Illinois Preschool Expansion Program Model
Birth-to-Third Grade Continuity Conference
2018

Governor’s Office of Early Childhood Development

Illinois State Board of Education
James T. Meeks, Chairman
Tony Smith, Ph.D., State Superintendent of Education
Preschool Development Grants
Preschool Development Grant

• $226 million awarded in Year One, renewable for four years

• Administered by the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services

• Funding awarded to 18 states for either development or expansion
Preschool Expansion in Illinois
Illinois’ Preschool Expansion

• In 2017 we began funding PFA-E programs with state money to match federal funds and increase total number of children served in this high quality model.
Head Start and Illinois’ State Plan

• Head Start programs are a key part of Illinois’ approved plan and an ideal foundation for a successful Expansion program

• 29 out of 40 Expansion compliance requirements generally align to the Head Start Performance Standards

• Head Start requirements for comprehensive services and parent engagement generally exceed Expansion requirements
Preschool for All: A Strong Foundation

Illinois’ robust Preschool for All program provides a strong foundation for the Preschool Expansion model, including:

• Teacher qualifications and class size
• Curriculum and assessment
• Inclusion of children with special needs
Expansion Components
High-Quality Preschool Program

- Staff qualifications
- Professional development
- Salary parity
- Staff ratio and class size
- Full-day programming
High-Quality Preschool Program

• Inclusion and individualized supports
• Standards-aligned curricula
• Comprehensive services
• Continuous improvement
New Components
Eligibility and Priority

• Federal eligibility
  – 4 years old by September 1\textsuperscript{st}
  – 200 % < FPL
• Priority Populations
  – Children from homeless families
  – Children from families below 50% FPL
  – Children involved in the child welfare system
  – Children with IEPs
• Mandatory Weighted Eligibility Form
Recruitment Process

- Identify community resources
- Engage and educate families

- Collect eligibility information
- Maintain contact

Recruitment
Waiting List

- Enroll eligible families!

Enrollment
Selection

- Prioritize families
- Maintain waiting list
Full Day Services

• Full day programming and full school year (1st grade equivalent)
• Salary parity for teachers
Key Staff

- Focus on administrative capacity and development of sustainable systems
- Program administrator
- Instructional leader
- Parent educator
Instructional Leader

• Qualifications
  – Bachelors in child development or early childhood education
  – Experience in early childhood field
  – Culturally and linguistically competent to the service area

• Professional Development

• Observation and coaching

• Instruction quality
Family Educator

• Qualifications:
  – Experience in child development, ECE, Social Work or related field
  – Culturally and linguistically competent to the service area

• Parent engagement/education

• Eligibility and recruitment

• Attendance

• Facilitating comprehensive services

• Connection to resources
Family Support and Engagement

• Family Support
  – Family assessment
  – Resource referral
  – Goal setting
  – Follow-up and documentation

• Family Engagement
  – Parent Advisory Council
  – Family education opportunities
Comprehensive Services

• Medical and Dental Homes
• Mental Health Services
• Collaborative Partnerships
Supports to Programs

• Program support specialists assist programs in building systems and solving barriers to compliance

• Targeted professional development supports programs in meeting new expectations

• Online resources for program administrative team
Community Impact

Communities across Illinois have used the Preschool Development Grant – Expansion Grant as a catalyst for stronger community collaborations between:

– School districts and Head Start programs
– Early childhood programs within a community
– Programs serving families who are at-risk and early childhood programs
Next Steps
Learn More

Visit our Preschool Expansion website for additional information and resources, including:

– Archived webinars
– Upcoming professional development
– Sample job descriptions
– Tools and best practices

https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Preschool-Development-Grant-Expansion-Grant.aspx
Thank you for joining us today

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