



Summer 2008

Greetings!

As you read this edition of *Inside Gateways*, your Gateways to Opportunity quarterly e-newsletter, I hope you reflect on the ways in which the field of early care and education has changed...and the ways in which it is still true to core values that were established decades ago.

Head Start, a program that began in 1965, is still providing high-quality care and early education as well as extensive family support to children and families. Head Start was established as a comprehensive federal program to meet the emotional, social, health, nutritional, and psychological needs of low-income children and their families. Today, we recognize that care and education of young children cannot exist in isolation. A variety of supports that encompass the entire family is critical in meeting the needs of young children.

"Intellectually, then, as well as politically and socially, Head Start was an idea whose time had come. And the report of the Head Start Planning Committee stands as one of The most significant historical documents Ever written concerning the needs of children. It pointed a direction for the nation." Dr. Julius B. Richmond, Head Start Founder

Today, we know that programs that recognize and serve families (however you define the family unit) are crucial to making a significant impact when working with children. Head Start was indeed visionary in the programs it established to include parent involvement, family support, health (mental health), nutrition, and education.

Head Start programs frequently utilize a traditional, play-based curriculum, focused on child-initiated activities. Indeed, as you read Lilian Katz's article, you will find references to the debate that has been ongoing for decades: Is the traditional curriculum or a more academic curriculum better for children? Lilian suggests that we need to develop a combined approach to fully meet children's needs.

Both the "Head Start family approach" and Lilian's suggestion for a combined curriculum make sense. As decades of Head Start research have proven, supporting the whole family truly benefits children. Why wouldn't the best curriculum reflect a more holistic or whole child approach as well? Utilizing a combined curriculum that encompasses both academic and intellectual development may best meet the educational needs of children.

As summer comes to an end and a new school year begins, each and every one of you will work to support children and families toward positive “whole child, whole family” outcomes. I know you will find much to reflect upon in this issue of *Inside Gateways*.



Joni Scritchlow and Your
Gateways to Opportunity
Professional Development Team

Profiles in Leadership

Periodically in this e-newsletter, we profile Gateways leaders to acquaint you with their work and to illustrate through their experiences the range of career options and paths available in early care and education.

This issue of Inside Gateways profiles two individuals who work in organizations related to Head Start in Illinois.

Elva DeLuna



Elva DeLuna is employed by the **Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS)** as the Education Manager for the Migrant Head Start Program in Illinois, a position she has held for the past 10 years. Migrant Head Start differs from Head Start in significant ways. In order for families to participate in Migrant Head Start, they must receive at least 51% of their income from agricultural work. To meet the needs of seasonal farmworkers, Migrant Head Start offers full-day programs during the summer months, occasionally serving children during evening and weekend hours. Programs have always been open to infants and toddlers. Migrant Head Start provides the same level of services as regular Head Start, but within a much shorter time frame. Migrant Head Start programs can be as short as 6 weeks or as long as 5 months, depending on the kind of farmwork in a particular community.

Elva oversees Migrant Head Start education services for 470 children and their families who are served in the eight Migrant Head Start programs in the state. The number of children and families served by Migrant Head Start changes each year as the population shifts. Elva says that the number served in Illinois has been reduced in recent years because farm machinery has replaced some of the need for farmworkers.

Elva understands the needs of migrant families from personal experience. Elva grew up as a migrant child. Her family spent the winter months in her home town, Del Rio, Texas. Between April and October, Elva, her parents, and four siblings traveled to North Carolina to pick tobacco; to Illinois to pick asparagus, corn, and green beans; and to Iowa to pick tomatoes. Like other migrant children, Elva worked in the fields with her parents and siblings. Elva's two younger brothers had the benefit of attending a Head Start program. Elva remembers the enormous impact the Head Start experience had on her brothers, her parents, and her community.

Elva's parents wanted a different future for their children and strongly supported their children's education. Elva completed high school attending evening sessions that were offered to migrant families so children could work in the fields during the day. After high school, Elva attended college, but she continued to migrate between Texas and Illinois to earn enough money to pay for school. Juggling migrant work between states made college completion a challenge. Elva eventually accumulated the coursework required for a bachelor's degree from several colleges and universities, including Western Illinois University and Texas A&M University.

During her first year of college, Elva volunteered in a child care program in Princeville, Illinois, which had a Migrant Head Start program. "My first class was with toddlers, and I simply got hooked on working with young children." Elva's college major was data processing when she started to volunteer, but it wasn't long before she switched to early childhood education and got a Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential.

