



ILLINOIS EARLY CHILDHOOD PREVENTION INITIATIVE PROGRAM



FY 2009 EVALUATION REPORT

**Illinois State Board of Education
Data Analysis and Progress Reporting Division**

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FOREWORD

This report is provided to fulfill Section 2-3.89 of the School Code (105 ILCS 5/2-3.89). The interpretations and conclusions expressed in this report have been prepared by Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) staff and do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of the State Board of Education.

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Section 2-3.89 of the School Code (105 ILCS 5/2-3.89) provides for grants to establish programs that offer coordinated services to at-risk infants, toddlers, and their families. The aim of the Illinois Early Childhood Prevention Initiative Program is to create a partnership that supports the development of infants and children from birth to age three by focusing on the child and family through a network of child and family service providers.

General Findings for FY 2009

1. A total of 136 projects, as compared with 115 in FY 2007 (18 percent increase), were funded to provide intensive services to parents and children; 20,032 parents, an increase of 28 percent from FY 2007, and 19,906 children, an increase of 22 percent from FY 2007, were served through the program. Among 20,032 parents served, 2,877 were pregnant teenagers. A total of 526 professional staff and 59 contractual personnel were employed.
2. A total of 16,162 workshops covering a variety of parenting skills and parent education topics were offered from August 2008 to July 2009. In addition, 8,089 parents participated in 8,188 play groups with parent-child interaction activities.
3. Instruction was provided to 11,061 parents at home. Most of the families (61 percent) received an average of one visit a week or once every two weeks.
4. Almost three-fourths (71 percent) of the projects used Parents as Teachers as a program model/curriculum. Baby Talk was another frequently used model. Some projects used multiple models and curricula.
5. Early childhood educational newsletters were developed and distributed by 109 Prevention Initiative projects to 27,039 parents; more than half (57 percent) of the projects distributed newsletters at least once a month.
6. A total of 8,482 families were referred to other community services and resources. Developmental screenings were provided to 13,894 children and health screenings were provided to 6,698 children. A total of 6,817 children also received social and emotional screening services.
7. There was a high degree of collaboration and coordination among the Illinois departments of Public Health, Children and Family Services, and Human Services; local hospitals and clinics; public school districts; libraries; Head Start; the Women, Infants, and Children Program; and the Early Intervention Program. (See Table 5.)
8. Almost 76 percent of the participants, a 14 percent increase from FY 2007, responded to the demographic questionnaire. The responses indicated that almost all (91 percent) of the participants were mothers; about one-fourth (26 percent) were teen-age parents; and almost 75 percent were minorities (a 15 percent increase from FY07)—black (34 percent), Hispanic

(38 percent), Asian/Pacific Islander (2 percent), and 2 percent reporting their ethnicity as multiracial. (See Table 6 for more information on participant characteristics.)

9. Parents were asked to evaluate the projects based on the changes that occurred in their knowledge and behavior as a result of participation. About 44 percent of the participants responded to the parent evaluation survey. Ninety-five percent of parents reported increased knowledge and awareness of the importance of parent-child relationships, 92 percent reported having knowledge of appropriate parenting skills and a better understanding of a child's physical and developmental growth and age-appropriate activities, and 91 percent reported spending more time interacting with their children. (See Table 7 for more information on the parent evaluation survey.)
10. Even as the funding level for the program increases, the demand for services continually increases. There were 3,121 parents on the waiting list, with more than 50 percent of projects reporting unmet transportation services for participants.

Illinois Early Childhood Prevention Initiative Program

INTRODUCTION

The Illinois Office of the Governor initiated the Illinois Early Childhood Prevention Initiative Program in 1989 in order to establish community initiatives to reduce school failure by coordinating and expanding services to families and children under three years of age who are living in high-risk areas.

A \$1 million appropriation funded four pilot projects in 1989. From FY90 through FY97, \$2 million was appropriated annually. The number of programs funded increased to 14 in FY93 and to 16 from FY94 to FY97. In FY98, 31 programs were funded through a \$4.3 million appropriation. Beginning in FY99, the funds became part of an Early Childhood Block Grant appropriation and the number of programs increased to 56. The number of programs increased again to 67 in FY03, with a \$9.3 million appropriation. In FY07, 115 projects were funded, with the number increasing to 136 in FY09.

