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PART 235  
EARLY CHILDHOOD BLOCK GRANT

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AUTHORITY: Authorized by Section 1C-2 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/1C-2] and implementing Sections 2-3.71 and 2-3.89 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/2-3.71 and 2-3.89].

SOURCE: Adopted at 16 Ill. Reg. 10181, effective June 10, 1992; expedited correction at 16 Ill. Reg. 15186, effective June 10, 1992; amended at 26 Ill. Reg. 903, effective January 15, 2002; old Part repealed at 30 Ill. Reg. 4618 and new Part adopted at 30 Ill. Reg. 4620, effective February 28, 2006; emergency amendment adopted at 30 Ill. Reg. 11793, effective June 26, 2006, for a maximum of 150 days; emergency expired November 22, 2006; amended at 30 Ill. Reg. 19383, effective November 28, 2006; amended at 32 Ill. Reg. 13357, effective July 25, 2008; amended at 33 Ill. Reg. 4027, effective February 23, 2009; amended at 34 Ill. Reg. 11615, effective July 26, 2010; amended at 35 Ill. Reg. 3742, effective February 17, 2011; amended at 36 Ill. Reg. 6827, effective April 18, 2012; amended at 39 Ill. Reg. 6674, effective April 27, 2015; amended at 40 Ill. Reg. 15168, effective October 24, 2016; amended at 44 Ill. Reg. 1942, effective January 10, 2020; emergency amendment at 44 Ill. Reg. 5924, effective March 27, 2020, for a maximum of 150 days; emergency expired August 23, 2020; amended at 44 Ill. Reg. 13359, effective July 28, 2020; amended at 45 Ill. Reg. 917, effective January 4, 2021.

## SUBPART A: Preschool Education and Prevention Initiative Programs

**Section 235.10 Purpose; Eligible Applicants**

- a) This Subpart A establishes the procedures and criteria for the approval of proposals submitted to the State Board of Education by eligible applicants for grants to assist in establishing early childhood education programs funded through the Early Childhood Block Grant authorized by Section 1C-2 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/1C-2]. The Early Childhood Block Grant program shall include:
- 1) preschool education primarily for at-risk and low-income children ages 3 years old to kindergarten enrollment age as defined in Section 10-20.12 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/10-20.12], to include those programs and activities that meet the requirements of Section 2-3.71 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/2-3.71]; and
  - 2) prevention initiative for at-risk children from birth to age 3 and their families, to include those programs and activities that meet the requirements of Section 2-3.89 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/2-3.89].
  - 3) For the purposes of this Part, "at risk" is defined as those children *who because of their home and community environment are subject to such language, cultural, economic and like disadvantages to cause them to have been determined as a result of screening procedures* (to be carried out in conformance with Section 235.20(c)(5) of this Part) *to be at risk of academic failure.* (Section 2-3.71(a)(4.5) of the School Code)
- b) Eligible applicants for Early Childhood Block Grant programs include any public or private not-for-profit or for-profit entity with experience in providing educational, health, social and/or child development services to young children and their families. If the Early Childhood Block Grant program is operated in or by a child care center subject to the licensure requirements of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), then that child care center must hold the appropriate licensure in accordance with rules promulgated by DCFS (see 89 Ill. Adm. Code 403 (Licensing Standards for Group Homes), 405 (Licensing Standards for Day Care Agencies), 406 (Licensing Standards for Day Care Homes), 407 (Licensing Standards for Day Care Centers) and 408 (Licensing Standards for Group Day Care Homes)).
- c) Joint applications for funds may be submitted by any combination of eligible applicants, as described in subsection (b) of this Section.

- 1) If a joint application is submitted, then an administrative agent shall be designated.
  - 2) A school district or other eligible applicant shall only participate in one proposal for a specific program.
- d) Eligible applicants may subcontract with a private school, not-for-profit or for-profit corporation, or other governmental agency that would otherwise be eligible under subsection (b) of this Section to conduct an Early Childhood Block Grant program.

(Source: Amended at 35 Ill. Reg. 3742, effective February 17, 2011)

**Section 235.20 Application Procedure and Content for New or Expanding Programs**

Each applicant that is proposing a program that has not received funding in the year previous to the current application or is seeking additional funds to expand its currently funded program shall submit to the State Board of Education a proposal that includes the components specified in this Section. For purposes of this Section, an "expanded" program includes one in which the applicant is proposing to serve additional children and their families or to offer initiatives not provided under its currently funded program.

- a) Grants for new or expanded programs shall be offered in years in which the level of available funding is such that one or more new or expanded programs can be supported, along with those currently funded programs that seek continuation funding in accordance with Section 235.60.
- b) When sufficient funding is available, the State Superintendent of Education shall issue one or more Requests for Proposals (RFP) specifying the information that applicants shall include in their proposals, informing applicants of any bidders' conferences and requiring that proposals be submitted no later than the date specified in the RFP. The RFP shall provide at least 45 calendar days in which to submit proposals.
  - 1) Proposals for preschool education programs shall be submitted electronically through the State Board of Education's grant management system (see <http://www.isbe.net/egms/>).
  - 2) Proposals for prevention initiative programs shall be submitted in a format specified by the State Board of Education.
- c) All proposals submitted in response to an RFP shall include the following components:
  - 1) A cover page signed by the school district superintendent or official authorized to submit the proposal or, in the case of a joint application, by the superintendent from each of the school districts and each authorized official of other eligible entities participating in the joint proposal.
  - 2) For applicants other than public school districts, a description that includes the following:
    - A) the applicant's mission statement, organizational structure and goals or policies regarding early childhood programs;

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- B) the applicant's existing competencies to provide early childhood education programs, to include a list of any early childhood accreditations that have been achieved, which may include, as applicable, the most current designation the applicant has received through the ExceleRate Illinois: Quality Rating and Improvement System (<http://www.excelerateillinoisproviders.com/>); and
  - C) in the case of a joint application, the goals and objectives of the collaboration and a brief description of each partner's experience in providing services similar to those to be provided under the Early Childhood Block Grant program.
- 3) A description of how the comprehensive services to be provided are aligned with:
- A) as applicable to the program being proposed, the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards, as set forth in Appendix A or, beginning July 1, 2015, the Illinois Early Learning Guidelines, as set forth in Appendix C;
  - B) the Illinois Birth to Five Program Standards as set forth in Appendix B; and
  - C) for proposed preschool education programs that will serve English learners, the "Early English Language Development Standards Ages 2.5-5.5 2013 Edition" (2013), published by the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System on behalf of the WIDA Consortium, Wisconsin Center for Education Research (WCER), University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1025 West Johnson Street, MD#23, Madison WI 53706 and posted at <http://www.wida.us/standards/eeld.aspx>. No later amendments to or editions of these standards are incorporated.
- 4) A description of the need for the program, which shall include:
- A) current demographic or descriptive information regarding the community in which the families and children reside (including information on the prevalence of homelessness); and
  - B) the process that was used to determine the need for the program in the community in relation to other similar services that may be operating in the same geographic area; this description must list, to

the extent known, the other services offered and an estimate of the number of children being served.

- 5) A description of the population to be served, as defined in Section 235.10(a), for each program to be funded under the Early Childhood Block Grant. This description shall include:
  - A) how the eligible population will be recruited;
  - B) the geographic area to be served; and
  - C) the estimated number of children and/or families to be enrolled.
- 6) A description of the procedures to be used to screen children and their families to determine their need for services. Results of the screening shall be made available to the program staff and parents of the children screened. All screening procedures shall include:
  - A) research-based criteria to determine at what point performance on the screening instrument indicates that children are at risk of academic failure as well as to assess other environmental, economic and demographic information that indicates a likelihood that the children would be at risk;
  - B) screening instruments/activities that are:
    - i) related to and able to measure the child's development in at least the following areas (as appropriate for the age of the child): vocabulary, visual-motor integration, language and speech development, English proficiency, fine and gross motor skills, social skills, and emotional and cognitive development; and
    - ii) formally validated with evidence that the instruments/activities reliably and accurately detect children who are at risk for developmental delays and do not incorrectly identify children disproportionately as being at risk of academic failure;
  - C) written parental permission for the screening;
  - D) parent interview (to be conducted in the parents' home language, if necessary), including at least the following:

- i) a summary of the child's health history and status, including whether the child has an existing disability, and social development; and
    - ii) information about the parents, such as age, educational achievement and employment history;
  - E) vision and hearing screening, in accordance with 77 Ill. Adm. Code 685 (Vision Screening) and 675 (Hearing Screening); and
  - F) where practicable, provision for the inclusion of program teaching staff in the screening process.
- 7) A description of the parent education and involvement component that will be provided, which shall include activities in each of the following areas:
  - A) communication between the home and the preschool education program that is regular, two-way and meaningful;
  - B) parenting skills are promoted and supported;
  - C) recognition that parents play an integral role in assisting student learning;
  - D) parents are welcome in the program, and their support and involvement are sought; and
  - E) parents are full partners in the decisions that affect children and families.
- 8) A description of how the program will coordinate with other programs, as specified in the RFP, that are in operation in the same area and that are concerned with the education, welfare, health and safety needs of young children. A copy of the written agreement between the program and any Head Start program (see <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ohs>) operating in the same area shall be executed by the date and contain the information specified in Section 2-3.71(a)(4.5) of the School Code. If a Head Start program is either unable or unwilling to enter into a written agreement, the program shall notify the State Board of Education of this fact no later than December 31 of each fiscal year.



