

FAMILY RESOURCE

TOOLKIT

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Welcome to the Family Resource Toolkit

Stronger Together

At the Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (ICAAP), we believe that all families deserve the tools and support they need to grow, heal, and thrive, no matter their background, income, or circumstances. That's why we've gathered Illinois-specific resources to support you.



This toolkit has resources that can make a big difference in a child's life, things like:



Healing and Equity:

Resources to support families facing trauma and to promote fairness and inclusion.



Healthcare and Mental Health:

Services that help you access medical care, counseling, and emotional support.



Housing Stability:

Help finding safe, stable, and affordable places to live.



Employment and Financial Support:

Tools for finding jobs, building financial stability, and help should you need it..



Food Access:

Programs that help your family get healthy, nourishing meals.



Immigrant and Refugee Support:

Services that protect and empower families living in a new country.

We know that asking for help isn't always easy, but every parent and caregiver deserves support! These resources are here to walk alongside you, provide relief during hard times, and open doors to new opportunities and healing.

You are not alone. Together, we can build strong, nurturing environments where children feel safe, loved, and ready to thrive.

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Understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

What Parents & Guardians Should Know

As parents and caregivers, we all want the best for our children. Life, however, can bring unexpected challenges, and sometimes, children go through tough experiences that can affect their health and development. These experiences are called **Adverse Childhood Experiences, or ACEs**.



ACEs can include things like:

- Living through the loss or separation of a parent or caregiver
- Being around conflict, violence, or abuse (even if not directed at them)
- Having a family member struggle with mental health, substance use, or incarceration
- Facing instability like frequent moves, housing issues, or food insecurity



IT'S IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER:

ACEs are not a reflection of someone's parenting. They're about what a child is exposed to — often things beyond anyone's control.



Why It Matters

When children experience high levels of stress without enough support, it can affect how their brains and bodies grow. This is known as toxic stress, and over time it can impact:

- Learning and focus
- Managing emotions and behavior
- Forming healthy relationships
- Physical health, even years down the line

Research shows that ACEs can increase the risk of health issues later in life, like heart disease, depression, or substance use. But that risk is not a guarantee! Especially when children are surrounded by love, support, and stability.

How We Can Support Our Children

The most powerful protective factor for children is having at least one caring, consistent adult in their lives. Even when hard things happen, healing and resilience are possible.

Here's how you can help:

- Listen with empathy and make space for your child's feelings
- Provide routines and reassurance to help them feel secure
- Ask for support when things get hard, especially from friends, family, teachers, or professionals
- Take care of yourself, too. Your well-being matters for both you and your child
- Celebrate progress, not perfection. Showing up with love goes a long way
- Use all available resources, to help address any adverse experiences your child may face.

Preventing ACEs is a goal we all share, but when they do occur, healing is always possible. Together, we can create safer, more nurturing environments where all children and families have the chance to thrive.



TED Talk on ACEs

This powerful TED Talk by Dr. Nadine Burke Harris explains ACEs and how early trauma affects long-term health. It's an informative video about the science behind ACEs and the importance of early intervention.





RESOURCES TO

Support Healing & Promote Equity

Every family deserves to feel safe, seen, and supported. This section includes organizations and services that promote healing, equity, and trauma-informed care. Whether you or your child have experienced hardship or are simply looking for extra support, these resources can help you build resilience and find community. You don't have to go through challenges alone, there is support available.

[AAP Parenting Website: HealthyChildren.org](#)

A trusted resource from the American Academy of Pediatrics offering articles, videos, podcasts, and webinars on parenting topics for every stage — from infancy through adolescence.

[Sesame Street for Families](#)

Offers kid-friendly videos and activities on difficult topics like trauma, grief, and homelessness. Also includes tools for parents, caregivers, and providers — with many resources available in multiple languages.

[Lurie Children's Mental Health Resources for Marginalized Populations](#)

Lurie Children's Center for Childhood Resilience provides trauma-informed resources and mental health support, with a strong focus on children from underrepresented communities.

