Distinguishing Features of Different Levels of Education

	Infancy and Toddlerhood (birth – age 3)	Early Childhood (Pre-K)	Elementary School (K-8)	High School (grades 9-12)
Philosophy	 Learning begins at birth Family education and parental support and encouragement are needed to help children who are at-risk and have developmentally delays and disabilities develop optimally during the crucial early years of life. 	 Early learning and development are multidimensional. Each child is unique and develops skills and competencies at their own rate. Young children learn through active exploration of their environment in child-initiated and teacher-guided and supported activities. Play and authentic activities provide a supportive context for child development and learning. 	 Teacher facilitated instruction Learning to think and process information Problem-solving approach Concept development 	 Team teaching Student driven learning Meta-cognitive instruction
Vision, mission, purpose, values	 Establish basic trust through the provision of loving, stable, nurturing and positive parent-child relationships. Support families in promoting their child's optimal physical, communication, adaptive, social-emotional, and cognitive development. Facilitate the child's participation in family and community activities. 	 Establish opportunities for young children to learn through active exploration of their environment by engaging in activities, exploring materials, and interacting with peers and adults through a balance of child-initiated and teacher-guided and supported activities. Young children are competent and capable of positive developmental outcomes. There should be high expectations for all children. Providers meet the needs of each child through individualization 		 Trusting themselves and developing their ability to negotiate the world Independent citizenship Transition into adulthood Productive and responsible member of community

	Infancy and Toddlerhood (birth – age 3)	Early Childhood (Pre-K)	Elementary School (K-8)	High School (grades 9-12)
Laws	 El Services- State Entitlement IDEA Part C 	 IDEA/Illinois Rules and Regulations Case Law LEA Policies and Contract Language 	 Illinois School Code NCLB IDEA/Illinois Rules and Regulations Case Law LEA Policies Educational Rights/Constitution LEA Contract Language 	 Illinois School Code NCLB IDEA/Illinois Rules and Regulations Case Law LEA Policies Educational Rights/Constitution LEA Contract Language
Funding	 El Services- IDEA Part H Funds, Central Billing Office, Medicaid funds Families billed on a sliding fee scale and insurance plans are billed Birth-Three Prevention Programs- ISBE Early Childhood Block Grant funding 	 IDEA Part B Funds Medicaid Funds Pre-K Funds-Early Childhood Block Grant; Mandated Categorical Funds Children receiving special education services or programs are provided a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) 	 Local Property Taxes State Aid IDEA Part B Funds Title I Funds Mandated Categorical Funds Transportation State and Federal Grant Funds Medicaid Funds 	 Local Property Taxes; State Aide IDEA Funds Title I Funds Mandated Categorical Funds Transportation State and Federal Grant Funds Medicaid Funds
Administrative structures	 Early Intervention-DHS EI Provider contracts, Child-Family Connections System Point of Entry Service Coordination Illinois Interagency Council on Early Intervention Prevention Initiative – ISBE & LEA oversight Prevention Initiative Grant Contract 	 ISBE –LEA Pre-Kindergarten Grant Program Contract LEA and School Board oversight of Superintendent and building level administration State approved Director of Special Education 	 LEA and School Board oversight of Superintendent and building level administration State approved Director of Special Education 	 LEA and School Board oversight of Superintendent and building level administration State approved Director of Special Education

	Infancy and Toddlerhood	Early Childhood	Elementary School	High School
	(birth – age 3)	(Pre-K)	(K-8)	(grades 9-12)
Curricular adoption, evaluation	 Prevention Initiative Programs- ISBE recommended research based program models and curriculum for parent education: Parents as Teachers, Baby Talk, Healthy Families America, Early Head Start Center-Based; Supplemental 0-3 services: Doula, Fussy Baby Network, Strengthening Families Illinois; Key Services include: personal home visits, parent group meetings, developmental screening, connection with community resources and goal setting; El Principles- Intervention must be linked to specific goals that are family-centered, functional, and measurable. Intervention strategies focus on facilitating social interaction, exploration and autonomy, IFSP built around family routines, with written home activity programs to encourage family participation in developmental and therapeutic activities daily. 	 Research-based Curriculum Aligned to Illinois Early Learning Standards Focus on adoption of intervention curriculum in accordance with Rtl model LEA decision making versus state adoption Specialized curricular materials available through Illinois Materials Service center and Assistive Technology Exchange Network 	 Research based and aligned to Illinois State Standards(moving toward National Standards) Focus on adoption of intervention curriculum in accordance with Rtl mode Curriculum adoption driven by LEA Vision, Mission and School Improvement Plan Grade level and team based adoption LEA decision making versus state adoption Specialized curricular materials available through Illinois Materials Service Center and Assistive Technology Exchange Network 	 Research based and aligned to Illinois State Standards (moving toward National Standards) Focus on adoption of intervention curriculum in accordance with Rtl model Curriculum adoption driven by LEA Vision, Mission and School Improvement Plan Departmentally based adoption LEA decision making versus state adoption Specialized curricular materials available through Illinois Materials Service Center and Assistive Technology Exchange Network