The number of children served increased from 1,604 in FY93 to 4,707 in FY00, 7,837 in FY03, and 8,733 in FY04. In FY09, 20,032 parents and 19,906 children were served. In 20 years the Illinois Early Childhood Prevention Initiative Program has grown from \$1 million and four projects to more than \$10 million and 136 projects serving almost 20,000 children, an increase of more than 1,100 percent in the number of children served.

Data Limitations

All data used in this report are self-reported by the projects.

Cost

Expenditure data are not available because the budget and expenditures also include the 0-3 Parental Training Program funds as part of the Early Childhood Block Grant.

Projects were asked to provide data on program models, service populations, home visits, workshops, other services provided, staffing, collaborations, and other programmatic information.

Model

The majority of the projects (71 percent) adopted Parents as Teachers as their model/curriculum; 33 projects implemented Baby Talk, the second most-used model. Projects also used Healthy Families and Early Head Start as models. Some projects used a combination of Parents as Teachers, Baby Talk, and Healthy Families as their model. About 9 projects used other models.

Participation

Table 1 shows that 55,023 parents were directly contacted to participate in the FY09 program. A total of 20,032 parents and 19,906 children received direct services. Of the 20,032 parents, 2,877 were pregnant teenagers and 3,098 were pregnant adults. Of the total number of children served, 1,835 were homeless children. There were 3,121 parents on a waiting list.

Table 1. Number of Participants, by Population Served: FY 2009

Population Served	Number of Participants
Families Contacted	55,023
Parents Served	20,032
Children Served	19,906
Pregnant Teenage Parents	2,877
Pregnant Adult Parents	3,098
Parents on Waiting List	3,121
Homeless Children Served	1,835
Parents Served at Home	11,061
Parents Participating in Play Groups	8,089

Workshops/Playgroups/Home Visits

As part of the services, projects conducted home visits to provide comprehensive, integrated, need-based services. The home visits also provided continuous support to the family and children in order to foster independence and make them knowledgeable about other services available in order to lead healthy and productive lives. About 11,061 families received one home visit per week or every two weeks, on average.

In addition to the home visits, projects also provided 16,162 workshops/classes or training sessions on a variety of topics, such as skills and knowledge of parenting and the developmental needs of their children. Table 2 on the next page shows the number, total hours, and topics of workshops. Parenting skill development, child growth and development, and language-literacy development were the most frequent workshop topics.

Table 2. Number and Hours of Workshops Offered, by Topic: FY 2009

Workshop Topic	Number	Hours
Child Growth and Development	5,002	2,707
Child Birth and Child Care	1,917	1,338
Prenatal and Postnatal Care	1,295	1,342
Prevention of Child Abuse/Violence	3,069	1,317
Family Structure, Function, and Management	3,046	2,869
Family Relationship	3,343	2,189
Parenting Skill Development	4,744	3,812
Language-Literacy Development	4,129	2,962
Health and Safety	2,440	1,611
Nutrition	1,856	1,431
Substance and Other Addiction	620	415
Discipline and Anger Management	2,454	2,288
Social and Family Fun Activities	1,896	2,955

Projects also provided parent-child activities to teach parents new ways of supporting and enhancing their children's development. About 8,188 play groups were offered, with 8,089 parents participating.

Individual Services

Research shows that the children's health plays a major role in their mental development. The Illinois Early Childhood Prevention Initiative Program offers health, vision, and hearing screenings at project sites or in collaboration with the Illinois Department of Public Health. Approximately 5,648 children received vision and hearing screenings, while 6,698 children received health screenings. Staff also performed developmental screenings on 13,894 children to assist with individual family plan development in order to better monitor progress. Other services provided to parents are listed in Table 3.

Although not reported as receiving services, some children may have already received services directly through the Illinois Department of Public Health as coordinated or referred services by these projects.

Case Management/Family Advocacy

Families receive comprehensive, integrated, and continuous support services through the Illinois Early Childhood Prevention Initiative Program. The program helps families to increase their awareness of opportunities and activities in order to strengthen their role as parents. About 10,211 (51 percent) of parents received case management services, which coordinate existing services available in the region and/or local community for parents. (See Table 3.)

