



Our Partners:



CAROLE ROBERTSON CENTER
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The Encompassing Center
Living Your Best Life with positive mental health outcomes

Erikson Institute



Welcome to the spring/summer 2023 edition of our BRIDGES Bulletin, where you can find out what we've been working on and learn about opportunities to connect with our work!

It's almost that time of year!

Planning for the annual BRIDGES Healing Together Family Fair (HTFF) has begun!

Through the HTFF, BRIDGES hopes to reach out to families with young children and provide an outlet for expression and open conversation, as well as the opportunity to hear from other parents and learn about resources on the West Side of Chicago.

There will be fun activities for children, giveaways, and food! *Date, time, and location coming soon!*

Sign up for updates at tinyurl.com/HTFFUpdates23.



Missed last year's HTFF? [Click here](#) or scan the QR code for more pics!



BRIDGES CPT Members Travel to Springfield to Advocate for Children and Families' Relational Health!

Moms On A Mission

Every year, COFI parent-leaders head to Illinois' capital to speak with legislators about policies to help support families and their young children across the state.



This year, COFI parent-leaders advocated for \$250,000 in new dollars for Smart Start Illinois, which includes:

- 5,000 more preschool slots
- Investment in enhancing and improving access to Early Intervention
- Expansion of the IDHS Home Visiting Program
- More funding for the Child Care Assistance Program

Parent leaders also fought for legislation that would **increase wages for early education and childcare workers** to a minimum of \$25/hour.

Thank you, COFI parent-leaders for showing up and speaking out on issues that matter to families!



Start Early's Early Childhood Advocacy Day

On April 18, over 300 early childhood advocates, including parents and community leaders, traveled to Springfield to voice their support for Governor Pritzker's Smart Start Illinois Initiative.

Leading the charge were Start Early and their partners at Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI), Illinois Action for Children, Child Care for All, Raising Illinois, SEIU, and We, the Village, who urged legislators to approve a 2024 budget that would invest new funding of \$320 million in Early Intervention services, evidence-based home visiting programs, increased childcare staff wages, and other supports and programming for families with young children.



Check out a recap of Early Childhood Advocacy Day on Start Early's [site!](#)

Thank you, Start Early and partners, for your tireless efforts to improve the health and wellbeing of our children and families!



Chicago Commons Workforce Collaborative awarded \$2 million for workforce and financial stability strategies aimed to help Women of Color



On March 15, Chicago Commons was [awarded \\$2.2 million by JPMorgan Chase](#) to fund workforce development and wealth building initiatives for low-income women and single mothers of color. Chicago Commons and partner organizations Instituto del Progreso Latino, YWCA, and PODER, will invest in trauma-informed,

career-focused resources to help women of color overcome systemic barriers. Resources will include financial workshops, employment and health coaching, and mental health interventions. This initiative builds on Chicago Commons' [Family Hub](#) program which promotes the wellbeing of families by providing educational, financial, and health resources.

Congratulations, Chicago Commons and partners, and thank you for your dedication to empowering our families and communities!

Is your organization hosting summer events, trainings, or programs for families with young children?

Let BRIDGES help you spread the word about your organization's events, programs, trainings, and other resources!



Through our "BRIDGING Our CPT" email blasts, we reach over 15 partner organizations and agencies that serve families with young children.

If you'd like us to share out, email Karen at karen_m_reyesrodriguez@rush.edu. Include a brief blurb and any materials (e.g. flyers) you'd like us to share.

We're looking forward to hearing from you!

Happy Summer from BRIDGES

For general inquiries related to BRIDGES, please contact us as BRIDGES@rush.edu

