play a critical role in this mission.

While the subsequent paper lays out facts and figures surrounding education through the high school level, the JLC believes that an education is never finished and promotes a positive educational experience for all of Chicago's citizens.

The Need for Education and Care
Research has demonstrated that childhood education has a significant impact on a child's lifetime development and educational outcomes. Early childhood education not only assists young children, but also impacts development and accomplishments through Grade 12. According to research conducted on education, children (preschool - Grade 12) who participate in these programs:

- Are better prepared academically and socially to start school: Children in various studies who received early childhood education showed higher cognitive, verbal, and social development.
- Achieve higher test scores in math and reading: Children in North Carolina who attended an early childhood program tested higher from primary grade through young adulthood.
- Are less likely to repeat a grade: By fifth grade, children in Maryland who attended early childhood programs were 44% less likely to have repeated a grade.
- Are less likely to require special education services: Chicago children who received early education were 41% less likely to be placed in special education.
- Have lower rates of depressive symptoms: Chicago children who received early education were 12.8% less likely to suffer from depression related illnesses.
- Have higher high school graduation rates: Chicago children who received early education were 29% more likely to graduate high school than those who did not.
• **Are more likely to attend a four-year college**: Children in North Carolina who attended an early childhood program were nearly three times as likely to attend a four-year college.6

• **Early childhood education can boost earnings later in life**: early childhood education can increase earnings in adulthood by 1.3 to 3.5 % 15

Furthermore, the years from birth to age 5 are viewed as a critical period for developing the foundations for thinking, behaving, and emotional well-being. One study, The Abecedarian Project, monitored the progress of its participants from birth until their mid-thirties. The study showed that people who received early care had lower rates of pre-hypertension, and heart disease. Many health risks of adulthood begin as habits formed in the earliest years of life. Skills that are gained through early educational programs set children onto life pathways that in turn affect their health and well-being throughout their life.

In addition, early childhood education has an impact on life outcomes far beyond education. Children who have access to early learning services:

- Have higher incomes and employment rates later in life: Children in Michigan who received pre-school education had significantly higher incomes and were more likely to be employed at age 40.9
- Show much lower rates of delinquency: Chicago students who attended early childhood programs had a 33% lower rate of juvenile arrest and 42% lower rate of arrest for a violent crime.7
- Are less likely to become a teen parent: Children in North Carolina who attended early childhood programs waited longer to have their first child than those who did not.8

Despite the tremendous benefits of early learning, hundreds of thousands of children in the United States do not receive the education they need during their first five years of life. The Ounce of Prevention Fund estimates that upwards of 67,000 children per year in Illinois are not being served, many of whom reside in the Chicagoland area.10

**Context for Involvement in Chicago and Illinois**

Several other organizations are involved with efforts to improve early education programs in Chicago and Illinois. By understanding the missions and initiatives of these organizations, the Junior League of Chicago can identify opportunities to provide support and partnerships, thereby achieving the maximum overall impact for our communities.

Organizations involved with early childhood education and care in our state include:

- **The Ounce of Prevention**: For over 35 years, the Ounce has advocated and provided direct support for early education and care. The Ounce utilizes cutting edge research on childhood development to design, improve, and administer early childhood education programs for thousands of families in Chicago.11
- **Voices for Illinois Children**: A statewide, nonpartisan organization to promote better opportunities and livelihoods for children in Illinois. Activities include policy research and analysis, policy advocacy, strategic communications, and community engagement.12
- **The Alliance for Early Success**: Brings together state, national, and funding partners to promote policies and programs at that lead to improved health, learning and economic outcomes for young children.13
• **Illinois Head Start Association:** Early Head Start is a nationally funded program that promotes the school readiness of young children from low-income families through local programs. The Illinois Head Start Association provides a variety of resources and support to Head Start programs, directors, and beneficiaries across the state.¹⁴

• In addition, early childhood education initiatives in Chicago are impacted by legislative changes, both locally and federally. The Junior League of Chicago is committed to monitoring these changes and advocating for improvements where possible. Examples of important legislation and federal programs include:

  - **The Child Care and Development Block Grant Program (CCDBG):** The CCDBG is the primary federal grant program that provides child care assistance for families and funds child care quality initiatives. CCDBG is administered to states in formula block grants which can be used to subsidize child care for low-income working families.