About 8,482 families were referred to other community services and 7,666 families received advocacy services. Family advocacy not only refers and coordinates services for families, but also keeps in touch with other social service agencies to ensure continuation of services to

families. Individual family service plans were offered by 130 projects for 11,886 families, an increase from FY07, in which 8,102 families had individual family service plans.

Table 3. Preventive and Advocative Services Offered, by Type of Service, Number of Projects Offering Service, and Number of Children/Parents Served: FY 2009

Service	Number of Projects Offering Service	Number of Children/Parents Served
Health Screening	118	6,698
Vision and Hearing Screening	118	5,648
Developmental Screening	133	13,894
Social/Emotional Screening	115	6,817
Service Coordination/Case Management	128	10,211
Development of Individual Family Service Plan	130	11,886
Developmental Monitoring	129	9,914
Family Advocacy	124	7,666
Referral to Community Services/Resources	132	8,482

Other Services

In addition to basic required services, many projects provided additional services to assist needy families. Table 4 on the next page shows the variety of services provided to enhance parents' lives by helping them to become more independent and to advance to the next phase in their children's lives. Household items, parent education, and crisis intervention are other major services provided by the projects. Recognizing that males are an important part of the family structure, 85 projects encouraged and provided services to involve males in their children's lives, an increase of 27 from FY07.

Table 4. Other Services Offered, by Type of Service and Number of Projects Offering Service: FY 2009

Service	Number of Projects Offering Service
Food Pantry	30
Clothing Boutique	36
Donated Household Items	68
Utility Assistance	24
Housing Assistance	22
Male Involvement	85
Continuing Education for Parent	49
Bilingual Education	41
Vocational Training	19
Even Start	9
Employment Services	19
Transportation Assistance	66
Counseling and Crisis Intervention	63
Transition to Pre-kindergarten/Head Start	114
Early Head Start	18
Child Care	66
Toy/Book Lending Library	132
Open Resource Center	89
Hot Line	50
Parent Support Group	84
Parent Advisory Board	64
Other	41

In addition to the services listed in Table 4, early childhood educational newsletters were developed and distributed by 109 Prevention Initiative projects to 27,039 parents; more than half (57 percent) of the projects distributed newsletters at least once a month.

Collaboration and Coordination of Services

One of the goals of this program is to provide needed services through a seamless and unduplicated system of collaboration and coordination of different services and agencies. Each project provides these collaborative partnerships according to local needs and resources. In addition to social services, each project has a referral system for placing three-year-old children in other early childhood education programs. These systems ensure that families and children will receive the continued support they need after leaving the Illinois Early Childhood Prevention Initiative Program.

Table 5 on the next page shows the number of projects providing collaboration and coordinated services.

Table 5. Number of Projects Participating in Collaboration/Coordination, by Type of Entity: FY 2009

Entity	Number of Projects
Illinois Department of Public Health	125
Illinois Department of Children and Family Services	115
Illinois Department of Human Services	111
Local Hospitals and Clinics	111
Churches	102
Local Charities and Not-for-Profit Organizations	95
Vocational Schools	43
United Way	60
Red Cross	42
Salvation Army and Other Shelters	73
Shelters for Abused Women	89
Food Pantries	108
Libraries	126
Universities/Community Colleges	100
Park Districts	78
YMCAs/YWCAs	51
Public School Districts	130
Women, Infants, and Children Program	119
Early Intervention System	130
Even Start	31
Healthy Family	64
Head Start	107
Parent-Teacher Organizations	48
Television/Radio Stations	55
Other	85

Almost 92 percent of projects collaborate with the Illinois Department of Public Health and 82 percent collaborate with local hospitals and clinics that provide health-related services. To meet other needs of families, the majority of projects (87 percent) coordinate with the Women, Infants, and Children program; 85 percent with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services; and 82 percent with the Illinois Department of Human Services. Most of the projects also have collaborative services with local libraries to encourage early literacy development. Parents are encouraged to read to their children in an effort to prepare their children for better success in school.

For transition to early childhood education, most projects also collaborate with public school districts, Even Start, Head Start, and Early Intervention Systems for special needs children.

Unmet Needs

Major concerns for the projects were transportation assistance and mental health services, which the projects were unable to provide, despite the parents' need. Dental and vision screening,

housing, and child care were some of the other major services that were not met by some projects.

