Illinois
State Board of
Education

ISBE Early Childhood Play-by-Play

FY20 EARLY CHILDHOOD BLOCK GRANT RFP'S RELEASED

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) today released Requests for Proposals (RFP) for the fiscal year 2020 Early Childhood Block Grant, which includes funding for Prevention Initiative, Preschool for All, and Preschool for All Expansion. Grants will increase access to early health and learning services for children from birth to age 5, pending appropriations by the General Assembly. The grant will fund only the expansion or creation of Prevention Initiative, Preschool for All, and Preschool for All Expansion programs and will prioritize programs that propose to serve children in areas with fewer resources. Chicago Public Schools will receive a separate grant for early childhood services, so this RFP will fund only programs outside the City of Chicago.

ISBE will give priority to awardable proposals from entities that propose to offer services to children who reside in Evidence-Based Funding Tier 1 or Tier 2 district boundaries and that can document a local gap in service provision in their area. After all proposals from Tiers 1 and 2 have been funded, ISBE will consider proposals from Tiers 3 and 4 based on the evidence of need and their scores. Proposals that score under 60 points will not be funded. (View FY 2019 EBF Tiers at www.isbe.net/ebfdist.)

The RFP's explicitly detail the required components of each application and the evaluation criteria. A fact sheet on improvements ISBE made to increase clarity and equity of the RFP's for applicants can be viewed at www.isbe.net/Documents/ISBE-ECBG-Flyer.pdf. ISBE hosted both recorded and live webinars regarding the RFP's. The webinars may be accessed, along with an FAQ document, at https://www.isbe.net/Pages/RFPs.aspx. Grants.gov provides resources on effective grant writing at blog.grants.gov/category/learngrants/grant-writing-basics/.

The grant applications are open to currently funded and new Early Childhood Block Grant applicants from public or private not-for-profit or for-profit entities with experience in providing educational, health, social, and/or child development services to young children and their families.

The grants will provide funding for four years. Funding for each of the last three years will be contingent on a sufficient appropriation by the General Assembly and satisfactory progress in the preceding year.

Interested applicants may access the RFP's at www.isbe.net/ECBG. Applications are due to ISBE no later than June 10, 2019.

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NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTION

At this time no subscription list is available for the EC Newsletter. Each issue will be sent to district Superintendents and will also be posted to the Early Childhood website at https://www.isbe.net/

UPCOMING FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

STAYED TUNED: ISBE is working on finalizing the use of FY19 unallocated dollars. Information will be forthcoming as to how districts can receive additional dollars unused by programs statewide for the purposes of transportation and other program components.

GRANT AMENDMENT DUE DATE

Many state and federal grant projects, including Early Childhood Block Grant Programs, are approaching a June 30 end date for obligating FY 2019 grant funds. All state and federal project end date extension requests and final budget amendments must be received at ISBE no later than 30 calendar days prior to the end date of the project.

As a reminder, please be advised of the following regarding the need for a project end date extension:

- An end date extension past June 30 is NOT needed for regular term staff salaries paid on a 12-month salary schedule.
- An end date extension past June 30 is NOT needed to pay obligations (e.g., purchase order for supplies) incurred June 30 or prior.
- An end date extension past June 30 IS NEEDED for new activities and obligations incurred July 1 or later (e.g., Summer School, Professional Development).

Final amendments for state and federal grants with a project end date of June 30, 2019, must be received by ISBE no later than May 31, 2019. The last day amendments will be accepted for grants with a project end date of August 31, 2019, is August 1, 2019.

New for all grants beginning in 2018: Amendments are necessary when the scope of a project changes significantly or if the expected expenditures exceed the **expenditure variance of 10 percent or $1,000 per an object total**, whichever is greater.

EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR (ESY)

During this time of year, questions often come up about Extended School Year (ESY) services, especially for a child whose third birthday is late spring/summer, and whether regression is the only way to determine eligibility to ESY. The IEP team must determine the need for ESY services on an individual basis. Besides regression, the team must consider the nature and severity of the child's disability, degree of impairment, rate of progress and availability of other services. It might be more helpful to consider what summer services may be necessary for the child to receive FAPE. Because brain research demonstrates significant opportunity for learning during the early childhood years, the team can use that as justification for taking advantage of such "windows of opportunity" during breaks in the school year. If the IEP team, including the parents, determines that services are not needed over the summer for the child to receive FAPE, the IEP team may note the first day of the next school year as the date services will begin. Additional information regarding extended school year services is available at https://www.isbe.net/Documents/memo_esy_01.pdf.