Elva was hired as a teacher and then became the Education Coordinator for the program in Princeville. Molly Joseph, the Education Manager for Migrant Head Start in Illinois at that time (the position Elva currently holds), recognized Elva's interest and potential in the field of early childhood. Molly nurtured Elva's abilities and provided regular high-quality, in-depth professional development opportunities for Elva, which allowed her to hone her skills as an early childhood teacher. After working in the Princeville program for 17 years, Elva accepted a position as a Home Visitor with **Migrant Education Even Start** in Illinois. Elva developed a different perspective as a Home Visitor while she worked with some of the same families she served in the Princeville child care program. "This new position helped me to appreciate the value of working with the whole family. As a teacher, I was primarily focused on the education and care of children in my program. As a Home Visitor, I learned that you cannot separate the child from the family—what happens to the child impacts the family and vice versa."

Elva had been working as a Home Visitor for 2 years when the Education Manager position she currently holds became available. Although her main focus as Education Manager is to write and monitor policies and procedures for education services in Migrant Head Start programs in Illinois, Elva tries to remember what it feels like to be a teacher in the classroom. "I always ask myself, 'Is this policy or procedure realistic or not?' and I encourage Migrant Head Start staff to let me know how various policies and procedures work for them."

Elva regularly travels to the eight center programs that she monitors in the state. She tries to help staff address the unique challenges faced by Migrant Head Start programs. Major challenges include the time limitations of migrant parents, many of whom work 10-12 hours a day earning very little pay. A minor change in the weather can affect parents' work prospects, so the main objective of migrants is to work as much as possible when they can. As a result, Migrant Head Start staff must be creative in finding ways to include parents in their programs. Staff retention is a struggle throughout the field of early childhood, but retaining staff in Migrant Head Start is especially difficult because the program operates only part of the year. Some staff members do return each year, and just as Elva did, many Migrant Head Start students pursue early childhood education as a career because of the program's enormous impact on them and their families.

George Davis



George Davis is the Executive Director of the **Human Services Department for the City of Rockford**, the department that administers Head Start services for Winnebago County and is the designated Community Action Agency for Winnebago and Boone counties in northern Illinois. As George looks back on his career path leading up to his current position as Executive Director (he recently commemorated his fifth anniversary in the position), George observes, "It's a career path that found me more than one that I planned."

George graduated from college in the early 1970s. Like many new graduates, George wasn't certain what he wanted to do after college. He did know, however, that he wanted to help people. George credits his parents, and his mother in particular, for instilling in him a passion for helping others. "I developed my interest in human services by watching the difference my mother made to members of our extended family because of her willingness to help out. My mother taught us to help others by her word and by her example."

George accepted a position as an intake worker with the Mental Health Center in Paducah, Kentucky. "That first position opened up my understanding of the world of human services because I worked with the elderly, with those who have disabilities, and with Head Start." One of George's responsibilities at the Mental Health Center was to serve as a community representative to a Head Start Policy Council in the area. "I had no idea what Head Start was, even though I grew up in the City of Chicago in Public Housing. By all accounts, we were a working poor family eligible for Head Start services, but I had never heard of Head Start before my position in Paducah."

George moved from the position of intake worker into case management, and through a series of twists and turns, he ended up back in Rockford, Illinois. In addition to counseling and child protection, George worked with developmentally disabled adults and families. George's first management position was with the Association for Retarded Citizens (ARC) in Rockford, a position he held for 7 years between 1985 and 1992.

With management experience under his belt, George applied for a Project Coordinator position for a Head Start Family Services Demonstration Project with the City of Rockford. George was hired for that position. When the position ended after 2½ years, George was hired by the City of Rockford as a Family Resource Coordinator, then as an Administrative Coordinator, and then as the Head Start Director. "I realized that all my jobs were with people who were in crisis and in desperate circumstances, but often at the end of their road. I lost that initial passion I experienced helping people at a stage in their lives when I felt I could really make a difference. I was the Head Start Director for 5 years. It was the first time I felt I was making a substantial and long-term difference for families by working with parents, staff, and members of the community toward a common goal."

