

# STATE EMPLOYEE CHILD CARE CENTERS 2016 ANNUAL REPORT



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## **2016 Annual Report on State Employee Child Care Centers**

### **Overview**

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

### **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, celebrated its 24th successful year in September 2016. Early Child Care Services, Inc., Stacy Olszewski, Director, manages the Center. The Center is currently preparing for its accreditation visit from the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Ms. Olszewski personally holds a credential as a director, preschool and infant/toddler.

There are three full-time teachers in each of the four classrooms and an additional small classroom with one teacher and ten five-year-old children. Children ages two through five are provided full-time care with priority enrollment given to children of state employees. The Center has been running at or near capacity since 2001. When there is space available, the Center provides care on a day-to-day basis for children who are not enrolled full-time in the center and whose primary caregiver is unavailable. The center prides itself with very low turnover of teachers with the average length of employment of eight years for lead teachers. Four out of five lead teachers have bachelor's degrees in Early Childhood Education.

In 2004, the Center began providing care for six and seven-year-old students with a cultural summer program. The children are able to take full advantage of the museums, libraries and special events located in the Chicago area. The summer program has proven to be a huge success as parents are offered high quality summer child care that includes fun and educational opportunities for their children.

The Center offers spacious classrooms, a separate Discovery Room designed by Kohl Museum, and a large outdoor playground, recently replaced in October 2013, located on the deck of the 21<sup>st</sup> 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 their way, science, social studies, art, music, movement, and computers. The children grow and develop socially, emotionally, cognitively, and physically during their time in the Center.

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; and
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 child care and education.

### **Capital City Learning Center, Department of Revenue**

Capital City Learning Center opened its doors on July 11, 2016. The Center is a sister company to Kountry Kids Learning Centers located in New Berlin and Rushville, Illinois. Owned by Kris and Stephanie Neuman, the Center provides professional quality care to the Springfield area with an emphasis on learning. Stephanie has her bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education and is currently working on her master's degree in Early Childhood Administration. Combined, the Neuman's bring many years of experience in the field of Early Childhood and Business Administration to the City of Springfield. The Center cares for children ages six weeks to five years.

The Center Director is Jodi Garrett who has nearly 20 years of early childhood experience with ten of those years serving as Director. Ms. Garrett has her bachelor's degree and plans to begin working towards her master's degree. The current staff consists of six teachers and three assistant teachers. All the teachers have experience and education in the field of early childhood education. The Center is currently at full capacity, has a waiting list and is taking new enrollment applications daily.

The Center uses Creative Curriculum for the lesson planning of the children. Their philosophy is children learn through play and language. The children's development is very important and the teachers strive to work together to meet the needs of each child. Capital City Learning Center experienced a great summer upon opening their doors with their little learners. This fall, the children participated in various activities including a parade for Halloween throughout the Department of Revenue and decorated a tree to display at Memorial's Festival of Trees annual event.

### **Dependent Care Assistance Program**

State of Illinois employees can pay for the care of their dependent children with tax-free dollars by utilizing flexible spending accounts. Employees may set aside up to \$5,000 annually through payroll deduction for this purpose.

The Illinois Department of Central Management Services reports strong employee participation since the program's inception in 1987. In calendar year 2016, 1,816 employees statewide participated in the program with contributions totaling \$4,757,246.64.