- 9) A description of the full-time and part-time professional and nonprofessional staff to be paid by the program, indicating that program administrators, early childhood teachers, counselors, psychologists, psychiatrists and social workers are appropriately qualified.
- A) Teachers of children ages 3 to 5 years must hold a professional educator license endorsed in early childhood education or an educator license with stipulations endorsed in early childhood and one of the following endorsements: provisional educator, alternative provisional educator, resident teacher or visiting international educator. (See Section 2-3.71(a)(3) of the School Code and 23 Ill. Adm. Code 1.Appendix A.)
  - B) Paraprofessional staff employed to assist in instruction provided to children ages 3 to 5 years shall meet the requirements set forth in 23 Ill. Adm. Code 25.510(b) (Endorsement for Paraprofessional Educator) or hold an approval for paraprofessional educator received in accordance with Section 25.15(a)(2)(J) (Types of Licenses; Exchange).
  - C) Teachers of children ages 3 to 5 years who are assigned to a transitional bilingual program or a transitional program of instruction that is administered by a school district, either in an attendance center or a non-school-based facility, shall meet the requirements set forth in 23 Ill. Adm. Code 228.35 (Transitional Bilingual Education), as applicable.
  - D) By July 1, 2017, directors of child care centers offering preschool programs funded under Section 2-3.71 of the School Code and this Part shall have either:
    - i) a minimum of a baccalaureate degree in child development or early childhood education or the equivalent (i.e., baccalaureate in any discipline with a minimum of 24 semester hours of credit in child development, early childhood education, or early childhood special education, including relevant field experience) and a Gateways to Opportunity Level II or III Illinois Director Credential issued pursuant to Section 10-70 of the Department of Human Services Act [20 ILCS 1305/10-70] (see <http://www.ilgateways.com/en/credentials>); or
    - ii) meet the requirements of subsection (c)(9)(E).

- E) By July 1, 2017, directors of preschool programs funded under Section 2-3.71 of the School Code and this Part and administered by school districts shall hold a professional educator license endorsed for principal or general administrative issued under 23 Ill. Adm. Code 25.337 (Principal (2013)) or 25.335 (General Administrative (Through August 31, 2014)), respectively.
  - F) Beginning September 1, 2015, an applicant must submit an assurance that each staff member who will provide services to children enrolled in an early childhood classroom funded under this Part and who does not hold a professional educator license issued by the State Board of Education pursuant to Article 21B of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/Art. 21B] and 23 Ill. Adm. Code 25 (Educator Licensure) has registered in the Illinois Department of Human Services' "Gateways to Opportunity" registry (see <http://registry.ilgateways.com>).
- 10) A description of staff development assessment procedures and ongoing professional development activities to be conducted, to include a description of how the results of the assessment will be used to inform the program's staff development and, for proposals for expanded programs, the continuous quality improvement plan required under Section 235.67.
- 11) A description of how developmental and/or educational progress will be assessed and documented to ensure that the program meets the needs of the child and provides a system whereby that child's parents are routinely advised of their child's progress.
- A) The procedures to assess progress shall be formally validated with evidence that the procedures reliably and accurately assess a child's progress relative to his or her individual needs and the standards set forth in Appendix A or Appendix C, as applicable.
  - B) The procedures shall address each of the domains of development specified in Section 235.20(c)(6).
- 12) A description of the required program components, as set forth in either Section 235.30 or 235.40.
- 13) Other information, as specified in the RFP, such as daily schedules (including the number of hours per day and days per week the program will operate, which must provide for at least 12.5 hours a week), an annual

calendar of at least 165 days, classroom locations, facility information (e.g., owner's name, terms of lease arrangement, size of classrooms and other areas to be used by the program), if applicable.

- 14) The plan for ensuring that the program provides either a snack, in the case of a half-day program, or a meal, in the case of a full-day program, for participating children.
    - A) Food and beverages provided in programs located in a school district attendance center shall meet the U.S. Department of Agriculture's competitive food standards set forth at 7 CFR 210.11 (2013).
    - B) Food and beverages provided in programs located in a licensed child care center or other community setting shall meet DCFS' standards set forth at 89 Ill. Adm. Code 407.330 (Nutrition and Meal Service).
  - 15) A budget summary and payment schedule, as well as a budget breakdown, i.e., a detailed explanation of each line item of expenditure. The budget shall specify that no more than 5 percent of the total grant award shall be used for administrative and general expenses not directly attributed to program activities, except that a higher limit not to exceed 10 percent may be negotiated with an applicant that has provided evidence that the excess administrative expenses are beyond its control and that it has exhausted all available and reasonable remedies to comply with the limitation.
  - 16) A description of how the applicant will ensure that no fees will be charged of parents or guardians and their children who are enrolled and participate in Early Childhood Block Grant programs.
  - 17) A plan for evaluating the proposed programs and activities to be included in the Early Childhood Block Grant, which shall correspond to the applicable specifications set forth in the RFP.
  - 18) Such certifications, assurances and program-specific terms of the grant as the State Superintendent of Education may require, to be signed by each applicant that is a party to the application and submitted with the proposal. (Also see Section 235.70.)
- d) Applicants may be requested to clarify various aspects of their proposals. The contents of the approved proposal shall be incorporated into a grant agreement to be signed by the State Superintendent of Education or designee and the school

district superintendent or, in the case of an entity that is not the school district, the person legally authorized to submit the proposal and bind the applicant to its contents.

(Source: Amended at 39 Ill. Reg. 6674, effective April 27, 2015)

**Section 235.30 Additional Program Components for Preschool Education Proposals**

- a) In addition to the requirements set forth in Section 235.20, applications for funding for preschool education programs and activities, as defined in Section 235.10(a)(1), must provide:
  - 1) a description of how the proposed educational program is developmentally appropriate for each child, which shall:
    - A) be accepted based upon evidence in the proposal that the results of the individualized assessment profile for each child will be the basis for determining that child's educational program; and
    - B) address the domains of development specified in Section 235.20(c)(6) and how a language and literacy development program shall be implemented for each child based on that child's individual assessment.
  - 2) a description of how the risk factors to determine eligibility reflect the community to be served and will be weighted to ensure that the children most at risk of academic failure are enrolled;
  - 3) the child/staff ratio for each classroom, which shall not exceed a ratio of 10 children to one adult, with no more than 20 children being served in each classroom;
  - 4) a description of the written transition plan to ensure that those children who are age-eligible for kindergarten are enrolled in school upon leaving the preschool education program;
  - 5) for school district applicants, a description of the steps to be taken to ensure that the provisions of Article 14C of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/Art. 14C] and 23 Ill. Adm. Code 228 (Transitional Bilingual Education) are met;
  - 6) a description of the provisions to be made to allow for the participation of children with disabilities in the program; and
  - 7) a description of the steps to be taken to ensure that a child who is not yet toilet trained is not excluded from the program.
- b) Each applicant also shall describe whether the program qualifies as a program serving primarily at-risk children or a program serving primarily children whose

families meet the income guidelines set forth in Section 2-3.71(a)(4.5) of the School Code.

- 1) A program serving "primarily at-risk children" is one that:
    - A) has 80 percent or more of the enrolled children identified as being at risk of academic failure (see Sections 235.10(a)(3) and 235.20(c)(6));
    - B) gives priority for enrollment to academically at-risk students over those students who have not been identified as academically at risk; and
    - C) has taken specific proactive measures to ensure that parents of children who may be at risk of academic failure are aware of the opportunity to enroll in the preschool education program.
  - 2) A program serving "primarily children whose families meet income guidelines" is one that has 80 percent or more of the enrolled children from families meeting the income guidelines and does not qualify under subsection (b)(1) as serving primarily academically at-risk children.
  - 3) Each applicant shall estimate the percentage of children to be enrolled who are considered to be at risk of academic failure or whose families meet income guidelines, as applicable.
- c) Programs serving primarily at-risk children shall describe:
- 1) the process to ensure that, if the program has a waiting list of children to be enrolled, all children identified as being at risk of academic failure are enrolled before other children not identified as being at risk; and
  - 2) the specific proactive measures the program has taken or will take to ensure that parents of children who may be at risk of academic failure are made aware of the opportunity to participate in the preschool education program.

(Source: Amended at 39 Ill. Reg. 6674, effective April 27, 2015)

**Section 235.40 Additional Program Components for Prevention Initiative Proposals**

In addition to the requirements set forth in Section 235.20, applications for funding for prevention initiative programs and activities, as defined in Section 235.10(a)(2), must provide:

- a) evidence that the program is derived from research on successful prevention services for at-risk families, including specific references to research that discusses the types of services and strategies to be offered by the program as effective in addressing the needs of the families to be served, to include the identification of the program model and research-based curriculum to be implemented;
- b) the steps to be taken to ensure that the program will serve those children and families most in need of prevention initiative activities and services;
- c) a description of the steps to be taken to coordinate services in the area, including a description of how the community will be involved in the development of a system for making referrals and providing follow up, and how case management services will be used;
- d) a description of how services will be targeted to family needs, to include how a research-based family needs assessment will be conducted and used to implement an individual family service plan for each family served in the program;
- e) a description of the intensity of services that will be offered (e.g., the number of hours that are available for families to participate in activities and services);
- f) the steps to be taken to encourage families to attend regularly and remain in the program a sufficient time to make sustainable changes; and
- g) a referral system that ensures that 3-year-old children are placed into other early childhood education programs that meet their specific developmental needs and the services to be provided to ensure a successful transition into those other programs.

