



children's home & aid

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March XX, 2023

Governor JB Pritzker
207 State House
Springfield, IL 62706

Dear Governor Pritzker,

Thank you for your thoughtful commitment to children and families in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 budget proposal. To further that commitment, the undersigned organizations would like to highlight an important issue impacting families across the state: the cost of diapers. As you are a national leader in supporting young children and their families, we strongly **urge you to include a publicly funded diaper allowance in the FY 2024 budget.**

Diapers can cost families any average of \$70 to \$100 per month, and approximately one in five families with young children in Illinois live below the federal poverty level and struggle to afford basic needs, including diapers. Diapers are not eligible for purchase through SNAP or WIC, so families needing diapers for their children are forced to decide between paying for diapers or other basic needs like food or rent. And this is all while diaper prices are rising rapidly. Since January 2019, the cost of diapers has increased by thirty percent, far outpacing inflation. Diapers are priced as a luxury, despite being a basic necessity for families.

Diapers are an integral part of childcare and child development. As you seek to commit a historic investment in early childhood care and education through Smart Start Illinois, the inability for caregivers to afford diapers can prevent attendance at childcare programs. Many childcare providers throughout the state require a family to provide diapers for their child. If they cannot provide diapers for the school day, the child cannot attend, and caregivers are forced to make alternate arrangements or skip work or school to care for their child.

Studies show that providing diapers is an excellent investment for the state. By providing families with an adequate supply of diapers, we can save them over \$1500 per year in medical costs and increase their personal incomes by \$11 for every dollar of diaper aid provided. Diaper need is also a significant stressor for caregivers. Many families can tell you the exact date and time their supply of diapers will run out. If something unexpected happens, they must scramble to pay for additional diapers they did not account for or create makeshift diapers from household supplies. This mental “diaper math” is a significant burden on caregivers and as a mom from our Stronger Beginnings home visiting programs in Metro East described “It seems like an easy thing but it’s not, it’s really not... it’s a whole side job to try and figure it out monetarily and what is ideally best for my child.”

A diaper allowance would make Illinois a national leader in combatting diaper need and move Illinois closer to your vision of being the best state in the country to raise a family. Thank you for your consideration of this important and impactful request. Should you have additional questions, please contact Eric Mayo, Public Policy Manager at Children’s Home & Aid, at 312-428-6872 or emayo@childrenshomeandaid.org.



Illinois DCFS License
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Sincerely,

Children's Home & Aid