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News and updates from  
Early Childhood Development



**Illinois**  
State Board of  
Education

July 2023

**Prevention Initiative**

## FY 2024 Prevention Initiative Monitoring

Programs selected for monitoring visits this fiscal year will be notified by September.

### Monitoring as an Opportunity for Meaningful Growth

Early childhood professionals do some of the most challenging and essential work out there. The long hours and complex nature of the job often mean that administrative tasks are low on the priority list. Recordkeeping is important but tough to prioritize when giving all of your energy to supporting families in need. When you receive notice that your program is scheduled to be monitored, it suddenly feels much more urgent -- and the stress of the backlog can feel overwhelming.

There is no arguing that it can be uncomfortable to have someone from outside your organization review your program documentation and ask interview questions. Having your schedule interrupted can be frustrating. But it also can be an incredible opportunity — a chance to gather meaningful information about a program that highlights its successes and captures ideas for improvement.

What are the benefits of Quality and Compliance Monitoring?

- Monitoring provides a structured roadmap for elevating both program quality and accountability.
- Monitoring contributes to the development of clearly articulated standards.
- Quality evaluation tools capture program successes and help grantees identify areas for continuous improvement beyond basic compliance.

When grantee programs excel in these areas, program staff and families benefit. Building high-quality programs creates high-quality local systems and, ultimately, high-quality state systems.

At VWG, we take continuous quality improvement seriously, including our own. Our PI monitoring team collects survey information from grantees to continually improve our processes; reduce the burden of monitoring on the grantee; develop highly organized, practitioner-driven data collection methods; and retain expert staff with deep knowledge of the early childhood field. While monitoring may never be anybody's favorite process, I hope you will start seeing it as a positive opportunity to create meaningful growth and think of your assessor as an advocate, teammate, and colleague who is as passionate about serving families as you are. In the end, that is the most important thing any of us can work toward, and it is why we are all here doing our part to ensure that vulnerable members of our communities have everything they need to thrive

*By Laura Abbruzzese  
Program Manager, Prevention Initiative Monitoring  
Vander Weele Group*

### Resource for Families

Illinois Contraceptive Access Now is a statewide initiative to make birth control easier to get in Illinois. For more information to share with families you work with, see [this website](#).

### Parent and Outcome Questionnaires

Remember to submit the data required for the Parent and Outcomes Questionnaires by **Aug. 31**. More information can be found [here](#).

**Preschool for All/ Preschool for All Expansion**

*Congratulations!*  
**2023 Pyramid Model Consortium  
 Champion Award Winner  
 Principal Tonia Williams**  
 James Mitchem Early Childhood Center  
 Valley View District 365U



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### **Pyramid Model Champion**

Tonia Williams, principal of James Mitchem Early Childhood Center in Valley View District 365U, received the 2023 Pyramid Model Consortium Champion Award for Pyramid Model at the most recent National Training Institute on Effective Practices. The Pyramid Model is a framework of evidence-based practices for promoting young children's healthy social and emotional development.

### **Raising Awareness Campaign**

The Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development has launched the Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) Raising Awareness Campaign. The intention of this campaign is to increase awareness, provide an understanding of IECMHC, answer questions, increase/expand the number of consultants, and provide overall support for the IECMHC profession. Take a moment to review the [one-pagers and videos!](#)

### **Multilingual Learners**

All preschool programs for children ages 3 to 5 that are administered by a public school district, including charter schools and Regional Offices of Education, must adhere to the rules under Part 228 (Transitional Bilingual Education). This includes preschool programs that are subcontracted by districts to community organizations and preschool programs that districts administer regardless of the source of funding.

The district must have families of all children new to the district, including preschool children, complete the [Home Language Survey](#) by the first day the student starts to participate in the preschool program. The survey contains two questions as outlined in 23 Ill. Adm. Code 228.15(a). If the answer to one or both of the questions is "yes," then the district must screen the child for English language proficiency.

Review our [Serving English Learners in Preschool Programs in Illinois Public School Districts Frequently Asked Question Document](#) for more information.

### **Exelerate Ratings**

Programs receiving a monitoring visit this year should expect for Exelerate Ratings to be sent to them in late summer.

### **Preschool for All/Expansion Monitoring**

Programs selected to be monitored this fiscal year will be notified in late August.

## Early Childhood Special Education

### New Resources for Teachers

We have developed several new resource documents. Please take a look and share with your teams.

- [New Teacher Orientation](#): This document provides suggestions to help orient new early childhood special education teachers. The priority trainings offer background information on early childhood requirements. The secondary trainings enhance classroom practices. General resources are also provided.
- [Guiding Questions for Discussing Services in the Least Restrictive Environment](#): This document provides questions designed to guide the placement discussion. These questions can be used for discussion during an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting or during the evaluation process.

### New Legislation

Amendments to [23 IAC 226.720](#) related to early childhood special education classroom age ranges became effective on Feb. 6, 2023. Prior to approval of this amendment, a student with an IEP could remain in an early childhood special education classroom if they turned age 6 during a school year. The amended language now states, “**Early childhood classes and services shall serve only children from three through five years of age.**”

This language is consistent with requirements under Preschool for All and Preschool for All Expansion programs to serve children ages 3 to 5 years. Children who are age-eligible for kindergarten cannot be enrolled in an Early Childhood Block Grant program.