(Source: Amended at 39 Ill. Reg. 6674, effective April 27, 2015)

**Section 235.50 Proposal Review and Approval for New or Expanding Programs**

- a) Proposals submitted for funding to establish a new program or expand an existing program shall be evaluated in accordance with the following criteria.
  - 1) Population to be Served (30 points)
    - A) The proposal clearly indicates that the area to be served has a high number of children and families determined to be the most in need of the services provided by the Early Childhood Block Grant program, as indicated by high levels of poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, limited-English proficiency or other need-related indicators, such as the school district's rate of dropouts, retention, truancy, teenage pregnancies and homeless students, high rates of infant mortality, birth trauma, low birth weight or prematurity, and high rates of child abuse and neglect, and that there exists in the area to be served an insufficient number of other programs and services to fully serve all children and families who potentially could be at risk.
    - B) Criteria and indicators for identifying children and families who are eligible for the program are clearly established and likely to target those children and families most in need of services.
    - C) Effective recruitment strategies are proposed that are likely to ensure that the maximum number of eligible children and families are enrolled in the program.
  - 2) Quality of Proposed Program (40 points)
    - A) The proposed program and activities will sufficiently meet the identified needs of the population to be served and include child and parent activities designed to enhance child development and parent effectiveness and, ultimately, school readiness.
    - B) The program proposal provides for effective linkages among parents, education, health and social service agencies, and child care providers and includes a plan for coordination of services with other educational programs serving young children and their families.



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- C) The proposed program is built upon effective research about early childhood education and aligned to the applicable Illinois early learning standards (see Appendix A or C).
  - D) The evaluation strategies include measurable outcomes for children and families that are designed to effectively gauge the success of the program and yield sufficient data that can be used to improve the program.
- 3) Experience and Qualifications (20 points)
- A) Proposed staff hold the appropriate educator and/or professional licenses for their positions and have the qualifications and experience necessary to successfully implement a high-quality early childhood program.
  - B) The staff development plan adequately addresses the needs of the project staff, offers a varied and full range of staff development experiences and provides sufficient opportunities for learning so as to allow staff to incorporate the training into program delivery activities.
  - C) In addition, an eligible applicant other than a school district has presented evidence that it:
    - i) holds the appropriate licensure to operate as a day care facility;
    - ii) holds early childhood accreditations or has other relevant experience that demonstrates success in implementing and administering programs similar to the ones funded under the Early Childhood Block Grant Program; and
    - iii) has a successful track record with similar grants or contracts.
- 4) The program is cost-effective as evidenced by the cost of proposed services in relation to the numbers to be served and the services to be provided. (10 points)
- b) The selection of proposals for funding may be based in part on geographic distribution and/or the need to provide resources to school districts and communities with varying demographic characteristics.

- c) Priority consideration may be given to proposals with specific areas of emphasis, as identified by the State Superintendent of Education in a particular RFP.
- d) For a previously funded applicant, progress toward correcting any deficiencies contained in an unfavorable monitoring report issued under Section 235.67 shall be considered in the review process.
- e) The State Superintendent of Education shall determine the amount of individual grant awards. The final award amounts shall be based upon:
  - 1) the total amount of funds available for the Early Childhood Block Grant; and
  - 2) the resources requested in the top-ranked proposals, as identified pursuant to subsections (a) through (d).

(Source: Amended at 39 Ill. Reg. 6674, effective April 27, 2015)

**Section 235.55 Proposal Review Process and Additional Funding Priorities for Preschool Education Programs**

In order to meet the funding priorities set forth in Section 2-3.71(a)(4.5) of the School Code, each proposal for a preschool education program shall be reviewed using both quantitative and qualitative criteria.

- a) Proposals shall first be screened to identify those proposals that meet the criteria for each funding priority (see Section 235.30(b) of this Part). Proposals shall be separated into the following three categories:
  - 1) proposals serving primarily at-risk children;
  - 2) proposals serving primarily children whose families meet income guidelines; and
  - 3) all other proposals.
- b) Within each of the three categories set forth in subsection (a) of this Section, the proposals shall be reviewed and scored using the qualitative criteria set forth in Section 235.50(a) of this Part to determine which proposals provide evidence of a “qualified program”. “Qualified programs” shall be those scoring at least 60 out of 100 total points.
  - 1) All qualified programs within the category set forth in subsection (a)(1) of this Section shall be funded before funding any qualified programs in the categories set forth in subsection (a)(2) or (a)(3) of this Section.
  - 2) All qualified programs within the category set forth in subsection (a)(2) of this Section shall be funded before funding any qualified programs in the category set forth in subsection (a)(3) of this Section.
  - 3) Within each category, priority for funding will be given to substantially similar proposals that either:
    - A) serve children from a community with limited preschool education programs or an insufficient number of programs to meet the community’s need; or
    - B) have few resources promoting preschool education.

(Source: Added at 35 Ill. Reg. 3742, effective February 17, 2011)

**Section 235.60 Application Content and Approval for Continuation Programs**

The requirements of this Section shall apply to those applicants seeking funding to continue preschool education and prevention initiative programs beyond the initial grant period.

- a) In order to continue to operate an Early Childhood Block Grant Program, a grantee each year shall electronically submit an application for continuation. The application shall include at least the following:
  - 1) an overview of the program, addressing the program components outlined in Section 235.20 and either Section 235.30 or Section 235.40, as applicable for preschool education or prevention initiative programs;
  - 2) if applicable, a description of progress the applicant has made in remedying any deficiencies identified pursuant to Section 235.67 within the timelines specified for compliance;
  - 3) budget summary and payment schedule as well as a budget breakdown, i.e., a detailed explanation of each line item of expenditure; and
  - 4) the certifications and assurances referred to in Section 235.20(c)(18) applicable to the renewal period.
- b) An Early Childhood Education Block Grant Program shall be approved for continuation provided that:
  - 1) a need continues to exist for the program, as evidenced by the number or proportion of children and families to be served;
  - 2) the program components proposed will be effective in assisting at-risk children and families;
  - 3) deficiencies identified pursuant to Section 235.67 have been corrected and/or significant progress is being made within the timelines specified in the continuous quality improvement plan;
  - 4) the proposed budget is cost-effective, as evidenced by the cost of proposed services in relation to the numbers to be served and the services to be provided; and
  - 5) in the year previous to the continuation application, the applicant complied with the terms and conditions of any grant it received pursuant to this Subpart A.

(Source: Amended at 39 Ill. Reg. 6674, effective April 27, 2015)

**Section 235.65 ExceleRate Illinois: Quality Rating and Improvement System**

Beginning in the 2014-15 school year, each grantee that operates a preschool education program funded under this Part shall participate in ExceleRate Illinois (see <http://www.exceletrateillinois.com> and click on "Information for Providers"). ExceleRate Illinois is the State's quality rating and improvement system that emphasizes continuous quality improvement for early learning and development programs and uses a consistent set of standards organized into four domains of teaching and learning; family and community engagement; leadership and management; and qualifications and continuing education.

- a) Based on the results of monitoring conducted pursuant to Section 235.67, grantees shall achieve an ExceleRate Illinois designation based on evidence of meeting the standards for that designation (see <http://www.exceletrateillinoisproviders.com/resources/standard-and-evidence-requirements> for further information).
- b) The physical location of the preschool education program shall inform the designation to be assigned under subsection (a).
  - 1) If the grantee is a school district and administers the preschool education program in multiple attendance centers:
    - A) the individual attendance center in which a program is located shall achieve a designation separate from the school district in situations in which the attendance center has three or more preschool classrooms; or
    - B) the individual attendance center in which a program is located shall achieve the designation of the school district in situations in which the attendance center has fewer than three classrooms.
  - 2) If the grantee is a community-based child care center, the designation achieved by the community-based child care center will be assigned to the preschool classrooms housed at that facility. The requirements of this subsection (b)(2) shall apply to any school district that operates a preschool education program in a community-based child care center.
  - 3) If the grantee is a public or private not-for-profit or for-profit entity other than a school district or a community-based child care center, the designation achieved by the public or private not-for-profit or for-profit entity shall be assigned to the preschool classrooms administered by the grantee regardless of the number of preschool classrooms.

- c) The designation achieved by a program shall not be changed unless the results of ongoing monitoring authorized under Section 235.67 indicate that the program has either:
- 1) met the standards for receipt of a higher designation; or
  - 2) failed to maintain a level of quality necessary to retain the designation currently achieved.
- d) A program that fails to achieve a "Gold Circle of Quality" or "Silver Circle of Quality" designation shall be subject to actions detailed in Section 235.67.

