

## *Are you doing all you can for our children?*

This question can be asked of ourselves and the community and state stakeholders with whom you speak/meet. And we MUST speak now!

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you at the recent administrators' conference. The fiscal crisis before us may be more daunting than the programmatic crisis presented by then governor Ryan in 2002. At that time we organized and incorporated the Illinois Association for Early Childhood Educators and Administrators. The Association has been resurrected and we hope to use it as a means to advocate and share ideas, successes and challenges. We hope to maximize internet communication so that we can benefit from and in our home communities. We hope you will be interested in participating in some manner. Email me at [mlyon@galesburg205.org](mailto:mlyon@galesburg205.org) so I can get your name and information in the loop. Keep telling the stories and work hard on the advocacy for without it the future is very gloomy.

## Messages from our conference

### Message points:

Preschool changes lives

Use the research based benefits which include less crime and more graduation

[www.cehd.umn.edu/icd/cls](http://www.cehd.umn.edu/icd/cls)

Prek allows us to serve Illinois's children earlier

"The sooner we start, the farther they go"

There are not other funding sources for prek other than the block grant

While programs have struggled this year to serve children, there are serious concerns that FY10

Funds or less will result in many fewer children being served. Speak about how the projections affect your community.

Relevant information: The 10% cut was approximately \$40 million. The block grant only reached 90% with the use of \$150 million in federal ARRA (state stabilization) funds. The federal funds will not be available for FY2011. Hence to return to the level of FY2009 the state will have to find \$190 million. If not found that would be a 50% cut from FY2009 levels. Statewide half the children would not be served; look at your classes which half does not deserve the program? Or do you have the local resources? Most do not!

### Suggested actions:

Appear at all public forums in your community.

Let them know what preschool looks like and does in your community

Speak to many non education groups in the community... example a Chamber of Commerce

Build local coalitions: one example of a statewide collation is: *Fight Crime: Invest in Kids*, an initiative of Sheriffs' Assn, Police Chiefs and State's Attorneys

Voter registration

Candidate forums on early childhood

Activities to mobilize the voice from your parents... education and directed action

Please act. If we don't; no one will. We can and we must advocate .For example, NAEYC standards for high quality Early Childhood Education Programs includes: The program encourages staff and families to work together to participate in and support community improvement or advocacy projects.

I look forward to hearing from you and having you join us in keeping our programs alive into the future.

Respectfully,

Maury Lyon *for the Association*  
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