SIS ENROLLMENT

Determining how to enter student information into SIS can be challenging, especially when the student is receiving services from multiple districts. Students receiving special education services through the home school district, but enrolled in a Preschool for All program in a different district must be reflected as follows in SIS.

>   The Home School District is responsible for entering the information into SIS;
>   The Home District will be listed in SIS as the **home school**;
>   The PFA program will be listed as the **serving school**; and
>   The LEA responsible for providing special education services (i.e. district or special education cooperative) will be listed as the **related service provider**.
>   The district and PFA program should work together so the student is enrolled correctly.

Please contact your ISBE principal consultant with any questions.

EARLY CHILDHOOD TRANSITION SYSTEM STUDENT DATA

Student information provided through the Early Childhood Transition System is the only information the CFC is able to give school districts without signed consent from the parent/guardian due to privacy. For this reason, this system should be used for planning purposes in estimating how many early intervention students will be turning three during a given school year. Contact should be made with the family of any child listed in this system regardless of if a referral has been made from the CFC a part of Child Find. A sample letter that can be mailed to these families can be found here: https://www.isbe.net/Documents/EC-District-Letter-Parent-list.pdf

HOME VISITING TASK FORCE COMMITTEE

The Home Visiting Task Force advances a comprehensive vision for home visiting that includes improving the quality of and access to evidence-based home visiting programs for all at-risk families; increases coordination between home visiting programs at the state and local levels, as well as between home visiting and all other publicly-funded services for families; and serves as the advisory body for Illinois' federal Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) grant program funded by the US Department of Health and Human Services. The next meeting will take place July 30, 2019 from 1:00-2:30 PM.

For the Classroom

GETTING CHILDREN READY FOR KINDERGARTEN

Springtime is right around the corner! The transition between winter and spring can be a bit exasperating, dealing with melting snow; cold, windy, rainy days; and mud while we wait for warmer, sunnier days.

Springtime is also the beginning of a transition for many of our programs' children and families, as we prepare them to transition from our Pre-K programs to Kindergarten classrooms. It is important that we as program staff ensure that this transition is as smooth as possible for children and families. We do this by preparing them with the information they need, as well as working with the receiving schools by informing them of our children's social-emotional and academic strengths & needs, and setting them up for success in kindergarten.

ISBE's Early Childhood Division has several resources available for your program to help you with the transition process. Our Kindergarten Page at ISBE Early Childhood Division provides several tools to help your program engage PFA teachers, Kindergarten Teachers, and parents in ensuring a smooth transition. There is information on creating a Kindergarten Readiness Fair, as well as sample Program Transition plans, and tip sheets for parents about getting ready for kindergarten.

A great resource to get your staff thinking about the transition process has been provided by the Global Family Research Project (formerly the Harvard Family Research Project) called The Transition to Kindergarten Interactive Family Case. This resource uses a case study approach to help families, teachers, and community stakeholders understand how the kindergarten transition process unfolds through the lenses of the child, the parent/caretaker, and pre-k and kindergarten teachers.

While we cannot control the weather, we definitely have the power to make sure the children in our programs and their families have a smooth transition to kindergarten. Here's hoping that you and your program staff, children and families have a great spring!

WHAT'S NEW WITH KIDS?

The Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS) is an observational tool designed to help teachers, administrators, families and policymakers better understand the developmental readiness of children entering kindergarten.

KIDS data, collected and available to districts in the same academic year, provides the greatest value to teachers and administrators. Preliminary fall 2018 data was released to districts to provide an opportunity to review the data for accuracy and share any concerns with ISBE prior to its finalization and public release in the statewide KIDS report. The data is **under embargo and will not be made public until late June 2019**, when ISBE will finalize the district-level and statewide data and release the report to the public.

The hope is that the earlier release of the preliminary district-level KIDS data will encourage more districts to consider administering KIDS again during the spring rating period, at the 170th day of attendance, to track developmental progress of students in this current kindergarten class and provide data about student development as they approach first grade.

District Resources have been made available for districts in conjunction with the release, including:

- **Guidance** on appropriate and inappropriate uses of KIDS data.
- **Suggested message points** to help frame the KIDS data.
- **Learning opportunities** with KIDS coaches! KIDS coaches are available to every district in the state and offer services year round.

An entire library of KIDS resources can be found in the **"District Resources"** Section of the KIDS Web pages: https://www.isbe.net/Pages/KIDSAdminandTeachers.aspx . For more information on KIDS, please contact tlamb@isbe.net .