(Source: Added at 39 Ill. Reg. 6674, effective April 27, 2015)

**Section 235.67 Program Monitoring**

- a) Each program shall be monitored on site at least once every four years to determine the extent to which it is complying with all operational requirements and to assess the quality of the developmental and/or educational components offered.
- b) By no later than September 1 of each year, the State Board of Education shall post at <http://www.isbe.net/earlychi/default.htm> the operational compliance checklist and the name of the research-based assessment tool to be used in the monitoring process.
- c) Each program shall receive a monitoring report with the results of the operational compliance checklist and the quality assessment. Using those results, the program shall complete a continuous quality improvement plan addressing operational compliance and a continuous quality improvement plan addressing the quality assessment.
  - 1) Each continuous quality improvement plan shall, at a minimum, address:
    - A) the specific issue or indicator for which a deficiency was noted;
    - B) the actions to be taken to remedy the deficiencies and, as applicable, the resources and professional development that will be targeted towards improvement efforts; and
    - C) The person responsible and the timelines in which the deficiencies are expected to be corrected, provided that no continuous quality improvement plan shall be in effect for more than two school years.
  - 2) The continuous quality improvement plan shall be signed by the person legally authorized to submit the plan, shall bind the applicant to its contents, and shall be electronically submitted to the State Board of Education not later than 30 days after the program's receipt of the monitoring report.
  - 3) By September 1 of each year, the State Board of Education shall post at <http://www.isbe.net/earlychi/default.htm> the templates to be used to develop the continuous quality improvement plan.
- d) For each year in which the continuous quality improvement plan is in effect, the program shall submit a progress report to the State Board of Education that



describes the progress the program has made relative to remedying the deficiencies identified. The progress report shall be submitted electronically no later than June 1 of each year.

- e) A program that fails to reach the goals of the continuous quality improvement plan within the timelines specified in the plan shall be subject to additional sanctions, including, but not limited to, removal of grant approval.

(Source: Added at 39 Ill. Reg. 6674, effective April 27, 2015)

**Section 235.70 Terms of the Grant**

- a) Each grantee shall submit evaluation information and other reports containing program-related data in a format specified by the State Board of Education, providing:
  - 1) descriptive statistics on the population served, eligibility, screening procedures and staff qualifications and training, including any social and emotional consultation services provided pursuant to Subpart C;
  - 2) descriptive information, including type and quality of the educational program, amount and extent of interagency collaboration, and parent education and involvement;
  - 3) the extent to which program objectives have been accomplished; and
  - 4) any similar program-related information that the State Superintendent of Education may request upon 30 days' written notice.
- b) At least once every four years, a program review shall be conducted for each project to ensure program quality, to assist in program improvement and to provide technical assistance.
- c) All equipment purchased by the grantee for the program with Early Childhood Block Grant funds must be documented on a form supplied by the State Board of Education and be maintained in the grantee's files.
- d) A time distribution worksheet shall be kept for any staff member in a part-time position.
- e) Grantees shall use funds provided under the Early Childhood Block Grant *to supplement, not supplant, funds received from any other source.* (Sections 2-3.71 and 2-3.89 of the School Code)
- f) Grant funds may not be used to provide religious instruction, conduct worship services or engage in any form of proselytization.
- g) Prior to final funding approval, each grantee shall:
  - 1) present evidence that staff meet the requirements of Section 235.20(c)(9), as applicable; and

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- 2) if subject to licensure requirements of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), present evidence that it holds the appropriate licensure (also see Section 235.10(b)).
- h) All preschool education program grantees must electronically report the data required under this subsection (h) in the Student Information System (23 Ill. Adm. Code 1.75) no later than October 15 of each year.
    - 1) The percentage of children enrolled in the program who have been identified as being at risk of academic failure.
    - 2) The percentage of children enrolled in the program who are from families whose incomes are less than four times the federal poverty level (FPL), established by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
    - 3) The percentage of children enrolled in the program who do not qualify under either category.
  - i) Each grantee shall enter information and other data relative to the students participating in the preschool education program into the Student Information System.
  - j) Failure of a grantee to enroll the required percentage of children (80 percent) in the particular prioritization category for which the proposal was funded (i.e., at-risk status or income levels) shall result in the amount of the grant award being reduced proportionate to the decrease in percentage of children enrolled.
  - k) School district grantees with programs serving homeless children must comply with all applicable provisions of the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 USC 11431 et seq.). Non-school district grantees should, to the extent possible, ensure that homeless children enrolled in their programs receive the support necessary for successful and continued participation, including, without limitation, arranging for appropriate transportation when necessary.
  - l) No funds may be used to help support or sustain any institution controlled by any church or sectarian denomination (see Article X, Section 3 of the Illinois Constitution).
  - m) Each grantee that operates a program in a facility licensed by DCFS shall require all employees and volunteers who are persons subject to background checks, as defined by 89 Ill. Adm. Code 385.20 (Definitions), to authorize DCFS to perform a Child Abuse and Neglect Tracking System (CANTS) background check. The

grantee shall maintain evidence of completion of required CANTS checks for all persons subject to background checks and copies of the evidence of completion shall be provided to the administrator of the DCFS-licensed facility. The requirement applies to any paid or unpaid individual, including any teacher who is holding an educator license pursuant to Article 21B and employed by a school district or other entity but working in the facility, who is used to perform essential staff duties as evidenced by being counted in the staff-child ratio or being allowed to be alone with children in a licensed child care facility outside the visual or auditory supervision of facility staff.

(Source: Amended at 39 Ill. Reg. 6674, effective April 27, 2015)

**Section 235.75 Child Care Centers During a Public Health Emergency**

- a) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Part to the contrary, if the Governor has declared a disaster due to a public health emergency under Section 7 of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency Act [20 ILCS 3305], currently funded early childhood block grant programs, defined as public school districts and other entities that voluntarily choose to provide care for children ages 0 to 12 of essential workers, as defined in Section 2-3.71(c) of the School Code, may use funds in excess of what is necessary for the program to provide at-home materials for children in the program and to purchase supplies and equipment while caring for children of essential workers. Examples of funds include, but are not limited to, instructional supplies, field trips, professional development, or mental health consultations. Each program that re-allocates funds under this subsection must amend its budget to reflect the new expenditures.
- b) Current early childhood block grant programs may utilize staff to support the caring for children of essential workers based on guidance from their local school boards or authorized officials. The State Board of Education supports the use of early childhood block grant funding to pay staff to care for children of essential workers. This funding may be utilized to pay existing full-time or part-time staff who are paid with early childhood block grant funds. If needed, and if funding allows, part-time staff may increase to working more than part-time to care for children of essential workers.
- c) Each early childhood block grant program that provides care for children of essential workers must comply with any requirements concerning day care centers, as governed by the Department of Children and Family Services (see 89 Ill. Adm. Code 407), and nothing in this Section shall be construed to supersede those requirements.

(Source: Added at 45 Ill. Reg. 917, effective January 4, 2021)

**Section 235.80 Chronic Absenteeism Data Report and Support**

- a) In this Section, "chronic absence" means absences that total 10% or more of school days of the most recent academic school year, including absences with and without valid cause, as defined in Section 26-2a of the School Code, and out-of-school suspensions for an enrolled student.
- b) Each grantee that operates a preschool education program funded under this Part must collect and review its chronic absence data and determine what support and resources are needed to positively engage chronically absent students and their families to encourage the habit of daily attendance and promote success.
- c) Each preschool education program must annually report all data collected under subsection (b) to the State Board of Education no later than July 1 of each year. The State Board will make this report publicly available via the Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map Internet website and the Preschool for All Program or Preschool for All Expansion Program triennial report.

(Source: Added at 44 Ill. Reg. 13359, effective July 28, 2020)

SUBPART B: GRANTS FOR TRAINING, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND HIGH-QUALITY SUPPORTS AND FOR WEB-BASED SERVICES

**Section 235.100 Purpose**

This Subpart B establishes the procedure and criteria for the award of one or more grants to eligible applicants for the purposes set forth in this Section.

- a) Grants for Statewide Training, Technical Assistance and High-Quality Supports, which are intended to:
  - 1) provide training, technical assistance and high-quality supports to recipients of funding under the Early Childhood Block Grant (see Subpart A) and offer other professional development opportunities that include, but are not limited to, evidence-based program models, job-specific training, support for mental health consultation and research-based curricula, as applicable to the early childhood program offered (i.e., Preschool Education or Prevention Initiative);
  - 2) align training and technical assistance opportunities to the Standards for Professional Learning (2011) promulgated by Learning Forward, 504 South Locust Street, Oxford OH 45056 and posted at <http://learningforward.org/> (no later additions to or editions of these standards are incorporated);
  - 3) ensure that each provider of professional development meets the requirements set forth in 23 Ill. Adm. Code 25.Subpart J (Renewal of Professional Educator Licenses) to award credit for professional development for educator license renewal purposes; and
  - 4) support programs, leaders and teachers to continuously improve practice and student outcomes.
- b) Grants for Web-Based Services shall address:
  - 1) Web-Based Resources. These resources must:
    - A) be provided through an early learning website for parents, caregivers, teachers, program personnel and program leaders;
    - B) offer evidence-based, reliable information on early childhood education focusing on standards-based instruction in a variety of formats (e.g., printable tip sheets; video, webinars and other multi-

media resources; discussion boards and "frequently asked questions" posts; "rich site summary" feeds; interactive tools and activities; in-person workshops; and online newsletters); and

- C) be made available in languages other than English.
- 2) Web-Based Early Childhood Asset Mapping System. The System shall relate early care and education site locations to other contexts, such as income and ethnic variables, in order to ensure that allocations of early care and education resources:
- A) are more equitably distributed across the State; and
  - B) focus on geographic areas with high concentrations of at-risk children (as defined in Section 235.10(a)(3)).