	Infancy and Toddlerhood	Early Childhood	Elementary School	High School
	(birth – age 3)	(Pre-K)	(K-8)	(grades 9-12)
Human resources (staff supervision and development)	 El System: training, supervision, credentialing and technology support by DHS Illinois El Training Program El Monitoring Program Provider Connections Birth-Three Prevention Programs: ISBE and LEA oversight ISBE 0-3 Program Standards and Quality Indicators & Resource Guide Illinois Early Learning Standards ISBE Annual Birth-Three Conference 	 ISBE and LEA oversight District Professional Learning Communities Staff evaluation LEA allocation of time and resources for professional development Mentoring Program Peer-based coaching and evaluation Professional organizations and ISBE Early Learning Standards STARNET Educational Resource Centers 	 ISBE and LEA oversight District Professional Learning Communities; staff evaluation LEA allocation of time and resources for professional development Mentoring Program; peer-based coaching and evaluation; professional organizations and Illinois Learning Standards for kindergarten and Elementary Education Educational Resource Centers. 	

	Infancy and Toddlerhood	Early Childhood	Elementary School	High School
	(birth – age 3)	(Pre-K)	(K-8)	(grades 9-12)
Expectations/ goal setting	 (birn - age s) Prevention Initiative Program: Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP); Illinois 0-3 Program Standards and Quality Indicators & Resource Guide; Illinois Early Learning Standards; ISBE Prevention Initiative Program specifications and requirements; Goal is to work in partnership with parents to share child development and parenting information using a structured research-based curriculum. Parents observe their child's skills and interact with their children through developmentally appropriate activities. Early Intervention System: Family's participate in assessment of family concerns and priorities related to the child and family. Child outcomes linked to assessment results and family priorities; child outcomes focus on facilitating child developmental domains (cognitive, communication, physical, social-emotional, and adaptive) and social interaction, exploration and autonomy; Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) child outcomes built around family routines, with written home activity programs to encourage family participation in developmental and therapeutic activities daily. IFSP family outcomes address family-related priorities. 	 (rre-k) Individual Education Plan; Illinois Early Learning Standards LEA expectations and implementation of curriculum with rigor and integrity Rtl implementation; assessment data School readiness 	 (K-8) Individual Education Plan Illinois Learning Standards for Kindergarten and Elementary Education; LEA expectations and implementation of curriculum with rigor and integrity Rtl implementation State and district assessments Graduation 	 (grades 9-12) Individual Education Plan Illinois Learning Standards for High School Education LEA expectations and implementation of curriculum with rigor and integrity Rtl implementation; state and district assessments Graduation and post secondary goals and requirements Employment

	Infancy and Toddlerhood	Early Childhood	Elementary School	High School
	(birth – age 3)	(Pre-K)	(K-8)	(grades 9-12)
Instructional strategies	 Prevention Initiative Program: Evidence based program models and curriculum for parent education: Parents as Teachers; Baby Talk; Healthy Families America; Early Head Start Center-Based; supplemental 0-3 services: Doula, Fussy Baby Network; Strengthening Families Illinois; home-based; relationship focused; parent modeling; parent education; parent support. Early Intervention System: evidence-based strategies focus on facilitating development in developmental domains (cognitive, communication, physical, adaptive, social- emotional) and social interaction, exploration and autonomy, Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) built around family routines, with written home activity programs to encourage family participation in developmental and therapeutic activities daily. 	 Young children learn through active exploration of their environment in child initiated and teacher guided and supported activities Play and authentic activities provide a supportive context for child development and learning Young children should be provided the opportunity to engage in activities, explore materials, and interact with peers and adults through a balance of child initiated, teacher initiated and supported activities, and embedded learning opportunities Implementation of research based curriculum and instructional strategies Children receiving special education services or programs are afforded access to the general education curriculum and instructional strategies as are their non-disabled peers Related services (e.g. Speech/Language therapy, OT/PT therapy, social work services, nursing services, etc.) are provided when they are required in order to assist a child in obtaining benefit from the educational program. 	 Elementary age students learn through a combination of teacher selected and child initiated activities through 3rd grade with gradual shift toward student's assuming more responsibility for learning. Instruction is aligned to Illinois Learning Standards utilizing evidence based practices. Children receiving special education services or programs are afforded the same instructional strategies as their non-disabled peers. Related services (e.g. Speech/Language therapy, OT/PT therapy, social work services, nursing services, etc.) are provided when they are required in order to assist a child in obtaining benefit from the educational program. 	