### Outstanding Practices in Inclusion Recognition

Does your program implement high-quality inclusive practices? If you do, you will want to consider applying for the Outstanding Practices in Inclusion recognition that will be celebrated at the Sharing A Vision Conference in 2025. Early CHOICES, which is the ISBE Preschool Inclusion Initiative, along with the Early Childhood LRE Stakeholders Consortium, will administer the recognition. Please visit this [webpage](#) for an overview of the [recognition](#).

Register [here](#) for the informational webinar, which will be at **10 a.m. Sept. 7**.

## Kindergarten/KIDS

### KIDS Implementation Training Now Available

The required Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS) Implementation Training is now available in an online course format. If you are an educator or an administrator who has not yet completed or is in need of completing the required KIDS Implementation Training, follow this [link](#) to register.

Please allow 1-2 business days for a training course account to be created. Once your account is ready, you will receive an email from Ed Leaders Network with information for getting started with the training course. Once you receive this email, you only have 10 days to complete the training. If you do not receive an email within 1-2 business days, check your spam/junk folder. If there is no email, please contact [mescapa@roe51.org](mailto:mescapa@roe51.org).

Prior to beginning the course, you must read the User's Guide pages i - x in the [KIDS User's Guide and Instrument](#).

### Save the Date

Join fellow kindergarten teachers, district and school administrators, KIDS coaches, and partners at the seventh annual Mastering KIDS Summit, coming to a town near you! We are offering two sites this year. On **Dec. 8**, the summit will be held at Tinley Park Convention Center and on **Dec. 13**, it will be held at Southern Illinois University Carbondale. This provides an opportunity to network, learn from experts and peers across the state, and gain practical insights you can use in your classroom and school. Information about sessions and registration will be coming soon.

### Professional Learning Opportunities

KIDS is an observational tool designed to help teachers, administrators, families, and policymakers better understand the developmental readiness of children entering kindergarten. Below is a calendar of professional learning opportunities for those who administer KIDS or who are interested in knowing more about it. Check back periodically for updates. If you are interested in a KIDS training but are unable to find a session near you, please contact 217-652-4276 or [mescapa@roe51.org](mailto:mescapa@roe51.org).

- [Learning Opportunities with KIDS Coaches](#)
- [KIDS Calendar of Professional Learning Opportunities](#)

## Professional Development

### SY 2023-24 PD Calendar

ISBE's calendar of professional development events for the 2023-24 school year has been released. Please visit [Early Childhood Professional Learning](#), [STAR NET](#), [Early CHOICES](#) and [Start Early](#) for complete listings.

- [Let's Review Early Childhood Outcomes: Striving for Best Practices in Early Childhood Outcomes](#) – Sept. 12, Virtual
- [Relationships Matter! Powerful Interactions to Start the School Year](#) – Sept. 18, Virtual
- [Establishing & Using a Successful Parent Advisory Council](#) – Sept. 19, Virtual
- [Treating Selective Mutism as a Speech Language Pathologist](#) – Sept. 19, Virtual
- [Empowering Self-Regulation in the Classroom for ALL Students](#) – Sept. 20, Virtual
- [Lesson Planning for Early Learners: Creating High-Quality Plans & Adapting for Individual Students](#) – Sept. 26, Virtual
- [Power of Playful Learning for PreK & Kindergarten](#) – Sept. 27, Virtual
- [Beyond Discipline to Guidance](#) – Sept. 28, Virtual

### WIDA Early Years

WIDA Early Years resources for preschool-age children are now available on WIDA's new [Teaching in PreK-3](#) webpage.

Beginning Sept. 1, WIDA will offer two new preK-3 resources:

1. A new self-paced workshop, "Exploring the WIDA PreK-3 Essential Actions," will introduce educators to the new WIDA PreK-3 Essential Actions. Educators will have an opportunity to build their knowledge and understanding of the Essential Actions and to reflect on their own ideologies, practices, and settings. Access to the course will require a WIDA Secure Portal account. Contact [assessment@isbe.net](mailto:assessment@isbe.net) for information about how to set up a WIDA Secure Portal account and access this and other WIDA self-paced offerings.
2. A new "Are We Ready?" resource will support preK–3 educators to promote and provide equitable transitions for multilingual children and their families as they move through preK-3. This resource will be available on the WIDA website.

### What Makes Inclusion Work in Early Childhood?

[This series](#) will guide participants in facilitated inquiry regarding key practices that support inclusive schools, as identified in the [What Makes Inclusion Work](#) framework and associated resources.

### Inclusion Planning Series

This Early CHOICES planning series is based on [Inclusive Inquiry Cycle: Self-Study and Planning Guide - Inclusion of Children with Disabilities](#) and reviews each stage of planning for an inclusive program. Teams will think through the process to increase access to inclusive environments for preschoolers. Register once for all four sessions [here](#).

### On-Demand Options

STAR NET Regions 1 and 3 have interactive lessons as well as video recordings that cover a variety of topics on early childhood education. Check out the list of trainings [here](#).

## Dates to Remember

### July

**30** Last amendment due for Aug. 30 project end date

### August

**31** Continuation grants due in order to have a July 1 start date



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The Illinois State Board of Education is the State Education Agency for Illinois. Our mission is to provide each and every child with safe and healthy learning conditions, great educators, and equitable opportunities by practicing data-informed stewardship of resources and policy development, all done in partnership with educators, families, and stakeholders.

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