George became more involved in Head Start and with partner agencies at the local, state, and national levels. He became active with and joined the board of the **Illinois Association of Community Action Agencies (IACCA)**. IACCA is a network of not-for-profit corporations and units of government in Illinois that focuses on improving the health, education, and economic standards of the low-income population. George also got involved with the **Illinois Head Start Association** and currently serves as its president. In 2004, George was appointed and still serves as a member of the Illinois Early Learning Council. In June of 2008, he received the designation of Certified Community Action Professional (CCAP). from the National Community Action Partnership—America's poverty-fighting network.

"What led me back to working in Head Start years after my original exposure to Head Start on the Policy Council in Paducah, Kentucky, was my desire to make a difference." George has held various positions in the human services sector. Nothing has been more satisfying for him than working in Head Start. "I know firsthand what many Head Start families go through. Our family lived in public housing. We were homeless for a time. We moved four times in one year before my parents were able to purchase a home on contract, which offered our family some stability."

Despite George's family's economic circumstances, they never sought any form of public assistance. As George grew older, he realized that not every family had the capacity or resilience to handle all the challenges of being poor that his family possessed. A second life lesson George learned from his parents was the critical role of family. "My mother taught us that you shouldn't rely totally on a program for assistance unless that program pulls in the family. I learned as a young child that family involvement is central to one's quality of life." The principle that parents and family come first in a child's life is consistent with Head Start's emphasis on parent support and family involvement. George acknowledges that high-

quality early care and education can make a huge difference. “This is especially true,” he says, “for low-income families and children.”

George’s commitment to Head Start is as strong today as it was 36 years ago when George had his first contact with the Head Start Policy Council in Paducah, Kentucky. “Once you work in Head Start, you never leave it and it never leaves you. You feel that you are having a real impact and making a real difference by putting into action sound principles that represent the best of who we are as people.”

Lilian Katz: Reflections

Academic and Intellectual Goals: Addressing Both in Early Education

In 1965, when Head Start began, I was an assistant teacher in the Mission neighborhood of San Francisco. The main objective of the 6-week summer Head Start program was to provide stimulation for the children. A few years later, recognition of the needs of low-income families across the country led to the “War on Poverty,” and soon Head Start became a year-round program.

At that time, nursery education, as we called it then, was full of contention about the curriculum and teaching methods. The most common two approaches in dispute were known as the traditional approach, which offered mainly child-initiated activities and lots of spontaneous play, and the experimental approach, which emphasized preparation for formal schooling with early-reading-related lessons. While the terms have changed since those days, the dissent continues. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) addressed the controversy to some extent in 1987¹ when it provided the first edition of its **position statement on developmentally appropriate practices (DAP)**.

It seems to me that it is time to shift the discussion of these issues. Many commentators, policy makers, and even some educators seem to believe that in early childhood education we are faced with a choice between a play-based curriculum and an academically focused approach. First, I suggest that we are not faced with an either/or situation. All young children in our programs should regularly have time for spontaneous play and other elements of the traditional early childhood activities outlined in NAEYC’s statement about DAP. While there is a place for components of both of these approaches in the early childhood curriculum, a major component that is often overlooked is the focus on children’s intellectual--as opposed to academic--development.

The term “academic” is often used to refer to something that has “no practical or useful significance” (Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 10th ed.). The academic components of the early childhood curriculum are concerned with acquiring small discrete items of decontextualized information, usually related to preliteracy skills. Acquiring this information often requires some practice for real mastery. Different exercises, which often rely on memorization, are designed to help children acquire beginning mastery for later literacy and numeracy learning. The items learned and practiced require that children give the teacher the correct answers that they know she awaits. These bits of information are essential components of reading and other academic competencies. The big issue in the field is not whether academic skills matter; rather, it is when they matter.

Intellectual goals and their related activities, on the other hand, address the life of the mind in its fullest sense. The formal definition of the concept of the intellect emphasizes reasoning, hypothesizing, predicting, the search for understanding, and the development and analysis of ideas. I suggest that an appropriate curriculum for young children focuses on supporting their in-born intellectual dispositions—for example, the disposition to make the best sense they can of their own experience and environment. An appropriate curriculum in the early years is one that encourages and motivates children to seek mastery

of basic academic skills in the service of their intellectual pursuits. The children thereby will be able to sense the purposes of basic skills like writing and measuring.