[REACH Initiative – Resilience Education to Advance Community Healing](#)

REACH is a resource for families of children with mental health concerns. Here you will find information on advocating for your child's mental health needs, figuring out fact from fiction when it comes to child mental health, helpful child mental health websites, and a list of practitioners who have completed REACH training.

[Resilience Supportive Schools – Illinois](#)

A free program that supports schools and educators in Illinois with tools and resources to improve the mental health and wellbeing of their school communities.

[Safe2Help Illinois](#)

A confidential, 24/7 program where children and adults can report concerns related to safety, bullying, mental health, or violence. The goal is early support — not punishment.

[AAP Healthy Children Podcast](#)

Engaging podcast series hosted by pediatric experts covering health, development, safety, and emotional well-being for children of all ages.

[Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline](#)

Available 24/7 at **1-877-863-6338**, this statewide hotline offers confidential support, shelter assistance, safety planning, and legal advocacy for individuals experiencing domestic violence.



RESOURCES FOR

Accessing Healthcare & Mental Health Services

Health is a foundation for everything, from learning and growing to feeling well. Your pediatrician or health care provider is your partner in securing a healthy future for your child and should always be your first resource when you have questions. In this section, you'll find additional resources to help your family access medical care, mental health services, and emotional support. Whether you need help finding affordable coverage, a local clinic, or counseling for your child, these services are here to help you prioritize your family's health.

HRSA Find a Health Center

A national map of Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). Enter your ZIP code to find low-cost or free clinics near you. Language assistance is available at no charge by calling **1-301-443-5636**.

Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights – Find a Health Center

Interactive map of health clinics across Illinois that welcome everyone, regardless of immigration status. Clinics provide primary care, testing, and more.

Immigrant Health Coverage – Get Care Illinois

Explains the types of health coverage available to immigrants living in Illinois, including programs regardless of immigration status.

HFS Medicaid Guide

A detailed guide to Illinois Medicaid — who qualifies, how to apply, and what services are covered.

CDPH Mental Health Services

School Counselors can also help with academic, career, and social-emotional development.

Get Covered Illinois

The official health insurance marketplace for Illinois. Offers support with enrollment and free, in-person help. Call **1-866-311-1119** to speak with a navigator.

Get Care Illinois

Step-by-step guide to finding the right health insurance in Illinois. Includes materials in multiple languages like Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, and Polish.

Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)

CHIP offers affordable health coverage for children in families that make too much to qualify for Medicaid. Also covers pregnant people. Call **1-800-318-2596** to apply.

Non-Emergency Transport Services for Those On Medicaid

Illinois Medicaid offers non-emergency transportation to help eligible clients get to and from medical appointments. This page outlines how to schedule rides, who qualifies, and what services are available.

RESOURCES FOR

Safe, Stable, & Affordable Housing

Every child deserves a safe place to call home. In this section, you'll find housing assistance programs, emergency shelters, rent support, and tools for finding long-term, affordable housing. Whether you're in crisis or planning ahead, these services are here to help you and your family stay secure, supported, and sheltered.

When You Need Immediate Housing

Housing Action Illinois – Statewide Housing Referral Resources

A statewide directory of housing services organized by region. Use this tool to find local Continuums of Care (CoCs), which help coordinate housing and support services for individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

211 Hotline

Dial 211 from anywhere in Illinois to connect with an operator who can help you find housing, food, mental health services, and more in your community. This is a free, confidential service available 24/7. Outside metro Chicago, 211 will route you to your nearest support network.

Emergency and Transitional Housing Providers

A statewide program offering emergency and transitional shelter for people experiencing homelessness or at risk of losing their housing. Includes links to local providers who may be connected with regional CoCs.

Homeless Youth Provider Agencies

Designed specifically for youth facing homelessness, this program offers emergency shelter, transitional housing, education and job support, and life skills development to help youth build a safe and self-sufficient future.

Eviction Help Illinois Hotline

Call: **1-855-631-0811**

Text: **844-938-4280** (English) or
844-938-4289 (Spanish)

Free, confidential support for renters facing eviction. Get connected to legal assistance, financial aid, and housing resources across Illinois.