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	(birth – age 3)	(Pre-K)	(K-8)	(grades 9-12)
Outcome accountability	 The IFSP documents the family functional outcomes developed by the service team, including the parents, reviewed at least every six months and rewritten annually by the IFSP team. Early Intervention outcomes: prevention or reduction of future special education or related services. Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO) document progress in child development and family support Prevention Initiative outcomes: future school success. 	 Outcomes for children eligible for special education programs or services: the reduction of future special education or related services and more educational services delivered in the LRE. An IEP documents the child's measurable annual goals, services and Least Restrictive environment; the IEP also describes how progress will be measured; the IEP team reviews the IEP annually. Pre-K outcomes: future school success. Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO) document progress in child development and family support. 		 Outcomes for children eligible for special education programs or services: the reduction of future special education or related services and more educational services delivered in the LRE. High School outcome: data driven instruction; state assessment data; AYP; graduation requirements, attainment of post secondary goals and requirements; employment.

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	(birth – age 3)	(Pre-K)	(K-8)	(grades 9-12)
Family relationships	 Families are the primary caregivers and educators of young children. Parents acquire information about child development, parenting topics, and positive parent-child interactions while gaining support from other parents. Parents share information about their child and family. Connect families to needed resources. Parents participate in child and family assessment and development of IFSP. 	 Families are the primary caregivers and educators of young children Parents acquire information about child development, parenting topics, and positive parent-child interactions while gaining support from other parents. Connect families to needed resources. Parents share information about their child and family. Parents must be a member of any team (e.g., planning or placement) that makes decisions regarding the education of their child, if eligible for special education services. 	 Family and school partnerships are essential for positive student outcomes. Relationships supported via Parent Teacher Organizations. School Foundations; Parent- Teacher Conferences. Web Access to school staff and student information; volunteering; community partnerships; parent clubs that support school activities. Parents must be a member of any team (e.g. planning or placement) that makes decisions regarding the education of their child, if eligible for special education services. 	 Family and school partnerships are essential for positive student outcomes. Relationships supported via Parent Teacher Organizations. School Foundations Parent-Teacher Conferences Web Access to school staff and student information Volunteering Community partnerships Parent clubs that support school activities Parents must be a member of any team (e.g. planning or placement) that makes decisions regarding the education of their child, if eligible for special education services.

	Infancy and Toddlerhood	Early Childhood	Elementary School	High School
	(birth – age 3)	(Pre-K)	(K-8)	(grades 9-12)
Transition planning	 Early Intervention Program: process begins when child is 2 years 6 months of age; transition planning conference held 90 days before the child's third birthday; 23 IL Administrative Code requirement 226,.110 (3); ISBE Document "When I'm 3, where will I be? A Family's Transition Workbook. Prevention Initiative Program: process includes registration of children at LEA, proof of residency, participation in Pre-K screening process. 	 Special Education students: IEP determines placement and program services annually; parents are members of the IEP team and have input into placement and services decisions Early childhood personnel are facilitators of transitions to elementary school and empower families to advocate for their child's education. Students transitioning from El to Early Childhood can access services and program placement through their IFSP. 	 Elementary staff are facilitators of transitions to high school. Curriculum articulation between elementary schools and high schools. Explore assessment data; articulation between elementary schools and high schools regarding sports, band and other extracurricular activities. LEA's must address Indicator 13 of Illinois Special Education State Plan regarding transition planning for education, post secondary education, training and independent living for IEP students at age 13 ½ and every year subsequent until high school graduation or receipt of certificate of completion as legislated by federal and state regulations. 	 Shadow days for elementary schools to visit high school Freshman orientations; summer freshman academies. Special education students become the fiscal responsibility of high school at age 14 ½ regardless of grade promotion from elementary school IEP students do not need diploma from elementary school to enter high school. Transition planning for IEP students is legislated at 14 ½ by federal and state regulations, and every year subsequent until high school graduation or receipt of certificate of completion. Transitions supported by Guidance Counselors.