Staff

A total of 762 professional personnel (526.0 FTE) were employed by 136 projects, including, but not limited to, early childhood teachers, counselors, psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers. Out of the 526.0 FTE, 404.3 FTE were involved in home visits.

Another 232 personnel (89.4 FTE) were employed as nonprofessionals, clerical, administrative support, or childcare staff. Additionally, 59 professional personnel were involved in providing services to parents and children as contractual staff.

PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS

Projects reported the characteristics of the parents they served. Demographic and other social information was reported by 15,177 parents (76 percent), an increase of 14 percent from FY07. Table 6 shows participants' data.

Table 6. Number and Percentage of Participant Characteristics, by Category: FY 2009

Participant	Number	Percent
Mother	13,750	90.60
Father	1,068	7.04
Grandmother	113	0.74
Grandfather	6	0.04
Other relative	37	0.24
Legal guardian	21	0.14
Foster parent	64	0.42
Other	23	0.15
Age of Participant Served	Number	Percent
17 years old and under	2,669	17.59
18 to 19 years old	2,124	13.99
20 to 29 years old	5,741	37.83
30 to 39 years old	2,715	17.89
40 years old and older	597	3.93
Racial/Ethnic Background of Participant	Number	Percent
White, Non-Hispanic	3,399	22.40
Black, Non-Hispanic	5,238	34.51
Hispanic	5,811	38.29
Asian/Pacific Islander	356	2.35
American Indian/Alaskan Native	19	0.13
Multiracial/Ethnic	263	1.73
Educational Background of Mother	Number	Percent
8th grade or less	1,910	12.58
Current high school student	2,604	17.16
Some high school, no diploma	3,126	20.60
High school diploma/GED	3,709	24.44
Vocational school training	378	2.49
Associate degree	347	2.29
Some college	1,531	10.09
Bachelor's degree	661	4.36
Other	458	3.02
Unknown	135	0.89
Employment Status	Number	Percent
Unemployed, not seeking employment (includes full-time homemaker)	5,107	33.65
Unemployed, seeking employment	2,257	14.87
Unemployed, enrolled in job training	145	0.96
Employed fewer than 20 hours per week	1,314	8.66
Employed 20 hours or more per week	3,494	23.02
Self-employed	175	1.15
Students	2,135	14.07

Table 6. Number and Percentage of Participant Characteristics, by Category: FY 2009
(continued)

Family Information	Number	Percent
Teenage parent	3,930	25.89
Pregnant, expecting first child	426	2.81
Non-English-speaking family	2,830	18.65
Receives Temporary Assistance to Needy Families	1,436	9.46
Receives Women, Infants, and Children Program assistance	7,168	47.23
Has family member involved with judicial system	747	4.92
Has family member incarcerated	496	3.27
Has family member with a disability	933	6.15
Homeless	334	2.20
None of the above	1,924	12.68
Parent(s) deceased	77	0.51
Child Information	Number	Percent
Enrolled in KidCare	4,227	27.85
Enrolled in Medicaid	7,569	49.87
High-risk birth	745	4.91
Developmentally delayed	662	4.36
Enrolled in Early Head Start	281	1.85
Involved with social service agency(ies)	1,591	10.48
Receiving Early Intervention Services	987	6.50
None of the above	2,202	14.51
Family Structure of the Child	Number	Percent
Two-parent home	6,804	44.83
Single-parent home	5,672	37.37
Living with grandparents	779	5.13
Living in an extended family	888	5.85
Living with other relative	249	1.64
Living with guardian	276	1.82
Living with foster parent	85	0.56
Other	136	0.90

The majority (91 percent) of the participants were mothers. About one-third (34 percent) were unemployed or not seeking employment and another 9 percent were employed for fewer than 20 hours per week. About one-fourth (26 percent) of the participants were teenage parents.

More than three-fourths (77percent) of the participants had no education beyond high school, with 24 percent having a high school diploma, 2 percent having some vocational training, and 50 percent having no high school diploma or GED credential. Half (50 percent) were enrolled in Medicaid programs and about 28 percent were enrolled in KidCare. Almost half (47 percent) of the children received Women, Infants, and Children Program services. Less than half (45 percent) were from two-parent homes and three-fourths (75 percent) were minorities.