Kindergarten Individual Development Survey
Every Illinois Child Ready for Kindergarten

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Check out the statewide professional development calendar. This reflects professional development opportunities from each of the six STAR NET regions as well as the Early Childhood Professional Learning Center from now through June 2019. Also be on the lookout for the July, 2019-December, 2019 calendar to plan out the next school year at https://www.eclearningil.org/professional-learning.

A few opportunities to highlight:

STEAM: Encouraging It and Keeping It Alive in Our Early Childhood Classrooms: 6/13/19 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., Hoffman Estates

Introduction to ECERS 3: 6/14/19 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., Geneva

Online ePyramid Modules and Implicit Bias eModules

Now available at no cost to qualifying programs on a first come, first serve basis.

Eager to learn how to support our children's social emotional growth?

Do you work in a state funded preschool program in Illinois?

Check out our Frequently Asked Questions document and see if these online eModules are for you.

What is the EC Professional Learning Workbench?

Join us at the Workbench to:
- Describe your role in early childhood education
- Use the Forums to ask questions, share ideas, or network with other early childhood educators
- Check out resources to support your work
- View upcoming professional learning opportunities

Download the ECPL Workbench Quick Step Guide PDF

Conference opportunity

Partner Plan Act Conference: Equity from the Start

Registration for the 2019 Partner Plan Act Conference is now open! The conference will take place in Bloomington, Illinois on **June 11, 2019** from 9:00am-4:00pm. This annual conference brings early childhood system stakeholders to learn, network, and deepen their community systems knowledge and skills. This year, the theme is Equity from the Start: Community Systems Development through a Racial Equity Lens. Register **now**!

Project Spotlight

THE OUNCE

The Ounce provides technical assistance and consultation for more than 40 partner agencies in Illinois. They help organizations build capacity to successfully operate a home visiting, doula, or Early Head Start/Head Start programs. We emphasize the importance of full implementation of program models and create solutions to meet the ongoing

EARLY CHOICES

The Early CHOICES Preschool LRE Initiative promotes increasing high quality inclusive education for each and every preschool aged child. Early CHOICES accomplishes this through:

- Increasing the number of children receiving services in general education.
- Providing technical assistance and professional development to families and professionals.
- Collaborating with other Illinois early childhood technical assistance projects.
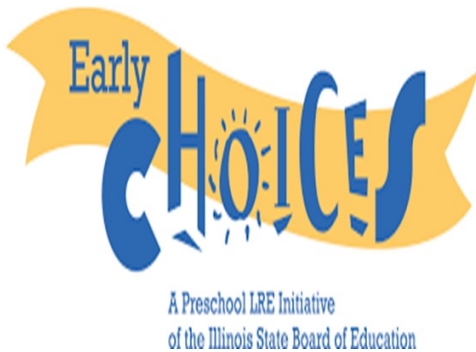
Program Spotlight

RESULTS OF ADMINISTRATOR SURVEY REGARDING PYRAMID MODEL IMPLEMENTATION

As part of the pilot evaluation for the Pyramid Model for Social Emotional Competence, Pyramid Model Consortium distributed an online Participant Survey to each program's Leadership Team during December 2018, approximately seven months after training began. All 22 sites completed the survey, for a 100% response rate. The survey was designed to assess participation in training and overall early Pyramid Model implementation efforts.

Overall, survey respondents are confident in the potential of the Pyramid Model approach to benefit children and families, and buy-in among administrators and staff is perceived to be strong. Survey respondents believe the model has the potential to deliver important benefits – improving social emotional outcomes for children, and reducing suspensions and decreasing program expulsions. Respondents reported having gained new skills to support implementation, from developing curriculum, to developing more inclusive settings, to building stronger relationships with families. The greatest area of growth has been learning new skills and techniques to support children with social emotional issues.

"The support for implementation has been immeasurable. I also believe in the Pyramid. It is good practice. It is super important. I want to continue to assist our staff in believing in the cause and the power it brings to our children, families, and staff. "

"Our program has an all-in mindset on the model. Prior to the model, we had a strong focus on SEL, however this model has shifted our focus to being proactive and preventative instead of reactive to behavior challenges."

To learn more about the Pyramid Model contact StarNet or The Center for Teaching and Learning. To see who is involved in the pilot project go to the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development website and click on Pyramid Model https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/OECD/Pages/Pyramid-Model.aspx Donna Nylander, Illinois' Pyramid Model Implementation Director-email: Donna.Nylander@illinois.gov

Does your ECBG program do something innovative you would like to share with the state? Send us information and pictures and you may be included in the next newsletter! Send information to earlychi@isbe.net