(Source: Former Section repealed at 35 Ill. Reg. 3742, effective February 17, 2011, and new Section added at 40 Ill. Reg. 15168, effective October 24, 2016)



**Section 235.105 Eligible Applicants**

- a) Grants for Statewide Training, Technical Assistance and High-Quality Supports  
Entities eligible to apply for grants for statewide training, technical assistance and high-quality supports are:
- 1) school districts;
  - 2) university laboratory schools approved under 23 Ill. Adm. Code 452 (Public University Laboratory Schools);
  - 3) charter schools authorized by Article 27A of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/Art. 27A];
  - 4) area vocational centers;
  - 5) regional offices of education;
  - 6) intermediate service centers; and
  - 7) other not-for-profit and for-profit entities with experience in providing training and technical assistance about educational, health, social and child development services to young children and their families.
- b) Entities eligible to apply for grants for web-based services are university laboratory schools approved under 23 Ill. Adm. Code 452 (Public University Laboratory Schools), area vocational centers, regional offices of education, intermediate service centers and not-for-profit entities with the expertise and demonstrated experience in early childhood learning and development necessary to deliver professional development or develop web-based resources, as these are defined in Section 235.100.

(Source: Added at 40 Ill. Reg. 15168, effective October 24, 2016)

**Section 235.110 Application Procedure and Content for New Programs**

Programs established under this Subpart B shall be funded for a five-year period. Funding in each year subsequent to the initial grant year is subject to a sufficient appropriation for the program and satisfactory progress of the grantee in the previous grant year. (See Section 235.130.)

- a) When State funding is expected to be available under this Subpart B for a given fiscal year, the State Superintendent of Education shall issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to eligible entities. This request shall:
  - 1) indicate the amount or expected amount for the program and the expected range for grant awards;
  - 2) describe the required content and format of proposals and identify the services and activities that will receive priority consideration for funding, if applicable;
  - 3) identify the data that recipients will be required to collect and report regarding the services and activities provided, the timelines for reporting and, as applicable, specifics about the evaluation to be conducted to measure the impact of the grant;
  - 4) identify the categories of allowable expenditures and require the submission of a budget summary and payment schedule, completed on the forms provided, as well as a narrative budget description that provides a detailed explanation of each line item of expenditure;
  - 5) include the information to be provided regarding any staff to be assigned to program activities, including any subcontractors proposed to provide services or conduct activities;
  - 6) include certifications, assurances and program-specific terms of the grant that the State Superintendent may require (also see Section 235.140); and
  - 7) indicate the deadline for submission of proposals, which shall provide applicants with at least 30 days in which to respond.
- b) Each proposal shall be signed by an authorized representative of the applicant entity.

- c) Applicants may be requested to clarify various aspects of their proposals. The content of any approved proposal shall be incorporated into a Grant Agreement to be signed by the applicant's authorized representative and the State Superintendent of Education or designee.

(Source: Former Section repealed at 35 Ill. Reg. 3742, effective February 17, 2011, and new Section added at 40 Ill. Reg. 15168, effective October 24, 2016)

### **Section 235.120 Proposal Review and Approval for New Programs**

Proposals submitted for initial funding under this Subpart B shall be evaluated in accordance with the criteria applicable to the specific grant for which a proposal is being submitted.

- a) Grants for Statewide Training, Technical Assistance and High-Quality Supports
  - 1) Experience (30 points)

The applicant demonstrates sufficient knowledge about educational, health, social and child development services to young children and their families. The applicant demonstrates prior successful experience in providing training, technical assistance activities and high-quality supports similar in scope and type to those required under the RFP.
  - 2) Program Planning (15 points)

The proposal presents thorough procedures for assessing the staff development needs of the personnel in local Early Childhood Block Grant programs and assuring that all stakeholders have a voice in articulating training and technical assistance needs and involvement in evaluation efforts. The proposal describes a comprehensive data collection, evaluation and continuous quality improvement plan and sufficiently explains how the information will be provided to the State Board of Education by the deadlines indicated.
  - 3) Program Description (30 points)

The proposed activities are comprehensive, demonstrate a sound approach, are evidence-based and have a strong likelihood of effectively addressing the staff development needs of Early Childhood Block Grant personnel to assist them in complying with the statutory mandate to implement an evidence-based program model (as applicable), research-based curriculum, and the components of the Early Childhood Block Grant program. The proposal describes appropriate staff development activities, reasonable outputs and timelines, and proposes evaluation methods that will be successful in determining the effectiveness of the approaches taken.
  - 4) Cost-Effectiveness of the Proposed Activities (25 points)

The proposed staffing level is sufficient to assure that the proposal's activities and services will be provided in an effective and efficient manner. The proposed budget is consistent with the proposal's activities and appears to be cost-effective, as evidenced by the cost in relation to the numbers to be served and the services to be provided.

- b) Grants for Web-Based Services
  - 1) Grantee Capability (30 points)
    - A) The applicant demonstrates sufficient capacity to fully deliver a project of the magnitude and scope inherent in web-based resources and services. The applicant includes a thorough description of its proposed staffing (indicating the number of staff to be employed and their responsibilities and qualifications). The staffing plan appears to have a high likelihood of contributing positively to the applicant's capacity to successfully perform the work outlined in the RFP.
    - B) The proposal adequately demonstrates the applicant's ability to effectively manage and account for allocations and expenditures of the awarded funds.
    - C) The proposal presents sufficient evidence of the applicant's expertise and experience in website construction and maintenance to suggest that the project will be implemented in a high-quality manner in accordance with the program specifications outlined in the RFP.
  - 2) Quality of the Project Implementation/Work Plan (50 points)

The proposed plan is appropriate and demonstrates thorough planning, communication and innovation sufficient to meet each of the objectives identified in the RFP. The activities proposed are appropriate for the work to be accomplished.
  - 3) Timeline, Cost-Effectiveness and Budget (20 points)

The project timeline is appropriate for the scope of the work and project deliverables. The proposal represents a cost-effective use of State resources, as evidenced by the amount requested to support the activities proposed. The budget is reasonable in relation to the services to be provided.
- c) Priority consideration may be given to proposals with specific areas of emphasis, as identified by the State Superintendent of Education in a particular RFP.

(Source: Former Section repealed at 35 Ill. Reg. 3742, effective February 17, 2011, and new Section added at 40 Ill. Reg. 15168, effective October 24, 2016)

**Section 235.130 Application Content and Approval for Continuation Programs**

The requirements of this Section shall apply to those applicants seeking funding to continue either training, technical assistance and support programs or web-based services grants beyond the initial grant period.

- a) In order to continue to provide services outlined in the initial Grant Agreement funded under this Subpart B, a grantee, each year, shall electronically submit an application for continuation. The application shall include at least the following:
  - 1) a description of activities undertaken to date and any other information required to be reported, demonstrating that the project has been implemented in conformance with the Grant Agreement;
  - 2) an updated scope of the work that discusses the services and activities for which the funding will be used, as articulated in the application for continuation, and a rationale for the activities to be undertaken;
  - 3) budget summary and payment schedule, as well as a narrative budget description, i.e., a detailed explanation of each line item of expenditure;
  - 4) information about any subcontractors proposed to provide services or conduct activities; and
  - 5) the certifications and assurances referred to in Section 235.110(a)(6) applicable to the renewal period.
- b) A program established under this Subpart B shall be approved for continuation, provided that:
  - 1) a need continues to exist for the program or services, and the specific services and activities proposed meet the priorities set forth in the application for continuation;
  - 2) the activities and services proposed will be effective in providing high-quality training, technical assistance and supports, or web-based services, as applicable, that meet the needs of Early Childhood Block Grant recipients and other providers;
  - 3) the proposed budget is cost-effective, as evidenced by the cost of proposed services in relation to the numbers to be served and the services to be provided; and

- 4) in the year previous to the continuation application, the applicant complied with the terms and conditions of any grant it received under this Subpart B.

(Source: Former Section repealed at 35 Ill. Reg. 3742, effective February 17, 2011, and new Section added at 40 Ill. Reg. 15168, effective October 24, 2016)

**Section 235.140 Terms of the Grant**

- a) Subcontracting is allowed with prior written approval of the State Superintendent of Education.
- b) Activities shall be supported by funding under this Subpart B only to the extent that they do not duplicate or supplant efforts already conducted by or under the auspices of the grantee.
- c) Reporting: Each grantee shall submit evaluation information and other reports containing program-related data in a format specified by the State Board of Education, providing, at a minimum:
  - 1) For grants for statewide training, technical assistance and high-quality supports, data and information regarding trainings, technical assistance activities, mental health consultation support and participants; and
  - 2) For grants for web-based services, data and information regarding the events administered with grant funds, completed activities, website maintenance and website traffic.
- d) Travel expenses, including transportation costs and, when overnight stay is required, lodging and per diem, are subject to the State rates published by the Governor's Travel Control Board for State employees and posted at <http://www.illinois.gov/cms/employees/travel/pages/travelreimbursement.aspx>.

