ECTACenter
The Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center

Illinois Early Childhood Programs Comparison Worksheet

This worksheet is a component of the ECTA Center's Preschool Inclusion Finance Toolkit. Use this tool to help list key programs for comparison of critical program requirements and elements at the local or state level. Identify available programs and add or delete rows and columns to customize as needed. Include elements at the regional level if such programming exists. This worksheet may be completed as a facilitated process for learning about each program. The compiled information should be updated as necessary. It could be used as a reference by programs that are collaborating, as an orientation resource for new staff, and as a source for budget presentations.

ELEMENTS	PROGRAMS					
	Preschool for All (PFA)	Preschool for All Expansion (PFAE)	Head Start	Special Education	Title I/ESSA	Child Care
Program Structure and Oversight						
State Agency	Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)	ISBE	(Federal) U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	ISBE	ISBE	Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS)
State Lead	Early Childhood Department	Early Childhood Department	Illinois Head Start Association and Head Start State Collaboration Office	Special Education Department	Title Grants Administration Department	Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)
Website	https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Preschool-For-All.aspx	https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Preschool-Development-Grant-Expansion-Grant.aspx	http://ilheadstart.org/	https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Special-Education-Programs.aspx	https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Title-I.aspx	https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=30355

	Preschool for All (PFA)	Preschool for All Expansion (PFAE)	Head Start	Special Education	Title I/ESSA	Child Care
Regional Agency, if applicable			(Federal) U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Region V Office of Head Start, Chicago			Region V
Local Agency	Determined through competitive grant process.	Determined through competitive grant process.	Local Head Start Program	Local school district	Local school district	Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA)
Local Lead						INCCRRA
Mission, Vision	ISBE is actively committed to develop, deliver, and support early childhood programs, practices, and services that will enable all children to be successful students and responsible citizens.	To expand high-quality full-day preschool programs with comprehensive services for children most at risk in high-need communities.	Head Start helps young children from low-income families prepare to succeed in school through local programs. Head Start programs deliver services to children and families in core areas of early learning, health, and family well-being while engaging parents as partners every step of the way.		Title I, Part A - Improving Basic Programs provides supplemental funding to state and Local Education Agencies (LEAs). The funding provides resources to LEAs and schools with high percentages of children from low-income families. Title I resources improve education quality and help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards. Title I services focus on children who are failing or who are most at risk of failing to meet state academic standards.	All people in Illinois achieve their full potential. Providing equitable access to social/human services, supports, programs, and resources to enhance the lives of all who we serve.

	Preschool for All (PFA)	Preschool for All Expansion (PFAE)	Head Start	Special Education	Title I/ESSA	Child Care
Monitoring	Completed a minimum of once every four years using the Preschool for All Compliance Checklist and Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS)-3.	Completed a minimum of once every four years using the Preschool for All Expansion Compliance Checklist and ECERS-3.	Local Head Start programs are federally monitored during Years 1, 2, and 3 of their 5-year grants. During Year 4, the programs are notified if they will need to compete for their next 5-year grant or if they will apply for write a 5-year continuation grant. The current monitoring tools used can be found on the national [Head Start Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center](#) website Programs are also monitored by state licensing entities, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, the local health department, and the local fire marshal.	Data regarding Indicators 6, 7, and 12 are submitted to ISBE annually. Indicators 6 and 12 are part of the Illinois Special Education Accountability and Support System.	Districts must describe in the Consolidated District Plan (CDP) how they will monitor student progress in meeting challenging state academic standards.	Annual monitoring for licensed centers, license-exempt centers, and license-exempt no-relative home day care providers.

Program Operations						
	Preschool for All (PFA)	**Preschool for All Expansion (PFAE)**	**Head Start**	**Special Education**	**Title I/ESSA**	**Child Care**
Eligibility	Grantees are responsible for screening all students and prioritizing at-risk factors based on their communities. The students with the most at-risk factors should be enrolled. The first priority is to serve primarily children who have been identified as at risk. The second priority is to serve primarily children whose family's income is less than four times the poverty guidelines.	A minimum of 80% of enrolled children have at least two risk factors or one highest-priority selection factor according to the weighted eligibility form created by the state.	Children must be at least 3 years of age or be 3 years of age by the local school's date of entry (on or before September 1 in Illinois). Categorically eligible if: homeless, in foster care, or in receipt of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or Supplemental Security Income. Income eligible if family income determined to be 100% or less than the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). 10% of a program's enrollment can be families above the FPL. All of these factors are based on a weighted eligibility process determined by the local Community Needs Assessment.	Student must be evaluated and qualify for special education.	Districts must submit a CDP that includes what measures the district will use to identify students at risk of failure.	How to determine eligibility for the Child Care Assistance Program.

