



2023 State Employee Child Care Centers Annual Report

**January 1, 2023 –
December 31, 2023**

In Accordance with 30 ILCS 590 Sec. 3, the Illinois Department of Central Management Services submits the following report to the General Assembly on or before December 31st.

Raven A. DeVaughn
Acting Director

2023 Annual Report on State Employee Child Care Centers

Overview of the Act

Pursuant to 30 ILCS 590, known as the State Agency Employees Child Care Services Act, the Department of Central Management Services (CMS) may authorize state agencies to contract for the provision of childcare services for their employees. To that end, the State of Illinois presently operates two on-site childcare centers, one located in Chicago and one in Springfield, as evidence of its commitment to provide a valuable service and benefit to state employees.

Childcare Center Annual Report

I. State of Illinois Child Development Center

The State of Illinois Child Development Center, located in the Michael A. Bilandic Building, 160 N. LaSalle Street, Chicago, Illinois.

Early Child Care Services, Inc. Director, Stacy Olszewski, managed the Center from 1997 through July 2023. Beginning August 1, 2023, the center has been managed by First Steps of Learning Centers of Illinois, Inc. The manager is now Charmaine Thomas, Regional Director for Illinois. Charmaine has been in the childcare field for 27 years and holds a Master's degree in Early Childhood Administration. The center has been accredited for over 20 years and received the Gold Circle of Quality by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).



The Center is licensed to care for children from ages 2 through 12 years. The hours of operation are 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday to align with most operational hours of State offices. There are five preschool classrooms all year and one school-aged summer camp group.

Currently, the average enrollment is 60 children. In fall of 2023, there were more openings than usual as many of the parents are working from home and no longer coming into the downtown area. Additionally, the center lost many 3-year-olds due to Chicago Public Schools opening their program to 3-year-olds in the 2022-23 school year. As people begin to return to working in their offices downtown, we are hoping to attract new State employees and have families return to our center once parents are back in the downtown area for work. We have flyers and signage to show presence in our building. Priority enrollment is given to children of state employees. The Center also provides care on a day-to-day basis for children who are not enrolled full-time in the Center and who work for the State of Illinois. The Center currently has vacancies and is actively reaching out to clients to market the Center. The 2023 rates for full-time and the summer camp program are listed below:

Full-Time Rates (based on age of birth)

2 years old	\$275/week
3 - 4 years old	\$265/week
Preschool/Kindergarten	\$265/week
6 years - 10 years for E-learning	NA

<i>Summer Camp Program Rates</i>	
6 years - 10 years	\$275/week

The Center prides itself on low turnover of teachers with an average length of employment of 8 years. All lead teachers have degrees in Early Childhood Education and 3 of those teachers have Bachelor’s degrees; one will have earned a Master’s Degree in Early Childhood Education in December 2023.

The Center offers spacious classrooms, a separate Discovery Room designed by the Kohl Children’s Museum, and a large outdoor playground located on the deck of the 21st floor of the Bilandic Building. The Center is staffed by dedicated and highly qualified early childhood teachers who provide a developmentally appropriate curriculum in a safe and nurturing environment. The innovative curriculum, based on the belief that children learn through play, includes whole language, math, science, social studies, art, music, movement, and computers. The children grow and develop socially, emotionally, cognitively, and physically during their time in the Center.

Due to the change of ownership, the Center was ineligible to renew its contract with Chicago Public Schools, as one of the requirements of that program is to be in business for one full year (details of previous contract below)

In 2008, the Center became part of the Chicago Public Schools in the Community Partnership Program which has enabled the Center to:

1. Increase the employees’ salaries based on their educational qualifications.
2. Financially assist Center employees to earn bachelor’s degrees.
3. Increase training opportunities for the staff.

By taking advantage of the program’s opportunities to better educate, train, and compensate the Center’s employees, the Center’s children and parents are afforded higher quality childcare and education.

The current contract (18-416-CMS-BOSS4-P-1380) for childcare services with Early Child Care Services, Inc. expires on May 15, 2026, with an additional 2-year extension option. This contract was awarded through CMS’ procurement process on May 16, 2018.

This contract became void upon dissolution of Early Child Care Services, Inc. It is the intent of First Steps of Learning Centers of Illinois to apply again as soon it meets eligibility criteria.

II. Capital City Learning Center, Department of Revenue



Capital City learning Center has been open for 7 years. The center is a sister company to Kountry Kids Learning Center in New Berlin and Rushville, Il. Owned by Kris and Stephanie Neuman, the center provides professional quality childcare to the Springfield area with the emphasis on learning. The Neumans bring years of experience in the field of early childhood learning,

as well as business administration.

The Center cares for children from ages 6 weeks through 5 years old. The hours of operation are 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday to align with most operational hours of State offices. The average full-time enrollment is 37 children, with a capacity of 43. There is a waiting list for enrollment comprised of approximately 75 children.

The 2023 rates for full-time are listed below:

Full - Time Rates (based on age of birth)	
6 weeks - 15 months old	\$275/week
15 months - 24 months old	\$265/week
2 years old	\$255/week
3 - 5 years old	\$245/week

The Center's Director is Lori Rice. Ms. Rice holds an associate degree and over 20 years of early childhood education experience. Ms. Rice is currently in her internship at NLU and will be graduating with her bachelor's degree in Infant Toddler Studies in December 2023.

The educational program is based on Creative Curriculum and Teaching Strategies Gold Standards. Capital City Learning Center has received the Gold Circle of Quality and Accreditation through the National Accreditation Commission. We have worked hard to achieve this goal and continue to strive each day to keep improving our quality of care to our families. We will be renewing our Accreditation and Gold status in the summer of 2024.

Capital City Learning Center strives to meet the needs of children and their families each day while at the same time building solid, positive relationships. Currently the Center is working with IDOR on moving to a new larger space to be able to serve more children. This space will continue to be in the Willard Ice Building.

Capital City Learning Center takes annual field trips in the fall. The Center visited places such as the Caterpillar Visitors Center, Jeffries Orchard, Chatham Public Library, and Ergadoozy. A new trip we added this year is the Children's Discovery Museum in Bloomington which will include riding the train. Everyone is very excited to have the

opportunity to experience this. Beginning in December, the Center will be hosting Family Fun Nights. This will give families opportunities to visit the Center and do activities with their child(ren), have a snack, and get to know other families. The Center is looking forward to finishing out the year with lots of fun, excitement, and learning.

The current contract (REV17Z4000) childcare services with Capital City Learning Center expires on June 30, 2024. This contract was awarded through the Illinois Department of Revenue procurement process.

Dependent Care Assistance Program

Both Centers accommodate State of Illinois employees by accepting payments through the flexible spending program. The flexible spending program allows for employees to set aside up to \$5,000 tax-free, per year through payroll deduction in order to pay for dependent care expenses.

The Illinois Department of Central Management Services reports strong employee participation since the program's inception in 1987. In calendar year 2023, an average of 2,193 employees statewide participated in the flex-spending program with contributions totaling \$7,342,881.00.