(Source: Former Section repealed at 35 Ill. Reg. 3742, effective February 17, 2011, and new Section added at 40 Ill. Reg. 15168, effective October 24, 2016)



## SUBPART C: social and emotional consultation services

**Section 235.200 Implementation and Purpose; Eligible Applicants**

- a) The State Superintendent of Education may annually allocate a portion of the Early Childhood Block Grant to assist preschool education programs funded under Section 2-3.71 of the School Code in providing to teachers in their programs ongoing social and emotional consultation services from mental health professionals.
- b) For the purposes of this Subpart C, social and emotional consultation services shall mean services that help prepare teachers to promote the social and emotional development of their students and to manage inappropriate classroom behaviors that may result from a student's exposure to such challenges as domestic violence, substance abuse, depression or other mental illness, homelessness and other potential concerns.
- c) Eligible applicants are those programs operating a preschool education program funded under Subpart A of this Part during the fiscal year in which funds are made available for social and emotional consultation services.
  - 1) Joint applications may be submitted, in which case one of the programs shall be designated as the administrative agent.
  - 2) A program shall only participate in one proposal for social and emotional consultation services.

(Source: Amended at 35 Ill. Reg. 3742, effective February 17, 2011)

**Section 235.210 Application Procedure and Content**

- a) When an allocation for social and emotional consultation services is made available pursuant to Section 235.200(a) of this Part, the State Superintendent of Education shall issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) specifying the information that applicants shall include in their proposals, informing applicants of any bidders' conferences, and requiring that proposals be submitted no later than the date specified in the RFP. The RFP shall provide at least 30 calendar days in which to submit proposals.
- b) Each proposal submitted in response to an RFP shall include the following components.
  - 1) A description of the need for the services, to include, but not limited to:
    - A) the number or proportion of students who are being served in each State-funded preschool education program included in the proposal who come from families experiencing the type of problems outlined in Section 235.200(b) of this Part;
    - B) the impact that these types of problems have in the classroom (e.g., classroom disruptions, difficulties in learning, lack of positive social interaction);
    - C) the number of teachers likely to use the consultation services on an ongoing basis; and
    - D) other resources that may be available to the program to provide similar services.
  - 2) A description of the types of services to be provided, to include the frequency of each, the person responsible, and how the effectiveness of the service will be measured.
  - 3) A description of the process, measures and data elements to be used to determine the effectiveness of the consultation services on teacher quality and classroom management.
  - 4) The name of each individual to provide the social and emotional consultation services, to include a description of his or her qualifications and experience that at least addresses the person's educational attainment and specialties, experience working with a population similar to that being served in the State-funded preschool education program, and evidence that

he or she possesses any licenses or other credentials required to practice his or her profession.

- 5) A budget summary and payment schedule, as well as a budget breakdown, i.e., a detailed explanation of each line item of expenditure.
  - 6) Such certifications, assurances and program-specific terms of the grant as the State Superintendent of Education may require, to be signed by each applicant that is a party to the application and submitted with the proposal.
- c) Applicants may be requested to clarify various aspects of their proposals. The contents of the approved proposal shall be incorporated into a grant agreement to be signed by the State Superintendent of Education or designee and the school district superintendent or, in the case of an entity that is not the school district, the person legally authorized to submit the proposal and bind the applicant to its contents.

(Source: Amended at 35 Ill. Reg. 3742, effective February 17, 2011)

**Section 235.220 Proposal Review and Approval of Proposals**

- a) Proposals shall first be screened to identify those proposals that demonstrate the greatest need for social and emotional consultation services as evidenced by the proportion of students in the program who come from families experiencing the type of problems outlined in Section 235.200(b) of this Part. Proposals shall be separated into the following three categories:
  - 1) proposals that are among the top one-third of all proposals received demonstrating the largest proportion of students who meet the criteria;
  - 2) proposals that are among the middle one-third of all proposals received demonstrating the largest proportion of students who meet the criteria; and
  - 3) all other proposals.
- b) Within each of the three categories set forth in subsection (a) of this Section, the proposals shall be reviewed and scored using the qualitative criteria set forth in subsection (c) of this Section to determine which proposals provide evidence of a “qualified program”. “Qualified programs” shall be those scoring at least 60 out of 100 total points.
  - 1) All qualified programs within the category set forth in subsection (a)(1) of this Section shall be funded before funding any qualified programs in the categories set forth in subsection (a)(2) or (a)(3) of this Section.
  - 2) All qualified programs within the category set forth in subsection (a)(2) of this Section shall be funded before funding any qualified programs in the category set forth in subsection (a)(3) of this Section.
- c) Proposals submitted for funding to offer social and emotional consultation services shall be evaluated in accordance with the following criteria.
  - 1) The proposal presents adequate procedures for assessing the specific needs of teachers for assistance in supporting the social and emotional development of their students and in managing difficult classrooms. (20 points)
  - 2) The proposed activities are comprehensive and sound, offer a varied and full range of staff development experiences, and provide sufficient opportunities for learning so as to allow staff to effectively incorporate the training into their classroom management plans. (30 points)

- 3) The proposed provider of the social and emotional consultation services has the qualifications and experience in early childhood mental health to successfully implement a high-quality training program. The proposed staffing level is sufficient to assure that the proposal's activities and services will be provided in an effective and efficient manner. (30 points)
  - 4) The proposed budget is consistent with the proposal's activities and appears to be cost-effective, as evidenced by the cost in relation to the numbers to be served and the services to be provided. (20 points)
- d) The State Superintendent of Education shall determine the amount of individual grant awards. The final award amounts shall be based upon:
- 1) the total amount of funds available for the social and emotional consultation services; and
  - 2) the resources requested in the top-ranked proposals, as identified pursuant to subsections (b) and (c) of this Section.

(Source: Added at 30 Ill. Reg. 19383, effective November 28, 2006)

SUBPART D: EXCLUSIONARY DISCIPLINE IN  
EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

**Section 235.300 Purpose**

This Subpart D shall apply to exclusionary discipline in early childhood programs that receive funding pursuant to Section 2-3.71(a)(7) of the Code.

(Source: Added at 44 Ill. Reg. 1942, effective January 10, 2020)

**Section 235.310 Definitions**

"Behavior Support Plan" means a written, planned and culturally and linguistically appropriate schedule of action agreed upon by the program staff, parents/guardians, and qualified professional resources assigned:

to assist a child, a family, caregivers, programs or teachers, and directors on how the program reflects on and modifies the program, classroom, and learning environment practices; and

to address the identification of serious and repeated patterns of challenging behavior.

The behavior support plan must be fully implemented before initiating the transition plan.

"Challenging Behavior" means any serious and repeated pattern of behavior, or perception of behavior, that interferes with a child's ability to engage in developmentally appropriate self-regulation and cognitive and prosocial engagement with peers or adults.

"Early Childhood Program" means a program that receives funding pursuant to Section 2-3.71(a)(7) of the Code.

"Program Transition Plan" means an individualized, written, and culturally and linguistically appropriate document developed by the departing and receiving early childhood programs, parents or primary caregivers, and qualified professional resources detailing tasks and individual responsibilities required to prepare for and then execute the move of the child from the current program to a more appropriate arrangement with as little negative impact and disruption as possible.

"Qualified Professional" means an individual with a recognized professional title such as, but not limited to, a child's early childhood mental health consultant, licensed clinical social worker, speech pathologist, or behavioral therapist. This individual should have expertise in early childhood education practices, children's behaviors, inclusion, applied behavior analysis, infant/early childhood mental health, or the impact of trauma.

"Repeated Pattern of Challenging Behavior" means behaviors that do not respond to repeated developmentally appropriate practice interventions and result in a disrupted learning environment for other children in the program. These include,

but are not limited to, extreme prolonged tantrums, physical and verbal aggression, property destruction, self-injury, injury to others, or withdrawal.

"School Code" or "Code" means 105 ILCS 5.

"State Board" means the State Board of Education.

"Temporary Removals" means practices that involve removing the child from regular participation in the program as a result of a challenging behavior. A temporary removal should be developmentally appropriate and may only be used as a last resort if there is a serious safety threat that cannot be reduced or eliminated by the provision of reasonable modifications. The program must help the child return to full participation in a group setting as soon as safety allows.

(Source: Added at 44 Ill. Reg. 1942, effective January 10, 2020)



**Section 235.320 Behavior Support Plans**

- a) All early childhood programs shall have written intervention policies of which parents/guardians shall be notified upon entry into the program. The policies shall address at least the following:
  - 1) Initial and ongoing observation of challenging behaviors;
  - 2) Communication with the parents/guardians in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner. Communication may occur for several reasons, including, but not limited to, better understanding of the child's needs and circumstances or challenges facing the family;3) *Utilization of a range of community resources, if available, deemed necessary, including, but not limited to, developmental screenings, referrals to programs and services administered by a Local Education Agency or early intervention agency under parts B and C of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 USC 1411 and 1431 et seq.) and consultation with an infant and early childhood mental health consultant and the child's health care provider (Section 2-3.71(a)(7)(B) of the Code);*
  - 4) Attempts of the program to seek training, technical support, and professional development resources to improve the ability of teachers, administrators, program directors, and other staff to promote social-emotional development and behavioral health, address challenging behaviors, and understand trauma and trauma-informed care, cultural competence, family engagement with diverse populations, the impact bias on adult behavior, and the use of reflective practice techniques; and
  - 5) Specific activities and strategies that will be implemented to promote a supportive teacher-child relationship and to support an increase in positive behaviors, including a timeline for intervention and the use of data to evaluate progress that is shared with the family/caregiver.
- b) Early childhood programs must document on forms prescribed by the State Board steps taken in accordance with the intervention policy, including observations of initial and repeated challenging behaviors, communication with parents/guardians, and attempts to utilize resources (including when parental/guardian consent is attempted and whether it is obtained).
- c) Any child who, after documented attempts have been made to meet the child's individual needs, demonstrates inability to benefit from the type of care offered by the early childhood program, or whose presence is detrimental to the group, may be recommended for initiation of a program transition plan.