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Enrollment			The Head Start Act of 2007 requires that children with disabilities make up at least 10% of their enrollment. Head Start programs may also reserve up to 3% of their enrollment slots for children who are experiencing homelessness or are in foster care.	Required to serve all students with special needs who qualify for an Individualized Education Program (IEP).	Required to serve student identified as most at risk.	CCAP providers are afforded a certain number of slots to fill as they see fit.
Age of Children Served	3-5	3-5	3-5	3-21	3-18	6 weeks-13 years
Program Hours	Minimum 2.5 hours daily.	Full day, at least five hours per day.	Minimum is 3.5 hours per day. Must offer at least 1,080 service hours per year and at least 8 months of service.	Should match what is available to same-aged peers at a minimum.	Determined by the local district.	5 hours or more is considered full time.

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Attendance	165 minimum days of student attendance. Attendance must be taken daily.	165 minimum days of student attendance. Attendance must be taken daily.	8 months of service. Program should maintain at least 85% attendance rate. If not, program should conduct analysis as part of its ongoing oversight and Continuous Quality Improvement efforts to increase attendance. If child is absent and program does not know reason, program must contact the family within 1 hour of expected attendance.	Should match what is available to same-aged peers at a minimum. Attendance must be taken daily.	Determined by the local district-	Provide services year round - The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and IDHS require attendance to be taken daily to include parent sign in and out.
Transportation	Not required, but an allowable expense within the PFA grant.	Not required, but an allowable expense within the PFAE grant.	Not required, but an allowable expense.	Not required. Special transportation should be considered as a part of the IEP.	Transportation provided to assist for supplemental services.	Transportation is not provided by CCAP. Providers can offer transportation while ensuring all safety precautions are adhered to.

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Program Requirements						
Class Size	20 students per classroom. If the program is utilizing an inclusive model, classes can serve between 15 and 20 students.	20 students per classroom. If the program is utilizing an inclusive model, classes can serve between 15 and 20 students.	Dependent on age of children: 3-year-olds in a double session, no more than 15 in a session. 3-year-olds in a full-day session, no more than 17 in the classroom. 4-year-olds in a double session, no more than 17 per session. 4-year-olds in a full-day session, no more than 20 in the classroom.	General education to special education student ratios cannot exceed 70%: 30% in blended, general education classrooms. The 5-student maximum can be increased to 10 students with the addition of a classroom paraprofessional in early childhood special education classrooms.	Per state guidelines.	Numbers and Ages of Children Served Grouping and Staffing Numbers and Ages of Children Served
Teacher-Child Ratio	1:10	1:10	1:10; must always have 2 teachers or a teacher and an assistant in the classroom no matter the size of the class.	1:5	Per state guidelines.	Licensing standards for daycare homes Grouping and Staffing Number and ages of children served

	Preschool for All (PFA)	Preschool for All Expansion (PFAE)	Head Start	Special Education	Title I/ESSA	Child Care
Minimum Teacher Qualifications	Professional Educator License (PEL) early childhood education endorsement.	PEL early childhood education endorsement.	All center-based Head Start teachers must have at least an associate or bachelor's degree in child development or early childhood education or equivalent coursework, or otherwise meet the requirements of Section 648A(a)(3)(B) of the Head Start Act.	PEL early childhood education endorsement, plus early childhood special education approval OR PEL Learning Behavior Specialist I (PK-21), plus early childhood special education approval OR Early childhood special education endorsement.	Teachers must hold a license from the State Board of Education appropriate to the setting they are teaching in.	Licensing standards for daycare homes Grouping and Staffing Number and ages of children served
Minimum Assistant Qualifications	Paraprofessional Educator License	Paraprofessional Educator License	Head Start assistant teachers, at a minimum, will have a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or a state-awarded certificate that meets or exceeds the requirements for a CDA credential, are enrolled in a program that will lead to an associate or baccalaureate degree, or are enrolled in a CDA credential program to be completed within two years of the time of hire.	Paraprofessional Educator License	Paraprofessional Educator License	Licensing standards for daycare homes Grouping and Staffing Number and ages of children served
	Preschool for All (PFA)	**Preschool for All Expansion (PFAE)**	**Head Start**	**Special Education**	**Title I/ESSA**	**Child Care**

Program Licensing	Community-based programs must be licensed by DCFS. School-based programs are exempt. School district programs are exempt from licensing.	Community-based programs must be licensed by DCFS. School-based programs are exempt School district programs are exempt from licensing.	The facilities used by a Head Start program must meet state, tribal, or local licensing requirements, even if exempted by the licensing entity. When state, tribal, or local requirements vary from Head Start requirements, the most stringent provision takes precedence.	Exempt from licensing.	Exempt from licensing.	DCFS is the licensing agent for all Illinois providers that want to provide legal care to children. https://sunshine.dcfs.illinois.gov/Content/Licensing/Welcome.aspx
Participate in Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) (Y/N)	Yes	Yes	Yes, a Head Start program must participate in state's QRIS if (i) its state or local QRIS accepts Head Start monitoring data to document quality indicators included in the state's tiered system; (ii) Participation would not impact a program's ability to comply with the Head Start Program Performance Standards; and, (iii) The program has not provided the Office of Head Start with a compelling reason not to comply with this requirement. Compliance for this is delayed until September 30, 2021.	No	No	Yes

