

SCHOOLS



SCHOOLS: Early Childhood Education

Illinois' landmark strides in early childhood care, education and development together form a national success story. These efforts reflect extensive research underscoring the great scope of brain development during children's earliest years and the potential for responding to such opportunities with a range of high-quality programs. They draw upon years of experience and planning, as well as the dedication of parents, educators, advocates and policymakers.

But Illinois' success story is far from complete. The Preschool for All approach has gradually but greatly expanded young children's access to educational services in recent years—an enrollment increase of 54 percent between FY2004 and FY2008. Aimed at offering voluntary, high-

quality preschool programs to 3- and 4-year-olds, Preschool for All prioritizes funding for services for children at risk of school failure and thereby funds few programs serving middle-income families.

The program's growth has been slowed by tight state resources, which trimmed a combined \$32 million from forecasted funding increases in FY2008-2009. Such shortfalls have added to the state's prekindergarten waiting list of nearly 17,500 children; that official figure does not reflect the needs of many other youngsters who cannot yet obtain services their parents want. Furthermore, Preschool for All's promise is uncertain because it is neither permanently authorized nor fully funded. More resources are needed to reach the goal of "for all."



Child care and Head Start programs are vital, vibrant components of Illinois' early learning system. But each faces challenges to expand their capacity. Enrollment in Head Start has been flat since FY2003, although the federal funding allocated to the state for this program has increased slightly, by nearly 5 percent, over the same time period. Moreover, many low-income, working parents struggle to cover the co-payments they must make to participate in state-supported child care—fees that can total 10 percent or more of a family's income. More resources are desperately needed to shore-up Head Start's proven,

educational and developmental supports for young children and to improve the affordability of child care for low income families.

Preschool for All's funding mechanism—the Early Childhood Block Grant—also helps support two sets of developmental services for children who are in particular need from birth to age 3. Prevention Initiatives provide intensive services to the families of at-risk infants and toddlers—for example, helping parents obtain a high school diploma. Parent Training programs include resource centers and phone lines to help moms and dads answer their questions about kids' healthy growth and development. But needs have vastly outpaced funding increases for these programs.

The same is true of Early Intervention (EI) services, which include a variety of therapies and other supports for children ages 36 months and younger with developmental delays, eligible mental and physical disabilities, or threats of such challenges. EI participation rates have increased 16 percent since SFY2004 and funding has grown 20 percent. Illinois' chronically late reimbursements to EI providers greatly hinder program quality—and threaten many programs' outright collapse.

We must increase resources and redouble our efforts to ensure an array of crucial, well-supported services are available for young children whose parents want them to participate in enriching, educational experiences before their formal years of schooling. After all, science provides ample evidence of the importance of such opportunities for kids' success throughout school and the rest of their lives. If we want to bolster children's learning, their preparation for the workforce, and their likelihood of becoming strong leaders for tomorrow's households and communities, our work begins today.



Early Childhood Education

Licensed Child Care, License-Exempt Child Care, and Licensed Family Child Care, June 2006

	Illinois	Illinois without Chicago	Chicago
Licensed Child Care Centers			
Number of sites	2,484	2,021	463
Total licensed capacity	187,674	153,414	34,260
License-Exempt Child Care Centers			
Number of sites	564	483	81
Total reported capacity	42,509	36,359	6,150
Licensed Family Child Care Homes			
Number of sites	9,604	7,653	1,951
Total licensed capacity	81,437	63,921	17,516

Source: Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map, University of Illinois

Early Intervention Program Participation Rates for Children Under Age 3 by Region, Illinois

	SFY2004	SFY2005	SFY2006	SFY2007	% Change
Number served	15,389	16,647	17,039	17,936	16.6%
Illinois	2.9%	3.0%	3.1%	3.3%	—
Cook County	2.7%	2.9%	3.1%	3.4%	—
Collar Counties	2.9%	3.1%	3.1%	3.1%	—
Downstate	3.1%	3.4%	3.3%	3.5%	—

Source: Illinois Department of Human Services

Early Intervention Program Data, Illinois

	SFY2004	SFY2005	SFY2006	SFY2007	% Change
Program expenditure (Numbers in 000's)	\$104,505.70	\$116,454.80	\$119,652.80	\$126,026.00	20.6%
Number of grantees	25	25	25	25	0.0%

Source: Illinois Department of Human Services

Illinois Early Childhood Prevention Initiative Program Participation by Population Served, FY2007

Population Served	Participants
Families contacted directly to participate	40,208
Children served	16,352
Parents served	15,611
Pregnant teenage parents	1,590
Pregnant adult mothers	2,598
Parents on a waiting list	2,948
Parents exiting the program	3,781
Parents served at home	7,746
Parents participating in play groups	7,070

Source: Illinois State Board of Education

The Illinois Early Childhood Prevention Initiative Program supports the development of infants and children from birth to age 3 by focusing on children and families in high-risk areas through a network of community service providers. It is funded by the Early Childhood Block Grant.

Illinois Early Childhood Prevention Initiative Program Participant Characteristics, FY2007

Participant	Number	Percent
Mother	8,550	88.5%
Father	824	8.5%
Grandmother	102	1.1%
Grandfather	4	0.0%
Other relative	25	0.3%
Legal guardian	24	0.2%
Foster parent	53	0.5%
Other	78	0.8%
Participant Race/Ethnicity		
White	3,182	33.0%
Black	2,942	30.5%
Latino	3,024	31.4%
Asian/Pacific Islander	219	2.3%
American Indian/Alaska Native	14	0.1%
Multiracial	256	2.7%

Source: Illinois State Board of Education

Illinois Early Childhood Prevention Initiative Program Characteristics of Child Participants, FY2007

	Number	Percent
Enrolled in KidCare	2,122	22.0%
Enrolled in Medicaid	4,927	51.1%
High-risk birth	658	6.8%
Developmentally delayed	547	5.7%
Enrolled in Early Head Start	338	3.5%
Involved with social service agency(ies)	1,522	15.8%
Receiving Early Intervention services	808	8.4%
None of the above	2,015	20.9%

Source: Illinois State Board of Education

Early Childhood Education

Head Start Program State Enrollment and Allocation, Illinois

	Enrollment	Funding
FY2003	39,619	\$259,780,216
FY2004	39,640	\$263,047,115
FY2005	39,672	\$267,111,453
FY2006	39,640	\$270,041,013
FY2007	39,640	\$267,812,098
FY2008	39,640	\$271,880,496
% Change	0.1%	4.7%

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families

Number of Sites for Public Preschool and Head Start, Illinois and Chicago, FY2007

	PreK and Preschool for All	Head Start
Illinois total	1,448	642
Illinois without Chicago	964	269
Chicago	484	373

Source: Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map, University of Illinois

Children Served by the Illinois Prekindergarten At-Risk Program

	FY2003	FY2004	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007*	FY2008*	% Change
Children served	55,984	59,652	72,652	76,508	85,186	91,808	64.0%
Second year in program	15,883	15,887	17,244	20,997	19,848	17,630	11.0%
Children served first year	40,101	43,765	55,408	55,511	65,338	74,178	85.0%
Percent eligible children served	72%	74%	86%	82%	74%	72%	—
Children on waiting list**	10,912	10,165	8,773	11,897	17,195	17,468	60.1%

* Includes data from the Preschool for All program

** Projects report children on the waiting list based on only those parents who opt to be placed on the waiting list. Some parents enroll their children in Head Start or another preschool program and would not be on a waiting list. Children who were on a waiting list in the previous school year could have been enrolled in the current school year.

Source: Illinois State Board of Education