- d) In all instances, when a early childhood program decides that it is in the best interest of the child to transition to a different program, the child's and parents' or guardians' needs shall be considered by planning with the parents/guardians to identify the new program and working with the parents/guardians and pending program on a program transition plan designed to ensure continuity of services to meet the child's and family's needs.
- e) Planned suspensions cannot take place due to behaviors caused by or related to a child's disability or a child referred for an evaluation who has not yet been found eligible for special education services. If a behavior is related to the disability, the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team must meet to consider behavior intervention strategies to modify the IEP. Expulsion due to a child's behavior is prohibited. If a child with an IEP is being transitioned, educational services consistent with the child's IEP must continue to be followed. *Planned transitions to settings better able to meet the child's needs are not considered expulsions.* (Section 2-3.71(a)(7) of the Code)
- f) Parents/guardians or programs may make a formal request for a special education evaluation at any time.

(Source: Added at 44 Ill. Reg. 1942, effective January 10, 2020)

**Section 235.330 Program Transition Plans**

- a) All early childhood programs must have written transition policies of which parents/guardians must be notified upon enrollment into the program. The policies shall address at least the following:
  - 1) Documentation that implementation of the behavior support plan took place prior to the initiation of the transition plan;
  - 2) Documentation that the initiation of the program transition plan is due to:
    - A) a determination by a qualified professional;
    - B) the program determining that the current early childhood program does not meet the child's developmental needs; or
    - C) a determination that the transition is necessary because of the program's inability to provide the supports needed to maintain the child in the program;
  - 3) Initial and ongoing observation of challenging behaviors;
  - 4) Communication with the parents/caregivers in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner; and
  - 5) *Utilization of a range of community resources, if available, deemed necessary, including, but not limited to, developmental screenings, referrals to programs and services administered by a Local Education Agency or early intervention agency under parts B and C of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 USC 1400 et seq.) and consultation with an infant and early childhood mental health consultant and the child's health care provider. (Section 2-3.71(a)(7)(B) of the Code)*
- b) Early childhood programs must document, on forms prescribed by the State Board, steps taken in accordance with the program transition policy, including observations of initial and repeated challenging behaviors, communication with parents/guardians, and attempts to utilize resources (including when parental/guardian consent is attempted and if it is obtained).
- c) Any child who, after documented attempts have been made to meet the child's individual needs, demonstrates an inability to benefit from the type of care offered by the early childhood program, or whose presence is detrimental to the group, may be transitioned to a different early childhood program.

- d) If a parent/guardian chooses to withdraw his or her child from a program, the parent/guardian must submit a letter, in writing, to the program and the letter must be kept on file with that program for five years. In instances in which a parent or guardian is not able to write a letter, program staff shall maintain the child's filed written documentation that includes the requestor's name and relationship to the child, along with the withdrawal date. The staff member must also sign and date the written documentation.

(Source: Added at 44 Ill. Reg. 1942, effective January 10, 2020)

**Section 235.340 Reporting**

No later than July 1, 2020, and no later than each July 1 annually thereafter, early childhood programs shall collect and report annually to the State Board all of the following data for children from birth to age 5 who are served by the program:

- a) *Total number served over the course of the program year and the total number of children who left the program during the program year.*
- b) Number of children with behavior support plans who transition to another program due to:
  - 1) a determination by a qualified professional;
  - 2) the program determining that the current early childhood program does not meet the child's developmental needs; or
  - 3) the program's inability to provide the supports needed to maintain the child in the program.
- c) *Number of temporary removals of a child from attendance in group settings due to a serious safety threat by children's race, gender, disability, language, class/group size, teacher-child ratio, and length of program day.*
- d) *Hours of infant and early childhood mental health consultant contact with program leaders, staff, and families over the program year. (Section 2-3.71(a)(7)(G) of the Code)*
- e) Total number of children returned to the program after a planned transition.
- f) Number of children with suspected disabilities or who have been referred for, and are pending, evaluation.
- g) Number of children who are transitioned into programs other than those funded by the Early Childhood Block Grant program.
- h) Number of children with behavior support plans.
- i) Number of children who are:
  - 1) referred to a district for evaluation; and

- 2) after evaluation, found eligible for special education services and transitioned out of early childhood or early intervention.
- j) Number of providers transitioning a child out of their program.
- k) If a child is considered for removal, the provider must notify the State Board of Education no later than two weeks after the initiation of the transition plan.
- l) All data collected must be disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, and age.

(Source: Added at 44 Ill. Reg. 1942, effective January 10, 2020)

**Section 235.APPENDIX A Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards – Children Age 3 to Kindergarten Enrollment Age**

The Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards for children ages 3 to kindergarten enrollment as defined in Section 10-20.12 of the School Code are broad statements that provide teachers and caregivers useful information that is directly needed as part of their daily classroom work. The standards are organized to parallel content in the Illinois State Goals for Learning (see 23 Ill. Adm. Code 1.Appendix D).

**LANGUAGE ARTS**

State Goal 1: Acquire foundational early literacy and language skills.

Standards:

Develop an appreciation for language and literacy activities.

Develop basic language skills.

Understand that language is used in a variety of ways to communicate.

State Goal 2: Develop age-appropriate early literacy reading skills and concepts.

Standards:

Demonstrate comprehension of text that is read aloud or seen in print.

Identify elements pertaining to the craft and structure of types of text.

Demonstrate understanding of text organization and basic features of print.

Demonstrate beginning letter and word recognition.

Demonstrate beginning phonological awareness.

State Goal 3: Develop early writing skills and concepts.

Standards:

Use writing to represent ideas and information.

Compose information to convey meaning.

Recognize multiple purposes and types of writing.

Explore writing and conveying ideas using digital tools.

State Goal 4: Comprehend the language of others.

Standards:

Demonstrate understanding through age-appropriate responses.

Understand language and information presented in a variety of ways.

State Goal 5: Use language, including body language, for expression.

Standards:

Communicate effectively using language appropriate to the situation and audience.

Demonstrate increasingly complex and varied use of language.

## MATHEMATICS

State Goal 6: Demonstrate and apply a knowledge and sense of numbers, including numeration and operations.

Standards:

Demonstrate beginning understanding of numbers, number names and numerals.

Begin to construct sets, add and subtract to create new numbers.

Begin to make reasonable estimates of numbers.

Compare quantities using appropriate vocabulary terms.

State Goal 7: Explore measurement of objects and quantities.

Standards:

Measure and compare objects and quantities using standard and non-standard instruments and methods.

Begin to make estimates of measurements.



Explore tools used for measurement.

State Goal 8: Identify and describe common attributes, patterns and relationships in objects.

Standards:

Explore objects and patterns.

Describe and document patterns using symbols.

State Goal 9: Explore concepts of geometry and spatial relations.

Standards:

Recognize, name and replicate common shapes.

Demonstrate an understanding of location and ordinal position, using appropriate vocabulary.

State Goal 10: Begin to make predictions and collect and analyze data information.

Standards:

Organize and describe data and information.

Gather information to answer questions.

## SCIENCE

State Goal 11: Demonstrate curiosity about the world, and engage in scientific inquiry to answer questions.

Standards:

Develop skills to observe, collect information, ask questions, predict, explain and draw conclusions.

Use tools and technology to assist in scientific inquiry.

State Goal 12: Explore concepts and information about life, physical and earth sciences.

Standards:

Understand that living things grow and change.

Understand that living things rely on the environment and/or others to live and grow.

Explore the physical properties of objects.

Explore concepts of force and motion.

Explore concepts and information related to the Earth, including ways to take care of our planet.

Explore changes related to the weather and seasons.

State Goal 13: Understand basic safety rules for scientific inquiry.

Standard:

Understand rules to follow when investigating and exploring.

### SOCIAL STUDIES

State Goal 14: Understand some concepts related to citizenship.

Standards:

Understand what it means to be a member of a group and community.

Understand ways groups make choices and decisions.

Understand the role that individuals can play in a group or community.

State Goal 15: Explore economic systems and human interdependence.

Standards:

Explore roles in the economic system and workforce.

Explore issues of limited resources in the classroom and world.

Explore concepts about trade as an exchange of goods or services.

State Goal 16: Develop an awareness of the self and his or her uniqueness and individuality.

Standard:

Explore his or her self and history.

State Goal 17: Explore geography, the child's environment, and where people live, work and play.

Standard:

Explore environments and where people live.

State Goal 18: Explore people and families.

Standards:

Explore people, their similarities and their differences.

Develop an awareness of self within the context of family.

#### PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT AND HEALTH

State Goal 19: Acquire movement skills and understand concepts needed to explore the environment, support learning and engage in health-enhancing physical activity.

Standards:

Demonstrate physical competency and control of large and small muscles.

Demonstrate awareness and coordination of body movements.

Demonstrate knowledge of rules and safety during physical activity.

State Goal 20: Develop habits for life-long fitness.

Standard:

Achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical fitness.

State Goal 21: Develop team-building skills by working with others through physical activity.

Standards:

Demonstrate individual responsibility during group physical activities.

Demonstrate cooperative skills during structured group physical activity.