PARENT EVALUATION SURVEY/OUTCOMES

Each project was required to ask parents to complete a questionnaire in order to evaluate the changes in their attitudes and knowledge as a result of participation in the program. Out of 20,032 participants, less than half (44 percent) responded to the parent evaluation survey. Table 7 shows the positive impact the program has had on parents.

Table 7. Number and Percentage of Participants Responding to Parent Evaluation Survey, by Survey Question: FY 2009

Survey Question	Number	Percent
1. Knowledge and awareness of importance of parent-child relationship.	8,409	94.9
2. Knowledge of appropriate parenting skills.	8,191	92.4
3. Knowledge of pre- and postnatal care.	5,427	61.2
4. Awareness of child's health/nutritional needs.	7,437	83.9
5. Awareness and better understanding of child's physical and developmental growth.	7,973	90.0
6. Knowledge of age appropriate activities for child.	7,903	89.2
7. Knowledge of rights and responsibilities as parents.	7,134	80.5
8. Awareness of parent advocacy/support groups.	6,522	73.6
9. Knowledge of existing community/government services.	6,879	77.6
10. Knowledge of family function and management.	6,616	74.6
11. I am more responsive to my child's needs.	7,718	87.1
12. I spent time interacting with my child.	8,035	90.7
13. I encourage my child more often.	7,767	87.6
14. I read to my child more often.	7,371	83.2
15. Language/literacy activities used with children.	6,959	78.5
16. Setting appropriate limits with young children (how to discipline).	6,927	78.2
17. Knowledge of dealing with guilt, anger, and frustration.	6,397	72.2
18. Providing immunization at the appropriate age.	6,741	76.1
19. I feel better about myself as a parent.	7,626	86.0
20. I am more confident in my role as my child's most important teacher.	7,345	82.9
21. My attitudes toward school and parent-school partnership improved.	6,024	68.0
22. Increase in self-esteem.	5,998	67.7
23. Enrolled in bilingual education program.	1,394	15.7
24. Enrolled in adult education class.	1,185	13.4
25. Enrolled in vocational education class.	514	5.8
26. Enrolled in high school.	1,367	15.4
27. Enrolled in GED class.	934	10.5
28. Enrolled in college.	1,012	11.4
29. Acquired GED.	963	10.9
30. Acquired high school diploma.	1,396	15.7
31. Awareness of alcohol/drug abuse programs.	1,922	21.7
32. Enrollment in alcohol/drug abuse programs.	368	4.1
33. Acquired better housing.	1,611	18.2
34. Actively seeking a job.	2,276	25.7
35. Acquired a job.	1,514	17.1
36. Other (specify).	243	2.7

Approximately 95 percent of parents reported gaining knowledge and awareness of the importance of parent-child relationships, while 90 percent to 92 percent also reported that participation in the program resulted in knowledge of appropriate parenting skills and a better understanding of a child's physical and developmental growth and age-appropriate activities.

Eighty-three percent of parents reported that they read to their children more often and 78 percent reported using more language and literacy activities with their children.

Almost two-thirds of the parents (68 percent) reported increased self-esteem. About 16 percent enrolled in bilingual education, 13 percent enrolled in adult education classes, 1,367 enrolled in high school, and 934 enrolled in GED classes. Additionally, 963 parents acquired GED certificates and 1,396 parents acquired high school diplomas. Through prevention initiative staff intervention and encouragement, 1,611 parents acquired better housing and 1,514 (17 percent) acquired a job.

The Illinois State Board of Education is committed to supporting early childhood education in order to ensure that all Illinois children develop a strong foundation for learning. The Illinois Early Childhood Prevention Initiative Program not only emphasizes the relationship among early childhood education, parent education and involvement, and future success in school, but also stresses the importance of strengthening families as a whole. The program provides grants to school districts and entities that offer coordinated services to at-risk infants, toddlers, and their families.

