

STATE EMPLOYEE CHILD CARE CENTERS 2018 ANNUAL REPORT



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2018 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 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.

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, celebrated its 26th successful year in September 2018. The Center offers spacious classrooms including a separate Discovery Room designed by Kohl Museum, and a large outdoor playground located on the deck of the 21st floor of the Bilandic Building which was recently replaced in October of 2012.

Early Child Care Services, Inc. Director, Stacy Olszewski, has managed the Center since 1997. The center has been accredited for over 20 years and is currently awaiting the most recent accreditation results from NAEYC. Ms. Olszewski holds a bachelor's degree and is credentialed as a director, preschool and infant/toddler instructor.

The Center is licensed to care for children from ages two 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. The rates of care are competitive, and the Center takes pride in the services provided. The full-time weekly rates for attendance range from \$205-\$210, depending on the age of the child. The summer camp rate is \$210 per week. Non-State families are charged an additional \$10 per week to attend.

The average enrollment is 80 children per week, 46 of which are State employee's children. The non-State families are employed with the city, county and/or federal government. There is a waiting list for enrollment comprised of approximately 10

children whose parents work for the State but they are not yet eligible due to age and another 10 children whose parents work for other government agencies. Priority enrollment is given to children of State employees. The Center has been running at capacity since 2001. When there is space available, the Center provides care on a day-to-day basis for children who are not enrolled at the Center full-time, but their primary care giver is unavailable.

In 2004, the Center began offering a robust summer camp for school-aged children, this group is known as the Green group. During this camp, children have the opportunity to visit many museums and libraries as well as participate in special events located in and around the Chicago area. The summer program has proven to be a huge success as it offers parents an option to have high quality summer care for their children that includes both fun and educational opportunities.

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 turnover rate is impressively low with an average length of employment of eight years. All lead teachers possess a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education. 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 Partnership 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.

II. 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 holds a Master's degree in Early Childhood Administration. Combined, the Neumans bring years of experience in the field of early childhood learning, as well as business administration to the City of Springfield.

The Center cares for children from ages six weeks through five 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 and part-time enrollment is 33 children, with a capacity of 39. There is a waiting list for enrollment comprised of approximately 20 children whose parents work for the State. The full-time weekly rates for attendance range from \$195 to \$225, depending on the age of the child. The part-time rates are \$48.75-\$56.25 per day depending on the age of the child.

The former Center's Director, Jodi Garrett, retired in July. The new Center's Director is Lori Rice. Ms. Rice hold an Associate's degree and over 15 years of early childhood education experience. Ms. Rice plans to pursue a Bachelor's degree beginning in 2019. The current staff consists of seven teachers, all of whom have Associate's degrees.

The educational program is based on the Creative Curriculum and Teaching Strategies Gold standards. In February, the Center earned a Silver Circle of Quality recognition and is currently working to achieve the Gold Circle of Quality along with obtaining accreditation through the National Accreditation Commission.

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. One way it achieves that goal is hosting a variety of fun, community and family-friendly activities. Some of the activities include planting gardens,, hosting an annual Halloween Parade, participating in and attending the Festival of Trees, visiting the pumpkin patch and learning activities at "Safe House."

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 2018, an average of 2,116 employees statewide participated in the flex-spending program with contributions totaling approximately \$7,568,287.