State Goal 22: Understand principles of health promotion and the prevention and treatment of illness and injury.

Standard:

Explain the basic principles of health promotion, illness prevention, treatment and safety.

State Goal 23: Understand human body systems and factors that influence growth and development.

Standards:

Describe and explain the structure and functions of the human body systems and how they interrelate.

Identify ways to keep the body healthy.

State Goal 24: Promote and enhance health and well-being through the use of effective communication and decision-making skills.

Standard:

Demonstrate skills essential to enhancing health and avoiding dangerous situations.

## THE ARTS

State Goal 25: Gain exposure to and explore the arts.

Standards:

Investigate, explore and participate in the arts.

Display an awareness of some distinct characteristics of the arts.

State Goal 26: Understand that the arts can be used to communicate ideas and emotions.

Standard:

Understand ways to express meaning through the arts.

#### SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

State Goal 27: Develop self-awareness and self-management skills to achieve school and life success and develop positive relationships with others.

Standards:

Identify and manage one's emotions and behavior.

Recognize one's own uniqueness and personal qualities.

Demonstrate skills related to successful personal and school outcomes.

State Goal 28: Use social-awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships.

Standards:

Develop positive relationships with peers and adults.

Recognize and appreciate individual and group similarities and differences.

Use communication and social skills to interact effectively with others.

Demonstrate an ability to prevent, manage and resolve interpersonal conflicts in constructive ways.

State Goal 29: Demonstrate decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school and community contexts.

Standards:

Begin to consider ethical, safety and societal factors in making decisions.

Apply decision-making skills to deal responsibly with daily academic and social situations.

Contribute to the well-being of one's school and community.

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER HOME LANGUAGE

State Goal 30: Use the home language to communicate within and beyond the classroom setting.

Standard:

Use the home language for use for a variety of social and academic purposes.

State Goal 31: Use the home language to make connections and reinforce knowledge and skills across academic, vocational and technical disciplines.

Standard:

Use the home language in order to attain benchmarks across the learning areas and to build upon and develop transferable language and literacy skills.

(Source: Amended at 36 Ill. Reg. 6827, effective April 18, 2012)

**Section 235.APPENDIX B Illinois Birth to Five Program Standards**

The Illinois Birth to Five Program Standards are broad statements that reflect current knowledge, research findings and shared beliefs about high-quality, developmentally appropriate early childhood care and education in the context of programs for infants, toddlers, preschoolers and their families.

Program Goal I:        Organization

Standards:

All birth to five programs must have a mission, vision or purpose statement based on shared beliefs and goals.

Scheduling practices and intensity of services are tailored to the goals of the program and to the individual strengths and needs of children birth to five and their families.

The strengths and needs of the children and families, as well as research on best practice, determine the ratio of participants to staff and the size of program groups.

The program meets the needs of children and families of varying abilities, as well as diverse cultural, linguistic, and economic backgrounds.

The physical environment of the program is safe, healthy, and appropriate for children's development and family involvement.

The administration promotes and practices informed leadership and supervision.

The administration participates in and encourages ongoing staff development, training, and supervision.

All birth to five programs must follow mandated reporting laws for child abuse and neglect and have a written policy statement addressing staff responsibilities and procedures regarding implementation.

The program budget is developed to support quality program service delivery.

The program implements effective systems for recording and managing information about the program, its staff, its participants, and learning and developmental outcomes and uses this information to engage in continuous improvement.

Program Goal II: Curriculum and Service Provision

Standards:

The curriculum reflects the centrality of adult/child interactions in the development of infants, toddlers and preschoolers.

The curriculum is aligned to the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards for preschoolers and supports children's cognitive, language, social, emotional and physical development and the development of positive approaches to learning.

The program prioritizes family involvement while respecting individual parental choices.

The program supports and demonstrates respect for the families' unique abilities, as well as for their ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity.

The program promotes a framework that is nurturing, predictable, and consistent, yet flexible.

The program supports children's healthy physical development.

Program Goal III: Developmental Monitoring and Program Accountability

Standards:

The program staff regularly conducts a developmental screening with an appropriate standardized tool for the purposes of identifying children with developmental delays or disabilities.

The program incorporates appropriate formative assessments of children, which are aligned with the curriculum, for the purposes of monitoring individual child development and individualization of the program and/or curriculum.

Leadership conducts regular and systematic evaluation of the program and staff to assure that the philosophy is reflected and goals of the program are being fulfilled.

Program Goal IV: Personnel

Standards:



The program leadership is knowledgeable about child development and best practice for quality birth to five programs.

The program leadership is effective in explaining, organizing, implementing, supervising, and evaluating birth to five programs.

The program leadership hires qualified staff who are competent in working with infants, toddlers and preschoolers and their families.

The program leadership provides ongoing supervision that promotes staff development and enhances quality service delivery.

The program leadership provides opportunities for ongoing professional growth and development.

The program leadership promotes continuity in staffing through provision of a supportive work environment, competitive wages and benefits, and opportunities for advancement.

The program leadership and staff are knowledgeable about programs and agencies in the community that provide services for children and their families.

Program Goal V: Family and Community Partnerships

Standards:

The child is viewed in the context of the family and the family is viewed in the context of its culture and community.

The program leadership and staff seek and facilitate family participation and partnerships.

The program assures that families have access to comprehensive services.

The program develops a partnership with families in which the family members and staff determine goals and services.

The program takes an active role in community and system planning and establishes ongoing collaborative relationships with other institutions and organizations that serve families.

(Source: Amended at 36 Ill. Reg. 6827, effective April 18, 2012)

### **Section 235.APPENDIX C Illinois Early Learning Guidelines – Children from Birth to Age 3**

The Illinois Early Learning Guidelines – Children from Birth to Age 3 are broad statements that provide parents, teachers and caregivers useful information about a child's growth and development.

#### **Self-Regulation: Foundation of Development**

**Physiological Regulation:** Children demonstrate the emerging ability to regulate their physical processes in order to meet both their internal needs and external demands in accordance with social and cultural contexts.

**Emotional Regulation:** Children demonstrate the emerging ability to identify and manage the expression of emotion in accordance with social and cultural contexts.

**Attention Regulation:** Children demonstrate the emerging ability to process stimuli, focus and sustain attention, and maintain engagement in accordance with social and cultural contexts.

**Behavior Regulation:** Children demonstrate the emerging ability to manage and adjust behaviors in accordance with social and cultural contexts.

#### **Social and Emotional Development**

**Attachment Relationships:** Children form secure attachment relationships with caregivers who are emotionally available, responsive and consistent in meeting the children's needs.

**Emotional Expression:** Children demonstrate an awareness of and the ability to identify and express emotions.

**Relationship with Adults:** Children demonstrate the desire and develop the ability to engage, interact and build relationships with familiar adults.

**Self-Concept:** Children develop identity of self.

**Relationship with Peers:** Children demonstrate the desire and develop the ability to engage and interact with other children.

**Empathy:** Children demonstrate an emerging ability to understand someone else's feelings and to share in the emotional experiences of others.

### Physical Development and Health

Gross Motor: Children demonstrate strength, coordination and controlled use of large muscles.

Fine Motor: Children demonstrate the ability to coordinate their small muscles in order to move and control objects.

Perceptual: Children demonstrate the ability to distinguish, process and respond to sensory stimuli in their environment.

Self-Care: Children demonstrate the desire and ability to participate in and practice self-care routines.

### Language Development, Communication and Literacy

Social Communication: Children demonstrate the ability to engage and maintain communication with others.

Receptive Communication: Children demonstrate the ability to comprehend both verbal and nonverbal communication.

Expressive Communication: Children demonstrate the ability to understand and convey thoughts through both nonverbal and verbal expression.

Early Literacy: Children demonstrate interest in and comprehension of printed materials.

### Cognitive Development

Concept Development: Children demonstrate the ability to connect pieces of information in understanding objects, ideas and relationships.

Memory: Children demonstrate the ability to acquire, store, recall and apply past experiences.

Spatial Relationships: Children demonstrate an awareness of how objects and people move and fit in space.

Symbolic Thought: Children demonstrate the understanding of concepts, experiences and ideas through symbolic representation.

Creative Expression: Children demonstrate the ability to convey ideas and emotions through creative expression.

Logic and Reasoning: Children demonstrate the ability to use knowledge, previous experiences, and trial and error to make sense of and have an impact on their world.

Quantity and Numbers: Children demonstrate awareness of quantity, counting and numeric competencies.

Science Concepts and Exploration: Children demonstrate a basic awareness of and use scientific concepts.

Safety and Well-Being: Children demonstrate the emerging ability to recognize risky situations and respond accordingly.

#### Approaches to Learning

Curiosity and Initiative: Children demonstrate interest and eagerness in learning about their world.

Problem-Solving: Children attempt a variety of strategies to accomplish tasks, overcome obstacles, and find solutions to tasks, questions and challenges.

Confidence and Risk-Taking: Children demonstrate a willingness to participate in new experiences and confidently engage in risk-taking.

Persistence, Effort and Attentiveness: Children demonstrate the ability to remain engaged in experiences and develop a sense of purpose and the ability to follow through.

Creativity, Inventiveness and Imagination: Children demonstrate the ability to use creativity, inventiveness and imagination to increase their understanding and knowledge of the world.

(Source: Added at 39 Ill. Reg. 6674, effective April 27, 2015)