ISBE Emphasis

The Illinois Early Childhood Prevention Initiative Program is based on the following important components of successful implementation:

1. **Screening:** Appropriate screening procedures are required to identify the children and families most in need and to determine their service needs in order to provide individual services. The participant characteristics identified in Table 6 reflect that most families served were unemployed, without high school diplomas, and received services through the Women, Infants, and Children Program. Almost half of them were enrolled in the Medicaid program.
2. **Program Model and Parent Education and Training:** Programs are designed for parents to gain knowledge and skills in parenting through implementation of a research-based program model. Interaction between parent and child is encouraged through play groups and other parent-child activities designed to teach parents methods of supporting and enhancing their child's development. Educational activities are site-based, home-based, or both, depending on the need of the community and families. The program also encourages father/male involvement in children's lives. A total of 16,162 workshops and 8,188 play groups were provided to approximately 20,032 parents, with 11,061 parents served at home.

ISBE has developed the Illinois Birth-to-Three Program Standards to help projects provide successful research-based prevention services for at-risk families.

3. **Community Collaboration and Linkages:** Collaboration and linkages are heavily promoted to avoid duplication of services and to maximize the efficiency of resources and services. A referral system to ensure the transition of three-year-old children into other early childhood education programs is a required component for this program. This ensures continual support for the at-risk child and family. Table 5 shows the collaboration of projects with state agencies, such as the Illinois Department of Public Health, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, and the Illinois Department of Human Services, and with service providers, such as hospitals, school districts, and libraries.
4. **Parent/Community Involvement Plan:** By communicating with parents about the program, linking parents with community resources and services, and providing parenting education activities, the program emphasizes and strengthens the role of a parent as a child's primary educator. Approximately 8,482 parents were referred to other community services and resources.

5. **Case Management Services:** Case management services are necessary to coordinate existing services available in the region in order to achieve successful long-term outcomes. The program should have a written agreement with other agencies to ensure intensive, comprehensive, integrated, and continual support services to families. In case management services, the educator also generally follows up with the parents and agencies to ensure that families received the services they need. Table 3 shows that 10,211 parents received these services.
6. **Individual Family Service Plan:** Each family should have an individual plan based on a family needs assessment that will assist them in reaching their goals. Case management services and an individual family service plan work together to help families meet their needs. In FY09, 11,886 families had an Individual Family Service Plan. Projects need to provide this service to all families.
7. **Qualified Staff:** ISBE requires projects to hire qualified staff members who have the necessary knowledge and skills to implement the Illinois Early Childhood Prevention Initiative program.
8. **Professional Development:** It is important for staff to continue to attain skills and knowledge based on current research and best practices to improve outcomes for families. ISBE provides numerous workshops throughout the year for early childhood program staff. In FY09, staff from 106 projects attended Birth-to-3 Program Standards workshops.

ISBE has continued to improve the quality of services to parents and children. Although Illinois legislators have continued to increase funding, the need for services exceeds available funding. Additional resources will enhance the ability to provide extensive and comprehensive services and to serve more at-risk families. Although 3,121 parents are on waiting lists, many more families also need assistance, which in turn will help children to be successful in school and in their lives. Investment in this program yields a high social and economic return.

PARENTS' COMMENTS

“Being able to be around other children the same age is so great—preparing them for preschool.”

“I like best that my child can interact with other children, play with different educational toys, and listen to story time. My child is learning something new over here every time. It’s a very educational program for small children.”

“I like the whole program. I feel welcome and it is very good for parents as well as kids. We are enjoying the day together.”

“My child is hearing/learning new words and is already at a five-year-old level.”

“We love the variety of experiences in an educational setting.”

“I learned, as my child, a lot!”

“I like best the structure and activities that help my child develop and gym time.”

“A wonderful place for children to explore and learn hands-on.”

“I get knowledgeable information from the staff with any concerns with my children.”

“My parent educator was very helpful, informative, and encouraging.”

“My parent educator is a wonderful person and teacher. I enjoy her visits and I have learned so much about my daughter and also about being a better parent.”

“My parent educator has been with me for three years now and I hope she continues to help me be a better mother.”

“With personal visits we followed instructions from the educators which enabled us to communicate with our child.”

“We read more books after the educators’ visits. They truly encouraged us about reading.”

“The educators were truly amazing. They are God-given gifts for any child or parent.”

“My educator is a godsend and knows how to relate with someone going through pregnancy from beginning to even after, up to childcare. Knows her stuff and has the best tips.”

“This is a very good program especially for first time parents. They offer you so many things to be able to understand your child development skills.”

“My parent educator is really good with kids—I’ve learned a lot about observing my child’s behavior and not overreacting. I think all teens need this help.”