Illinois Housing Development Authority – Housing Help is Here

Offers rental and utility assistance, foreclosure prevention, and access to free legal help for eviction issues — including court-based support.

State Homeless Prevention Program Providers

Provides emergency assistance for individuals and families at risk of homelessness. Includes help with rent or mortgage, utilities, and case management to stabilize housing.

Public Housing Resources (HUD Illinois)

Federal housing information for Illinois residents, including access to Section 8 vouchers, public housing programs, and a hotline for those experiencing domestic violence.

Illinois Department of Children and Family Services – Norman Services

Norman Services provide housing-related support for families at risk of separation due to lack of shelter, food, or basic needs. May include emergency housing assistance or support to help reunify families.

Emergency Housing Services for Veterans

This government resource provides information on emergency housing assistance for veterans and others facing urgent housing crises. It includes links to shelters, financial aid programs, and housing support.

Resources for Veterans Experiencing Homelessness

The VA's Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program offers housing stability and rapid re-housing support to low-income veteran families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Getting Support for Other Basic Needs

Meeting Basic Needs of Families Experiencing Homelessness and Housing Insecurity – Illinois Early Learning

A helpful guide listing resources across Illinois that support families with basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing, diapers, and safety — especially useful for those experiencing housing instability.

Early Head Start & Head Start for Families Experiencing Homelessness

Children and pregnant individuals experiencing homelessness are automatically eligible for Early Head Start and Head Start. These programs offer free early childhood education and support services, even for families temporarily living with others or in shelters.

Homeless Youth Handbook – Chicago Coalition for the Homeless Law Project

A legal and practical guide for youth experiencing homelessness in Illinois. Covers housing rights, education, healthcare, and more — helpful for young people and for professionals supporting them.

Educational Rights & Support for Families Experiencing Homelessness

Families facing housing instability have special rights under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, which ensures children and youth can continue their education without disruption. These resources explain what those rights are, and how you can access them.

Rights of Families Experiencing Homelessness – Tip Sheet (Illinois Early Learning)

A simple, visual guide explaining the rights of families experiencing homelessness under the McKinney-Vento Act. Great for quick understanding and sharing.

McKinney-Vento Factsheet (English – ISBE)

Learn about eligibility and benefits under McKinney-Vento. This factsheet outlines the services available to children in temporary housing situations, such as staying with relatives due to economic hardship.

ISBE McKinney-Vento Homelessness Program

Official resource hub from the Illinois State Board of Education. Offers information for families and students about their educational rights under federal law.

ISBE Multi-Language Fact Sheet Printable Flyers

Flyers explaining McKinney-Vento rights are available in multiple languages including Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, Polish, and more — to ensure families of all backgrounds have access to support.

ISBE School Wellness Hotline / McKinney-Vento

Call (800) 215-6379 or email Homeless@isbe.net to reach the statewide McKinney-Vento coordinator. They can help answer questions or direct you to local support.

McKinney-Vento Lead Area Liaison Map (PDF)

A color-coded map showing McKinney-Vento contacts by region across Illinois. Useful for finding the right person to help in your area.

McKinney-Vento District Homeless Liaison Locator

Use this tool to find the local liaison assigned to your school district. They can help with immediate school enrollment and support services for children experiencing homelessness.

Video: McKinney-Vento Parent and Caregiver Overview (YouTube)

A short, helpful video explaining how McKinney-Vento works, what rights families have, and how to access education-related support.



RESOURCES FOR

Employment, Financial Support, & Economic Stability

Economic stress can weigh heavily on families, but there are programs and supports available to help lighten the load. This section includes job placement resources, financial assistance, and tools for building long-term stability. Whether you're seeking a new opportunity or trying to make ends meet, these services are here to help you move forward with confidence.

Illinois Job Link

A statewide job search site where you can filter listings by location, education level, pay, and more. Free to use and regularly updated with new opportunities.