One of my favorite examples is a project undertaken by a kindergarten class in a small town in central Illinois. Because the teacher was not able to take her children on field trips, she had to choose a topic that would allow the children to conduct investigations in their school. She asked the children to ask their parents, grandparents, neighbors, and others in their community if they had any kinds of old balls they could give them to take to kindergarten for their project. They collected more than a dozen different kinds of balls: a baseball, a football, a volleyball, a soccer ball, a billiard ball, beach balls of different sizes; a ping pong ball, a bowling ball, golf and tennis balls, and marbles. One child brought a gum ball, and another child brought an old world globe, which led to a discussion about whether or the globe was a ball.

One child said, yes it was, because it was round. But another one responded by pointing out that their lunch plates were round, but they were not balls. This led to a discussion of circles compared to balls. The teacher then introduced the concept of sphere, and the children enjoyed “spitting” that word to each other! Another child raised the question of the American football, which was a ball but not a sphere. But others pointed out that it does bounce. Another child pointed out that the globe wouldn’t bounce, but another said that the bowling ball wouldn’t bounce either. The children then divided into small groups, one to study the differences in surfaces, another predicted and measured the height of the bounce of each ball, others predicted and measured their weights, and so forth. Each group asked for help in recording its findings by writing down words and numbers. The children’s keen involvement in this investigation provoked a range of intellectual processes and provided contexts for the meaningful use of their developing academic skills.

You can [read more about the balls project](#) on the Clearinghouse on Early Education and Parenting Web site. [Tips for implementing the Project Approach](#) are available on the Illinois Early Learning Project Web site and its [Illinois Projects in Practice Web](#) site.

References

¹ Bredekamp, Sue (Ed.). (1987). Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs serving children from birth through age 8 (Exp. ed.). Washington, DC: NAEYC.

Current Early Care and Education Initiatives

Periodically in this e-newsletter, we provide updates on key professional development initiatives taking place in Illinois. Additional information and updates about each initiative are available on the Gateways Web site.

Teacher Preparation Assistance Grants from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)

In spring 2007, the Quality for All Committee (QFAC) in the Illinois Quad Cities received a **Teacher Preparation Assistance Planning Grant** from ISBE. The Quality for All Committee is a coalition of individuals from the Early Childhood Coalition of the Illinois Quad Cities Area, the Rock Island County Regional Office of Education #49, the Regional Offices of Education #27 and #28, Black Hawk Community College, and Western Illinois University. QFAC applied for the Teacher Preparation Assistance Grant to address the Type 04 early childhood certified teacher shortage in northwestern Illinois.

With the ISBE grant in hand, QFAC recruited a group, or cohort, of 13 people who held a bachelor's degree in elementary education and who were interested in completing a teacher education program leading to early childhood teacher certification. This cohort, which included individuals from minority and diverse populations, also had to agree to work in state-funded prekindergarten programs upon completing certification requirements. The ISBE grant offered participants financial assistance to cover the cost of tuition and books, a factor that QFAC previously had identified as a primary barrier to obtaining an early childhood certificate. ISBE grant funds can also be used to pay for child care for those attending classes.

QFAC arranged to have the coursework offered at **Western Illinois University** either online or at its Quad Cities campus on evenings and Saturdays. This schedule is convenient for individuals who work full time during the day and thus addresses a second barrier that QFAC identified to obtaining an early childhood certificate—inconvenient class scheduling.

The Teacher Preparation Assistance Grant recipients are expected to complete the 2-year certification program between spring and summer of 2009. Upon completion, the candidates must teach in an Illinois state-funded prekindergarten program for 5 years. Although each candidate has 10 years to complete his or her teaching commitment, he or she must begin teaching in an Illinois state-funded prekindergarten within 2 years of obtaining the Type 04 certification. To help grant recipients find employment, QFAC provides a listing of prekindergarten position openings and assistance in interviewing and resume writing.

The Teacher Preparation Assistance Grant also enabled QFAC to assist those who were not part of the initial cohort but who wished to further their early childhood education studies. **Black Hawk Community College** in Moline collaborated with Western Illinois University to implement the Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT) degree in **Early Childhood Education (ECE)**. The AAT creates a pathway between 2- and 4-year institutions of higher education so that students transferring from a 2-year institution have equal status at the beginning of their junior year with students who started college at the 4-year institution (often referred to as native students). This new option helps students who transfer from a 2-year to a 4-year institution avoid the time and cost involved in course duplication, which had been a significant barrier to degree completion in the past. In addition to the new AAT program, Western Illinois University will offer an early childhood program at its Quad Cities campus beginning in fall 2009. Previously Western's early childhood program had only been available at its Macomb campus.

