



CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**Barbara T. Bowman**  
Chief Officer

January 26, 2010

To Early Childhood Principals, Administrators, Teachers and Staff:

The *Early Childhood Healthcare Outreach* (ECHO) initiative, a collaboration between the Office of Early Childhood Education (OECE) and the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) Children and Family Benefits Unit (CFBU), is a new service to help families apply for **All Kids**, the Illinois health insurance program. **All Kids** provides **free and/or low-cost health insurance to all children** living in Illinois who are 18 or younger, **regardless of their immigration status and income**. Our mission is to make sure **"Every Child in Early Childhood has Health Insurance!"**

**BENEFITS FOR OUR STUDENTS:**

- Children between 0-5 years are at a critical developmental stage. Regular medical checkups, as well as access to a primary physician, are vital to their well-being. These services are hard to access for children without health insurance. The ECHO agents will help ensure that more children have access to important health services.
- Healthy children are less likely to miss school, and good attendance contributes to better educational outcomes.
- ECHO will help families comply with physical and immunization requirements.

**BENEFITS FOR FAMILIES:**

- Two ECHO agents, one of whom is bilingual, will provide application assistance and case management over the telephone; there is no need for a parent to make a trip to the local Illinois Department of Health Services (IDHS) office.
- Illinois offers programs to insure eligible parents and guardians (FamilyCare), as well as pregnant women in need of prenatal care and their newborns (Moms & Babies).
- Families with private health insurance may be eligible for a premium rebate.
- Agents can conduct Parent Education Seminars to help educate parents about **All Kids** and the importance of health insurance for children.

**HOW YOU CAN HELP:**

- Refer families to the 3-ECHO hotline number (773-553-3246).
- Invite an ECHO team member to speak at parent meetings, Health Clinic Days, open houses, or any other events for parents that take place at your school; or to speak with school staff to spread the word about ECHO.

If you have any questions about the ECHO Initiative or would like to plan an event, please contact Emila Badrov at (773) 553-2734.

Sincerely,

Barbara T. Bowman

BTB:pac

c: Dr. Barbara Eason-Watkins  
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OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

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