

ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



Early Childhood Care and Education Position Statement Adopted January 20, 2000

The State Board of Education believes that the educational development and success of all Illinois children can be significantly enhanced when children participate in early childhood programs and services.

For the purposes of this position statement, early childhood is defined as the period in a child's life from birth through eight years of age. Appropriate early childhood programs, practices and services are defined as those which:

- ❖ are founded on research-based knowledge about child development;
- ❖ promote the child's emotional, physical, mental and social well-being; and
- ❖ support nurturing families.

The Illinois State Board of Education is actively committed to develop, deliver and support early childhood programs, practices and services that will enable all children to be successful students and responsible citizens. The State Board will give particular attention to the following actions:

- 1) Emphasize the need for high-quality early experiences that reflect research and knowledge on program quality and outcomes across the developmental period of birth through eight.
- 2) Encourage Illinois public schools to create coherent early learning systems that minimize major transitions for children and provide stable, consistent educational experiences for young children, ages three through eight years.
- 3) Make prekindergarten programs available for all Illinois children identified as at risk of academic failure and actively seek their participation. Support the provision of full-day prekindergarten for at-risk students who need additional educational experiences.
- 4) Support the availability of full-day kindergarten programs for all Illinois children.
- 5) Collaborate with families and relevant social service providers to provide early identification of and response to educational risk factors among children from birth through three years of age.

6) Collaborate with families, community organizations, child care organizations, Head Start and other state agencies to meet the physical, mental, social and emotional needs of young children, including their physical care and protection; share resources, services and accountability.

7) Emphasize the quality of instructional staff and leadership for early childhood programs in Illinois.