In addition to QFAC, three other groups received the ISBE Teacher Preparation Assistance Grants in spring 2007. The fiscal agents and agencies are listed below. Grant provisions and timelines vary among the four grant recipients.

- Northern Illinois University/Rockford Public School #49
- Chicago Metropolitan Association for the Education of Young Children
- Erikson Institute/Child Care Resource Center

For more information about QFAC's Teacher Preparation Assistance Grant, contact:

Quality for All Project Coordinator
Rock Island County Regional Office of Education
3430 Avenue of the Cities
Moline, IL 61265
Phone: 309-736-1111

Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map (IECAM)

The Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map (**IECAM**) was developed by the University of Illinois Early Childhood and Parenting Collaborative and Chicago Metropolitan 2020 in response to the Illinois Early Learning Council's request for a publicly accessible interactive tool that could support "transparent" decision making about funding and planning for early childhood services around the state. This Web-

based tool brings together data on early care and education from state agencies (birth to 5), Head Start, and the private sector. IECAM also includes community demographic information that can be used by federal, state, and local government agencies to inform resource allocation in the state. The goal is to help public agencies and community planners use resources as efficiently as possible.

IECAM
Early childhood services and demographic data for the state of Illinois.

Illinois

Early Childhood Asset Map

Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map

The Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map (IECAM) provides a comprehensive picture of early care and education services in Illinois by combining up-to-date demographic information with early childhood program information from state agencies, Head Start, and private sector child care.

IECAM users can see—through information provided in tables or in maps generated by its Geographic Information System (GIS)—the distribution of early childhood services at the state level and in counties, townships, and legislative districts.

Where do I start? Whether you need a map of existing early childhood services in a specific area or a table of statistical data, IECAM is designed to meet your needs.

Search IECAM Data

IECAM IS NOT A CHILD CARE LOCATOR.

Parents, if you're looking for child care: [Find your local CCR&R](#)

News...

- The **IECAM Electronic Newsletter** is now available. Visit the [newsletter page](#) to read newsletters or sign up for **IECAMNEWS-L**.
- Help us improve IECAM by completing the [IECAM User Survey](#).

Quick Links...

- Interested in a presentation or training session about IECAM? Visit the [training request page](#).
- Looking for detailed information on early care and education in [Chicago community areas](#)?

Searching the IECAM Data Collection

Users can search the IECAM data collection for information on a variety of early care and education services (state prekindergarten or Preschool for All [PFA], Head Start, child care, etc.) and demographic indicators (population level, poverty level, home language use). Search results are displayed in a table. Data tables can be exported so that users can perform additional calculations or include the data in reports.

Users can also interact with a map of Illinois using IECAM's Geographic Information System (GIS) features. Users can identify early childhood service sites on the map, view data on individual sites, and explore the demographic characteristics of various geographic regions (e.g., counties, townships, and legislative districts).

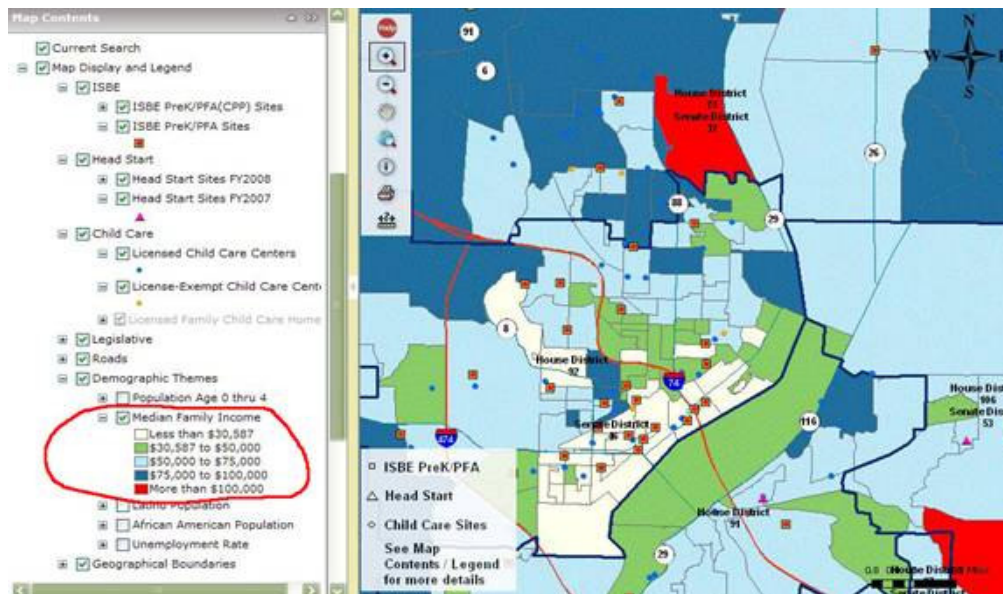
Using Demographic Theme Maps on IECAM

Users can zoom in to a specific region on the map to see what kinds of early childhood services exist in that region. The location of each child care center, licensed family child care home, state-funded prekindergarten/PFA classroom, and Head Start classroom will appear on the map.

