

## **LWVIL 2015 Biennium Report: Children's Services**

### **Jan Kay: Issue Specialist**

LWVIL and LWVUS have strong positions in place regarding social policies for positive results after actions are taken to aid at risk individuals and families. Unfortunately, the numbers of those at risk has risen in Illinois. The issues under the Social Policy portfolio include employment, transportation, child care and housing and income. The LWVIL works alongside many research/policy organizations to optimize our advocacy efforts.

LWVIL looks to organizations such as Voices for Illinois Children and Oz of Prevention and others in issues around families and the children who need help in order to live on a daily basis. Child care is of utmost importance to families who work many and varied hours each day and yet cannot afford to pay for the entire cost of the care for the children. The child care workers must be well trained and pass background checks and health and safety standards must be met.

**Voices for Illinois Children** and LWVIL support child care assistance for low income working families by keeping co-payment requirements at a reasonable level. In May 2013, LWVIL urged our U.S. Senators to vote for the Marketplace Fairness Act to collect taxes that were owed our state. Funds then would be invested in K-12 education, preschool, child care and other services needed. In Aug. 2013 along with Voices for Illinois Children, LWVIL supported action by Congress that provided grants for high quality preschool to all low and moderate income families with 4-year-olds. In the wake of the January 2015 tax cut and the large loss of revenue of over \$5 billion, thousands of families faced "dramatic cuts to programs and services that build a stronger Illinois."

A recent Harvard study showed the "role that geography plays in shaping a child's chances of future success." Counties with high family incomes dramatically increased a poor child's odds of moving up in the economic ladder and vice versa. DuPage County in suburban Chicago and Fairfax County , VA were the top places economically and Baltimore, MD was at the bottom, especially for boys. "The places in America where poor kids have the most economic mobility are, by and large, not where blacks live."