	Infancy and Toddlerhood (birth – age 3)	Early Childhood (Pre-K)	Elementary School (K-8)	High School (grades 9-12)
Services offered	 Early Intervention Services: Developmental Screening, Service Coordination; Developmental Therapy, Speech/Language Therapy, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Nurse Services, Social Work/Counseling Services, Dietitian Services and others; El services are provided in natural environments within the home or community. Prevention Initiative Services: Home visits, Center-based services; parent education groups, infant/toddler play groups, field trips, infant massage, Parent Café's, toy/book lending library, developmental screening, new born hospital visits. 	 Scientifically based and developmentally appropriate curriculum that address cognitive, communication, physical, adaptive, , and social-emotional development and other related services as needed (e.g. Social Work, Nursing, Speech, etc.). Children who are eligible for special education services receive special education and related services in the least restrictive environment 	Core Curriculum: Reading/Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Science, Health/Physical Education, and may include Fine Arts and other extra-curricular activities and other related services as needed (e.g. Social Work, Nursing, Speech, etc.)	Core Curriculum: English/ Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Science, Foreign Language, Health/Physical Education, Fine Arts and other curricular and extra-curricular activities; Guidance Counselor services and other related services as needed (e.g. Social Work, Nursing, Speech, etc.)
Demographics of learners	 El Program: a child must have a 30% delay in one area of development or a documented medical condition or disability, as determined by the IDHS, Bureau of Early Intervention. Pl Program: for enrolling families prenatally or prior to children turning 4 months, eligibility based on family and environmental risk factors obtained through a parent interview assessing environmental, economic and demographic information; for children age 4 months or older, criteria also based on performance on approved screening instrument 	 Students, ages 3 to 5, determined to be eligible for special education services with an IEP. Student ages 3-5 years who are at-risk of school failure. All students must be residing within the LEA boundaries and meet strict residency requirements, with the exception of the homeless (McKinney Vento Act). 	 Students, ages 5 to 14 1/2, determined to be eligible for special education services with an IEP. Students, ages 5-14 years. All students must be residing within the LEA boundaries and meet strict residency requirements, with the exception of the homeless (McKinney Vento Act). 	 Student, ages 14 ½ to 22 years, determined to be eligible for special education services with an IEP. Students, age 14 through graduation eligibility. All students must be residing within the LEA boundaries and meet strict residency requirement, with the exception of the homeless (McKinney Vento Act).

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Settings (school, community)	 Home based natural environment Community infant care centers and other natural environments in the community School based Prevention Initiative programs 	 LEA Elementary School facility Community Pre-school and Day Care Centers Special Education Cooperative facilities 	 LEA elementary school facilities; Charter Schools Private/Parochial facilities Special Education Cooperative school facilities 	 LEA High School facility; Junior Colleges Community Vocational settings; Tech centers Sheltered Workshops for IEP students Special Education Cooperative Centers; Charter School Magnet Schools Private/Parochial school facilities
Special Education	 Early Intervention System: Child Family Connections Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) delivered within a natural environment within the home or community by DHS credentialed personnel Early Intervention Services Service Coordination 	 Mandated Programs/Services: IEP/IFSP delivered by LEA in the least restrictive environment Special Education and Related Services documented on IEP Service Plan for eligible students attending a private/parochial school 504 Plan for students who are not eligible for special education but who have documented disabilities Provision of hospital and home based instruction for students with IEPs Suspension of students with disabilities and LEA's requirement to provide FAPE 	 Mandated Programs/Services: IEP delivered by LEA in the least restrictive environment The IEP team may recommend a more restrictive environment Service Plan for eligible students attending a private/parochial school Provision of hospital and home bound instruction for IEP students Suspension of students with disabilities and LEA's requirement to provide FAPE LEA responsible for provision of FAPE for students who are court adjudicated 	 Mandated Programs/Services: IEP delivered by LEA in the least restrictive environment, unless IEP team recommends a more restrictive environment Service Plan for eligible students attending a private/parochial school Provision of hospital and home bound instruction for IEP students Suspension of students with disabilities and LEA's requirement to provide FAPE; LEA responsible for provision of FAPE for students who are court adjudicated