The locations of early care and education programs can then be superimposed on “thematic maps” that show the following information:

- Population of children up to the age of 5
- Median family income levels
- Latino population levels
- African American population levels
- Unemployment rates

The following graphic shows one such use of IECAM's demographic theme maps for the Peoria area.



This map shows the distribution of Median Family Income across “census blocks.” The circled legend on the left (under Map Contents) explains which colors refer to which median family income range in the census blocks on the map. In this map, several early care and education site locations are plotted on top of the median family income map: ISBE prekindergarten/PFA sites, Head Start sites, and licensed and license-exempt child care centers.

By “turning on” different kinds of early care and education service sites and plotting them on top of different demographic theme maps in the Map Contents box, users can get a general idea of the early care and education services available in a specific area. IECAM does not give specific enrollment numbers nor predict the need for care. Instead, it is a starting point for studying service availability in a given community.

Understanding How to Use Data on IECAM

The data found on IECAM comes from a variety of sources, including the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), the Illinois Department of Human Services, the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (INCCRRA), and Head Start. Although it is the intent of IECAM to provide the most up-to-date data, it is also important to remember that the tables of data and the points on the GIS map only give you a snapshot of services in the geographic area selected. Some of the essential elements that make up the foundation for the IECAM project—the programs, people, and partnerships that sustain early care and education in Illinois—cannot be shown on a map or in a table. These include the community collaborations being developed and maintained throughout towns and counties across the state, as well as the partnerships formed with the expressed purpose of providing the highest quality of service delivery for young children. In order to understand how to best use the data found on IECAM, users will find it necessary to take the time to know and understand the communities, programs, and populations in a particular geographic area.

For more information about IECAM, contact:

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Phone: 217-244-3105

Web: <http://iecam.crc.uiuc.edu/>

New Gateways Resources

The following resources and resource links have been added to the Web site since the last issue of Inside Gateways.

Illinois and National Resource Links: Research Reports

After-School Programs and Academics: Implications for Policy, Practice, and Research

http://www.srcd.org/documents/publications/spr/22-2_afterschool_programs.pdf

Early Childhood Educators as Learners: Engaging Approaches for Professional Development.

<http://www.journal.naeyc.org/btj/200707/default.asp>

Ensuring Quality Care for Low-Income Babies: Contracting Directly with Providers to Expand and Improve Infant and Toddler Care

http://s242739747.onlinehome.us/publications/ccee_ensuring_quality_care_contracting.pdf

Professional Development: The Landscape of Opportunity in Early Care and Education

<http://cecl.nl.edu/research/issues/rnsu08.pdf>

Promoting a Pre-K to Three Vision for Early Learning

<http://www.nasbe.org/index.php/pub-archive/journal-archive/45-standard/426-promoting-a-pre-k-to-three-vision-for-early-learning>

Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act: Attracting, Supporting, and Keeping High Quality Early Childhood Educators

<http://www.naeyc.org/policy/federal/pdf/HEAhandout07.pdf>

The Science of Early Childhood Development: Closing the Gap between What We Know and What We Do

http://www.developingchild.net/pubs/persp/pdf/Science_Early_Childhood_Development.pdf

Successfully Supporting All Children in Early Education Programs

http://ddpc.state.ny.us/publications/childcare_education/child_care_pub_final.pdf

A Thinking Guide to Inclusive Childcare

<http://www.disabilityrightswi.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/02/thinking-guide-to-inclusive-child-care.pdf>

What Does Economics Tell Us about Early Childhood Policy?

http://rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB9352/index1.html

Illinois and National Resource Links: Advocacy

National Conference of State Legislatures: Early Care and Education Legislation Database
<http://www.ncsl.org/programs/cyf/ECELD.cfm>

Careers in ECE
http://www.ilgateways.com/careers_in_ece.aspx