  - **The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):** IDEA is a United States federal law that governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to children with disabilities. Part C is a $436 million program administered by States that serves infants and toddlers through age two with developmental delays.

**Our Opportunity for Involvement**

To support and promote the education and care for all children grades K-12, the Junior League of Chicago has committed to the following strategic initiatives:

- Educate members on trends and importance of education and care for grades K-12
- Establish partnerships and provide volunteer support for organizations in the community that address these issues
- Build relationships with appropriate policymakers to advocate for adolescent education and care

To wholly fulfill our commitment to education and care, the JLC will continually reevaluate our tactics and initiatives to achieve the above goals, especially in light of changing legislation. We will work with our nonprofit partners to ensure that our impact is maximized and that we provide meaningful support to children and families in need.

To support and promote childhood / young adult education and care for all, the JLC has committed to the following plan of action:

- **Educate members on trends and importance of education and care for grades K-12**
  - Provide general background information on our website and links to additional resources
  - Coordinate a minimum of two JLC trainings or information sessions per year with a specific focus on education and care

- **Establish partnerships and provide volunteer support for organizations in the community that address this issue**
  - Build coalitions with like-minded interest groups like Action for Children, Voices for Illinois Children, and the Ounce of Prevention Fund
• Communicate regularly with partner organizations to discuss opportunities for the JLC to get involved through volunteering or other activities
• **Build relationships with appropriate policymakers to advocate for education and care**
  • Share policy paper and relevant updates with state and local policymakers to inform them of the JLC’s commitment to and involvement with early childhood education and careers
  • Invite legislators to present to the JLC on related government initiatives
  • Where possible, provide JLC representation at forums on education

The JLC will closely track progress on the above plans to ensure that our commitment to early childhood/youth adult education and care is fulfilled. The JLC will monitor relevant legislative changes or trends in order to adjust plans as needed and capitalize on opportunities to create additional impact.

**Current Legislation**

**IL HB 2663**
**2018**
**Early Childhood Programs Expulsion Restrictions**
Status: Enacted - Act No. 105
Date of Last Action: 08/14/2017 - Enacted
Author: Stratton (D) Additional Authors: Castro (D); Wallace (D); Moeller (D); Andrade (D); Turner (D); Van Pelt (D); McConnaughay (R); Harris N (D); Bush (D); Willis (D); Wheeler (R); Welch (D); Tabares (D); Sims (D); Ammons (D); Andersson (R); Batinick (R); Aquino (D); Swanson (R); Sauer (R); McCombie (R); Mah (D); Greenwood (D); Conyears (D); Jimenez (R); Murphy L (D); Harper (D); Bourne (R); Winger (R); Guzzardi (D); Scherer (D); Mitchell C (D); Kifowit (D); D'Amico (D); Althoff (R); Hunter (D); Martinez (D); Harmon (D); Collins J (D); Davis W (D); Chapa-LaVia (D); Soto (D); Radogno (R); Lightford (D); Feigenholtz (D); Currie (D); Ford (D); Hernandez (D); Holmes (D); Evans M (D); Hammond (R); Williams A (D); Unes (R); Rezin (R); Biss (D); Mayfield (D); Gabel (D); Lilly (D); Hutchinson (D); Gordon-Booth (D); Steans (D); Harris G (D); Burke D (D)
Topics: Preschool (Since 2015)
Summary: Amends the School Code, provides that early childhood programs receiving State Board of Education grants for preschool educational programs shall prohibit the expulsion of children, provides instead that when persistent and serious challenging behaviors emerge, the early childhood program shall document steps taken to ensure that the child can participate safely in the program and utilize a range of community resources.


For more information on the Ounce of Prevention, visit: https://www.theounce.org/who-we-are/

For more information on Voices for Illinois Children, visit: http://www.voices4kids.org/

For more information on the Alliance for Early Success, visit: http://www.earlysuccess.org/home


“The Economic of Early Childhood Investments.”


http://abc.fpg.unc.edu/abecedarian-project