

Illinois Preschool Expansion Program

Frequently Asked Questions – Program Models and Structure

Implementation Model

Early childhood programs choosing to implement the Preschool Expansion model may select an approach to implementation that fits their current space capacity; demonstrated community need and program goals. Implementation models include:

- **New Classrooms:** The Preschool Expansion model is implemented in completely new classrooms that do not currently house an early childhood program. Direct costs for implementation of the new classrooms are allocated to the Preschool Expansion funding stream. New staff are hired for the classrooms. All previously existing early childhood classrooms in the program continue to operate separately and independently from the new Preschool Expansion classrooms.
- **Enhanced Classrooms:** In an enhanced model, existing early childhood classrooms are enhanced with resources from the Preschool Expansion funding stream to provide a full-day program with all Expansion program elements. There are multiple approaches to developing an enhanced classroom:
 - **Part-Day Classroom Enhanced to Full-Day:** In this model, a program is operating one session of a part-day Preschool for All program in each physical classroom. The program uses the Preschool Expansion funding stream to provide a full school day (equivalent to a first grade day) and all Preschool Expansion elements to the same number of children who previously received a part-day program without those elements.

For example, before becoming an enhanced classroom, Room 101 served 20 children in a part-day Preschool for All program, operating three hours per day. The program uses Preschool Expansion funding to enhance Room 101 during the next school year. The classroom will continue to serve 20 children, but will operate for six hours per day (equivalent to a first grade classroom in the local school district) and will add a parent educator, instructional leader and all of the other elements required by the Preschool Expansion compliance checklist.

- **Double Session Classroom Enhanced to Full-Day:** In this model, a program is operating both morning and afternoon sessions of a part-day Preschool for All program in the same physical classroom. The program uses the Preschool Expansion funding stream to provide a full school day (equivalent to a first grade day) and all Preschool Expansion elements to the same number of children served in one of the part-day sessions. The remaining part-day session continues to operate in a separate physical classroom.

For example, before becoming an enhanced classroom, a program operated two physical classrooms – Room A and Room B. Both of them served 20 children in the

morning and 20 children in the afternoon (four sessions total). The program uses the Preschool stream to provide a full school day (equivalent to a first grade day) and all Preschool Expansion elements to two classrooms of children. The remaining two part-day sessions continue to operate in a third classroom designated for this purpose – Room C.

	Before Expansion	With Expansion
<i>Room A</i>	Morning – 20 children Afternoon – 20 children	Full Day – 20 children
<i>Room B</i>	Morning – 20 children Afternoon – 20 children	Full Day – 20 children
<i>Room C</i>	Vacant	Morning – 20 children Afternoon – 20 children
Total Served	80 children	80 children

- **Head Start:** Existing part-day Head Start classrooms may be “enhanced” to a full-day program using the Preschool Expansion funding stream. In this model, programs must continue to meet all Head Start Program Performance Standards, in addition to the compliance requirements for the Preschool Expansion model. The classroom structure will reflect those listed above, based on the configuration of the Head Start program.

Cost Allocation

Programs using an enhanced program model to expand the services offered by an existing Preschool for All or Head Start must allocate costs between each funding stream according to a written cost allocation plan. This plan must be developed by the school district or organization receiving the Preschool Expansion funding stream directly from ISBE.

For programs expanding from a Preschool for All part-day model to the Preschool Expansion model, it is expected that half of the personnel cost for the teacher and teacher assistant will be allocated to Preschool for All. The other half of instructional personnel costs and all other expenditures required by the expanded model (such as the parent educator, instructional leader, mental health consultation and others) should be allocated to the Preschool Expansion funding stream.

Wraparound Child Care Assistance

All programs implementing the Preschool Expansion Program model must offer a full school day of programming to eligible children at no cost to their families. This full day must be at least equivalent in length to a first grade school day in the local school district.

Beyond this school day, programs may choose to offer extended day services to families. If a program accesses the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) to assist families in subsidizing this additional portion of the day, children enrolled in the Preschool Expansion Program should only be billed to CCAP at a part-day rate.

Community Partners

Programs may choose to place some or all of their Preschool Expansion model classrooms in community partners (community-based or private early childhood programs). A formal, written agreement must be executed between the program directly receiving grant funds from ISBE (grantee) and the community partner program. **Grantees are responsible for maintaining fiscal compliance, program compliance and quality across all of their program sites, including partners.**

Grantees choosing to contract with community partners must ensure that their systems and procedures for compliance and quality support both their directly-operated sites and their community partner sites. For example, the new positions mandated by the Preschool Expansion model (instructional leader and parent educator) must provide support to educators and families across all program sites, including community partners. Grantees must plan and budget to ensure that the services offered to children and families in their directly-operated classrooms are offered at the same level of quality and compliance in their community partner classrooms.

In the event that the grantee program chooses to discontinue the relationship with a community partner, this change must be noted in a budget revision in the program's eGrant. This serves as formal notification to ISBE that the partner has been removed.

Programs seeking to bring on a new partner should thoroughly assess the capacity of the new proposed partner site to implement a high-quality program. This assessment should include:

- Demonstrated need for early childhood programming in proposed service area of the partner and the ability of the partner to recruit the most at-risk children and families.
- Commitment of the proposed partner to serving children with multiple risk factors and their families.
- Ability of the partner site to attract and retain qualified staff and commitment to salary parity with local school district salary scales.
- Capacity to comply with all requirements outlined in the Preschool Expansion compliance checklist.