| Required Professional Development or Training | Written staff development plans are required for each teacher and paraprofessional. Staff participates in professional development related to providing services to children with IEPs. | Each teacher and assistant teacher works with the instructional leader to develop an individual professional development plan that is connected to professional development and continuing education opportunities. Teaching staff members receive training annually on program's selected screening tools and curriculum and assessment tool. Program's Professional Development Plan addresses issues of language and cultural diversity within the program. | Per 1302.92 of the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS), staff must complete 15 clock hours of PD per year within the scope of their job responsibilities and training on child abuse and neglect; family engagement; and family services, health, and disabilities that lead to improved family outcomes. In addition, education staff must receive PD on the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, their curriculum, partnering with families, working with children with disabilities, adult-child interactions, dual language learners, transitioning, and using data for individualization. For more, see the Performance Standards and Head Start Act. Programs must also provide coaching to their education staff as well as assist staff in developing Professional Development Plans. | None | N/A | Yes

Licensed provider homes and centers are required to complete 15 hours of PD annually

License-exempt homes and centers are required to complete 6 hours of training annually. |

Child Development and Learning					
Learning Standards	Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards (IELDS)	IELDS	IELDS and the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF)	IELDS	IELDS	Learning standards are chosen at the discretion of the provider.
Curriculum	The program utilizes a research-based curriculum that aligns with the IELDS.	The program utilizes a research-based curriculum that aligns with the IELDS.

The program has adopted a model or curriculum for social-emotional learning (SEL). | Head Start programs must use a research-based, developmentally appropriate curricula that aligns with the ELOF and the IELDS. Programs also must offer parents the opportunity to participate in activities from a research-based parenting curriculum. Programs must have mental health consultation for staff, families and children for SEL. | No requirements, but programs should follow best practices and use a research-based curriculum that aligns with the IELDS. | Determined by the local district. | Curriculums are chosen at the discretion of the provider. |
| **Child Assessments** | The program utilizes an appropriate research-based authentic assessment system that aligns with the curriculum and documents children's progress over time with measurable outcomes. | The program utilizes an appropriate research-based authentic assessment system that aligns with the curriculum and documents children's progress over time with measurable outcomes. | In collaboration with each child's parent and with parental consent, a program must complete or obtain a current research-based developmental screening to identify concerns regarding a child's developmental, behavioral, motor, language, social, cognitive, and emotional skills within 45 calendar days of when the child first attends the program. | No requirements, but programs should follow best practices and use a research-based assessment that aligns with the curriculum. | Determined by the local district. | Not required. |
| **Reporting Child Progress** | Portfolio collections measure progress over time; 3 reporting periods. | Portfolio collections measure progress over time; 3 reporting periods. | Programs must conduct standardized and structured assessments, which | Progress reports regarding progress on IEP goals should take place every reporting | Progress reports regarding progress on student goals/growth should take place | Not required. |

			may be observation-based or direct, for each child that provide ongoing information to evaluate the child's developmental level and progress in outcomes aligned to the goals described in the Head Start Early Learning Child Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five. Such assessments must result in usable information for teachers, home visitors, and parents, and be conducted with sufficient frequency to allow for individualization within the program year. Child-level assessment data is aggregated and analyzed at least three times a year.	period for general education students.	every reporting period for students receiving Title I services.	
Behavior Supports and Requirements						
Positive Behavior Supports	Program required to address social skill development, but no requirement for a curriculum or model.	The program has adopted a model or curriculum for social emotional learning.	Head Start programs must provide a program-wide culture that promotes children's mental health; social and emotional well-being; and overall health. This includes mental health consultation for staff, families and children for SEL, supports for effective classroom management and positive learning	No requirements.		Some CCAP families qualify for early intervention; services can be provided on site.

			environments; and development of community partnerships for additional mental health resources and services.			
Suspension and Expulsion	The program has a policy prohibiting suspension and expulsion. ISBE rules are specified in. Public Act 100-0105	The program has a policy prohibiting suspension and expulsion. ISBE rules are specified in. Public Act 100-0105	Head Start Performance Standards prohibit expulsion and severely limit suspension, according to HSPPS 1302.17. In addition, Head Start programs must follow Illinois Public Act 100-0105.	The program has a policy prohibiting suspension and expulsion. ISBE rules .are specified in Public Act 100-0105		PA 100-0105 prohibits early care and education providers from expelling young children (ages 0-5) from their program because of the child's behavior. Providers must take documented steps to address the child's behavioral and other needs in order to keep the child in care., If expulsion is ultimately necessary, providers can work with the family on a "planned transition" to a more appropriate setting; this "planned transition" process is not considered an expulsion. Providers also have to report data related to transitions. More specific guidelines will be clarified through the rulemaking process.

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