Illinois workNet

Offers career support services including training programs, virtual workshops, and job coaching. Specialized assistance is also available for youth, veterans, and individuals with disabilities.

Illinois workNet Service Finder

Use this locator tool to find local career centers, employment support programs, and job training services available in your community.

Resume Writing Guide and Builder – Illinois workNet

Create or update your resume using free online tools. Requires a free Illinois workNet account to access the resume builder.

Illinois Financial Wellness Hub

Offers educational tools to help you manage your finances — from budgeting and reducing debt to planning for homeownership or college savings.

Ticket to Work Program (Social Security)

Free program for individuals receiving disability benefits who want to return to work. Includes job training, placement assistance, and continued support.

Call **1-866-968-7842** or TTY **1-866-833-2967**

RESOURCES FOR

Food Access & Nutrition Assistance

No child should go hungry. This section connects families with programs that ensure access to healthy, nourishing food. From food pantries to school meal support to grocery assistance, these resources are here to help you put meals on the table without shame or stress. Good nutrition fuels everything, and help is always available throughout Illinois.

[WIC Brochure – Illinois Department of Human Services](#)

A printable brochure explaining the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program, which provides nutrition assistance for pregnant people, new parents, and young children.

[WIC Program – Illinois DHS](#)

Learn how to apply for WIC benefits, including access to healthy food, nutrition education, and support for moms and babies.

[Illinois Department of Human Services – Help is Here](#)

Explore a wide range of state programs including SNAP (food stamps), WIC, and cash assistance. Use this page to start the application process or find help near you.

[Greater Chicago Food Depository – We Got You Illinois](#)

Campaign to help young adults and families find food, diapers, health services, and housing support in the Chicago area.

[Find Free Food – Greater Chicago Food Depository](#)

Search by ZIP code to find free groceries, meals, and diapers at pantries and community centers in Chicago and Cook County.

[Find Food Illinois – Eat.Move.Save.](#)

Interactive statewide map to help you find nearby food pantries, meal programs, and SNAP enrollment assistance.

[2-1-1 Illinois Assistance Hotline](#)

Dial 2-1-1. Call anytime to connect with local food assistance programs, housing resources, and health services — available statewide, 24/7.

[Student's Guide to Overcoming Food Insecurity](#)

Designed for college students, this guide shares where and how to access food support on or near campus — including SNAP eligibility and on-campus pantry listings.

[Eat. Move. Save. – Recipes and Tips](#)

Family-friendly recipes and tips to make healthy eating easier on any budget. Many resources available in English and Spanish.

[HealthyChildren.org – Nutrition Guide](#)

Nutrition tips from the American Academy of Pediatrics, including guidance on meal planning, portion sizes, and balanced diets for every age.

[USDA MyPlate](#)

Interactive tools and meal planners to help families create nutritious, affordable meals using simple food groups.

[Oldways](#)

Offers traditional, culturally inclusive eating guides like the Mediterranean, African Heritage, and Latin American pyramids — with recipes and shopping tips.

[Breastfeeding Resources for Moms – Illinois Public Health Institute](#)

Support and guidance for breastfeeding parents, including local programs and links to national breastfeeding resources.

[Find Summer Food | We Got You Illinois](#)

This easy-to-use site helps families locate free summer meals for children and teens across Illinois. Just enter your zip code to find local meal distribution sites and program details.

[Summer Meals and LunchStop Program](#)

Chicago Public Schools offers free, nutritious meals to students and youth 18 and under during the summer months through their Summer Meals and LunchStop programs. No registration or ID is required.

RESOURCES FOR **Immigrant & Refugee Support**

Navigating life in a new country comes with challenges, but you're not alone. This section includes legal services, language support, family assistance programs, and advocacy groups that support immigrant and refugee families. These resources are here to protect your rights, support your journey, and make sure you and your children feel safe, included, and empowered.

[Parole in Place Benefits and Eligibility – Work Permits 4 All](#)

Helpful site explaining eligibility for immigration benefits under Parole in Place (PIP), including work permits and legal protections for military families and other specific groups.

[Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights – Immigrant Family Resource Program \(IFRP\)](#)

IFRP connects immigrant families with local community-based organizations that offer culturally and linguistically responsive services, including public benefit enrollment and legal support.

[Illinois Map of Welcoming Centers & Family Resource Programs \(in Spanish\)](#)

An interactive map showing Welcoming Centers and Family Resource Programs across Illinois. Many services are bilingual or Spanish-language focused, especially in the Chicago area.

[Illinois Department of Human Services – Statewide Resources for Immigrants and Refugees](#)

A comprehensive guide to programs available for immigrants and refugees, including legal aid, healthcare access, and language support.

[Illinois Department of Human Services – Support Services for New Arrivals](#)

State-supported resources for recent immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees. Offers connections to food, shelter, legal assistance, and employment support.



You Are Not Alone

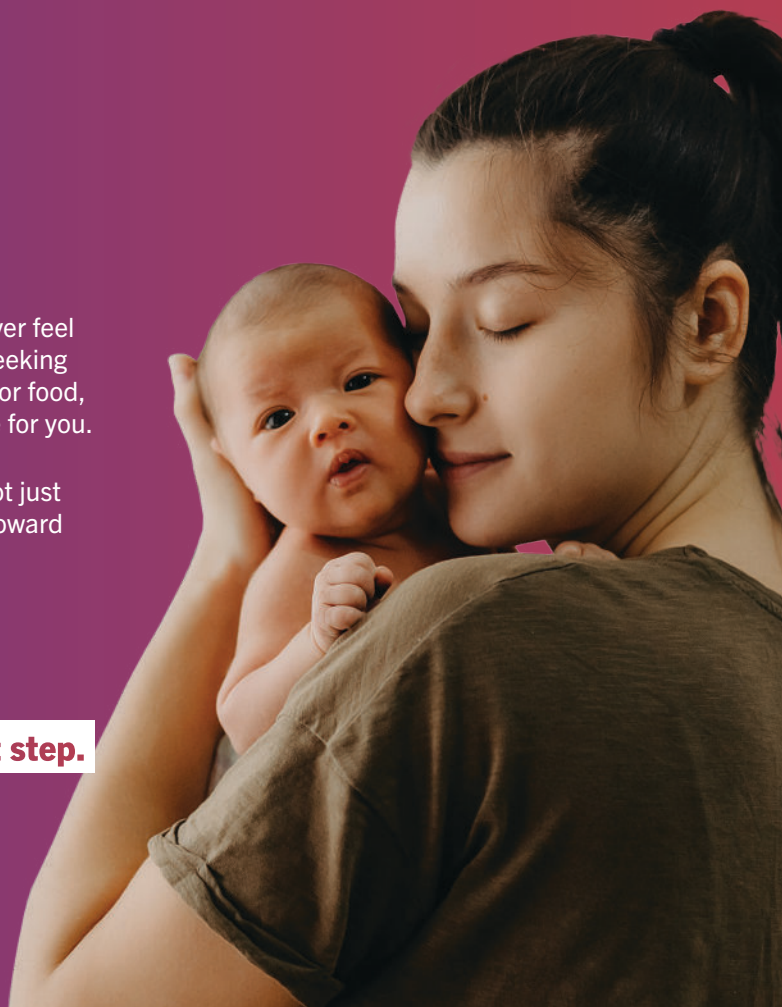
At ICAAP, we believe that no parent or caregiver should ever feel alone when navigating life's challenges. Whether you're seeking support for your child's development, looking for housing or food, or exploring healthcare or legal options, this toolkit is here for you.

Every resource in this guide is designed to support you, not just in moments of crisis, but as part of your family's journey toward healing, growth, and resilience.

We encourage you to explore the sections that speak to your needs.

Reach out. Ask questions. Take that first step.

You're doing the most important work there is:
caring for a child and building their future!



Together, with care, knowledge, and connection, **we can create a future where all children and their families have the opportunity to thrive.**



Illinois Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics

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Visit beacon.illinois.gov for information about community-based resources and state-funded support programs near you.