

Ask Your Senators to Support Strengthening of CACFP

Last week, Senator Kirsten Gilligrand (D-NY) introduced the Access to Nutritious Meals for Young Children Act of 2009 (s. 2749). The bill will strengthen the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) by improving young children's access to nutritious meals in child care centers, homes, Head Start and Early Head Start.

The bill will bolster CACFP by:

- Increasing reimbursement rates for centers and homes.
- Adding a third meal or snack option, help to cover the cost of food for children who are in child care for longer hours. -
- Expanding CACFP family child care home area eligibility. -
- Increasing the reimbursement rate for CACFP sponsoring organizations.
- Streamlining and simplifying program and paperwork requirements.

Send a letter to Senator Durbin and Senator Burris asking them to support S. 2749.

This is the first of several bills that will be introduced as a part of Child Nutrition and WIC Act Reauthorization. Please stay tuned for more updates.

Governor Quinn Appoints Members to the P-20 Council

On Tuesday, Governor Quinn made 23 appointments to the P-20 Council, which will play a large role in Illinois' pursuit of \$400 million in federal Race to the Top educational funding. The council consists of experts from

P (preschool) through 20 (graduate school) and includes business leaders, teachers, parents, civic groups, university, community colleges and school officials. The council will have the responsibility of making recommendations to the Governor about strengthening Illinois' educational system.

To read the full release from the Governor's office, click [here](#).

Education Secretary Delivers Opening Remarks at NAEYC Conference

"I want our schools to get out of the catch-up business," U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan proclaimed at the opening of the annual National Association for the Education of Young Children conference. "To prevent the gap, we must be ready to dramatically improve outcomes for our children."

To prevent this achievement gap, Secretary Duncan touted the Administration's adoption of a birth to third grade agenda that will help early learning programs become better integrated with the K-12 system.

He also praised the “new partnership” between the Department of Education and Health and Human Services, a partnership that has already begun to “establish interagency groups to identify evidence-based practices and strong models in more than half-a-dozen areas: Early learning standards; curriculum and assessment; program quality and monitoring standards; bolstering the early childhood workforce; coordinated data systems; health and mental health promotion; and family engagement.”

To read Secretary Duncan’s full speech, click [here](#).

The 2010 Census: Info You Should Know!

The Constitution of the United States mandates that a count of every person living in the United States be taken every 10 years.

Why is an accurate count important?

Census data will determine the number of seats Illinois will occupy in the U.S. House of Representatives. Census data will also determine how more than \$400 billion of federal funds will be distributed throughout the United States. That money is used to fund crucial services every year, such as hospitals, schools, senior centers, emergency services, and job training centers. To read more about the importance of the Census, click [here](#).

How is the count taken?

The count is taken via Census forms that will be mailed to every address across the country in March of 2010. The form should be returned, by mail, no later than April 1, 2010.

Will a government employee come to my home?

A census employee may contact you if you do NOT return a census form at all. However, if you return your census form by April 1, 2010, no one will come to your door.

Right now, there is a lot of information – both fact and fiction – out there about the Census. Here are the **FACTS**:

- The nation’s toughest privacy laws protect all information gathered by the U.S. Census Bureau. No information may be shared with any person, business, or government agency at any level. All census workers are sworn into their positions, take an oath of confidentiality, and face a prison sentence of 5 years and a \$250,000 fine if any information about an individual is shared. Your information is safe.

- The 2010 Census will be one of the shortest and simplest in U.S. history. It will ask just 10 basic questions including: Name, Sex, Age and date of birth, Hispanic origin, Race, Household relationship, If you own or rent your home
- It requires less personal information than a typical credit card application. For example, the 2010 Census does NOT ask about bank account information, salary or income, citizenship or immigration status, and will never ask you for your Social Security Number.
- If a census employee comes to your home, you should ask to see identification. All census takers will have an official government ID badge, marked with their name. They may also have a "US Census Bureau" bag.
- The census taker will never ask to come into your home.
- The Census Bureau will not contact you by email. Do not type any financial information into an email that claims to be from the US Census Bureau - it is a scam.

REMEMBER: If you fill out your census form and return it by April 1, 2010, no government employee will come to your home. For more information on the 2010 census, please visit www.2010.census.gov and www.civilrights.org/census. Questions and comments should be directed to Joey Cavise at cavisej@actforchildren.org.

Save The Date: Rally at the Capitol on January 12, 2010

On January 12, 2010, as the legislators are returning to work in Springfield, the Responsible Budget Coalition will be holding a rally in the rotunda of the Capitol.

Next years' budget deficit is projected to be \$12 billion. As our Representatives and Senators return to Springfield, they must find a real solution to this budget crisis. Programs such as education, child care, health care and other human services are in danger of even larger cuts next year unless legislators pass the new revenue needed to fund these vital services.

Come join us as we fight to stop cuts that will harm Illinois families. More details to come.

Spring Into Action 2010 - March 23-24, 2010

Planning for Illinois Action for Children's annual public policy and advocacy conference is well underway. This year's conference will feature workshops on issues impacting children and families in Illinois, opportunities to meet with your legislators, and networking with early

care and education professionals and advocates. There will also be a keynote address from Judy Langford, Senior Fellow at the Center for the Study of Social Policy in Washington DC. Look for more information on how to register soon!

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