



# ILLINOIS

Prevention Initiative



## **BUILDING ON THE PROMISE: PROFILES OF STATE INITIATIVES TO BUILD ON EARLY HEAD START**

### INITIATIVE SUMMARY

The Illinois Prevention Initiative provides grants to center-based programs to expand access to Early Head Start (EHS) services to additional children birth to age three and help grantees increase program quality. The initiative to expand access to Early Head Start was established by the Illinois State Board of Education in 2007, as recommended by the Illinois Early Learning Council. The initiative is funded through an 11 percent set-aside of the Early Childhood Block Grant (Infant Toddler Set-Aside) with state general revenue funds. The statute requires that all programs funded by the Block Grant serve infants and toddlers at-risk of school failure using a research-based program model. The Illinois State Board of Education awarded funds to the first four grant recipients in FY 2008. The Illinois State Board of Education contracts with the Ounce of Prevention Fund to provide ongoing training and technical assistance to help grantees work toward meeting federal Head Start Program Performance Standards and National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation.

### APPROACHES USED TO BUILD ON EHS

- ✓ Increase the capacity of existing EHS programs to serve additional children and expectant mothers.
- ✓ Develop partnerships between EHS and community-based child care providers to provide EHS services to additional children in child care settings.
- ✓ Provide resources to child care providers to help deliver services meeting EHS Standards.

### PROGRAM

#### **Child and Family Eligibility**

- **Family Income:** While there is not an income eligibility level for the initiative, children must be at risk for school failure as defined by the state, which includes an indicator for poverty. Programs that blend Block Grant funds with child care subsidy funds must also adhere to state child care income eligibility rules (200% of Federal Poverty Level).

- **Parental Work Status:** No requirement; however, programs that blend Block Grant funds with child care subsidy funds must also adhere to state child care eligibility rules which require parents to be working or in a school or training program.
- **Child Age:** Birth to age three
- **Other Risk Factors:** Children must meet the state definition of “at-risk” as determined through a screening process, including low-income families, homeless families, families where English is not the primary language, teen parent families, and families where the parent(s) have not completed high school. Screening includes use of an approved instrument for children at risk of academic failure, parent interviews, vision and hearing screening, and where possible, inclusion of teaching staff in the screening process.
- **Length of Eligibility:** Children remain eligible until the age of three.
- **Expectant Mothers Served:** Yes

**Number Served by State Initiative:** 100 children birth to age three and 41 expectant mothers in FY 2007.

**Number Served by Federally Funded Early Head Start:** In comparison to the state initiative, federally funded EHS served 2,699 children birth to age three and expectant mothers (according to federal Program Information Report data for 2006).

#### **Eligible Providers**

- Federal Head Start grantees
- Federal Early Head Start grantees
- Private for-profit child care centers
- Private non-profit child care centers
- Faith-based child care centers
- School districts
- Community agencies
- Local health departments

#### **Co-pay**

Programs blending child care assistance funds charge co-pays based on the child care assistance program.

#### **Program Standards**

- **Federal Head Start Performance Standards Required?** Federal Head Start Program Performance Standards are required for Head Start/EHS grantees that serve additional children, even when partnering with child care centers to provide EHS services. Child care centers that receive grants are not explicitly required to meet the federal Head Start Program Performance Standards, although programs must work toward meeting relevant education and family support standards such as: group size and ratios; staff qualifications; curriculum; screening; assessment; parent education and support; and coordination of care.
- **Additional State Standards:** State child care licensing requirements.

**Do other children besides those enrolled in the EHS model benefit when services are delivered in child care settings?**

Yes, all children in the child care settings benefit from an increased quality of care, even when not directly enrolled in the EHS model.

**Length of Day/Year**

Services are offered for at least six hours a day, full-year.

## **FUNDING AND SUPPORTS**

**Sources and Budget for Fiscal Year 2007 (unless otherwise noted)**

\$868,000 in state general revenue from the Early Childhood Block Grant (11 percent set-aside for infants and toddlers) support the EHS model Prevention Initiative programs in FY 2008.

The Illinois State Board of Education granted additional dollars to the Ounce of Prevention Fund for a Training Institute to provide technical assistance to the grantees.

**What support and technical assistance does the state offer?**

Grantees receive ongoing training and technical assistance from the Ounce of Prevention fund, as well mental health consultation from the Erikson Institute.

**What incentives are there for child care providers to participate?**

Child care providers receive additional funding per child, access to professional development, training and technical assistance from the Ounce of Prevention Fund and the Erikson Institute, other support to meet Head Start Program Performance Standards, and additional health and family support services for the children and families they serve.

## **GOVERNANCE AND COORDINATION**

**What state agency administers the funding for this initiative?**

Illinois State Board of Education

**How does the funding flow to local providers?**

Outside of Chicago, the Illinois State Board of Education issues a Request for Proposals (RFP) to contract with providers. In Chicago, the Chicago Public School District issues an RFP to contract with local providers.

**Can a child in the state initiative also have a child care subsidy?**

Yes, participating children can also be eligible for a full child care subsidy.

**Does the state coordinate with federally funded Head Start agencies to conduct any of the activities?**

The Illinois State Board of Education meets regularly with the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Region V office to discuss program selection, monitoring, technical assistance, and professional development, although these activities are currently conducted separately. Illinois State Board of Education staff are also part of the Good

Start, Grow Smart team that includes the ACF Region V office, State Child Care Bureau, and the Head Start-State Collaboration Director.

**Does the state coordinate with the Head Start–State Collaboration Office to conduct activities?**

While activities are not directly coordinated with the Head Start-State Collaboration Office, Illinois State Board of Education staff are part of the Good Start, Grow Smart team that includes the ACF Region V office, State Child Care Bureau, and the Head Start-State Collaboration Director.

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

**What state agencies are responsible for monitoring, and how often is on-site monitoring conducted in a year?**

The Illinois State Board of Education is responsible. Programs are also monitored by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services for child care licensing. A final monitoring plan has not been adopted. The Illinois Early Learning Council has charged members two of its committees (Oversight and Coordination and Infant Toddler) to develop recommendations for establishing a coordinated monitoring system for Illinois' Birth to Three programs.

**Are there specific measurement tools used to monitor services provided?**

Not yet determined (see above).

**Are programs also monitored by federal agencies?**

Yes, if grantees are also a federal Head Start or EHS grantee, they will be monitored by the Office of Head Start every three years using the federal review process.

**Has the state evaluated the effectiveness of the state EHS initiative?**

The Illinois State Board of Education has contracted with the Erikson Institute to evaluate the programs funded through the Early Childhood Block Grant.

**Are state funded programs required to report data to the state?**

Grantees are required to submit a year-end reporting form to the Illinois State Board of Education.

## SOURCES

### Interviewed

[Karen Yarbrough](#), [Nancy Shier](#), and [Deanna Durica](#), The Ounce of Prevention Fund; June 2007 (updated July 2009)

Reviewed by [Kay Henderson](#), Early Childhood Division, Illinois State Board of Education; November 2007.

### Online Information

- The Illinois State Department of Education maintains a [website for bidders](#) interested in funding for initiatives for birth to age three including the [Request for Proposals](#) (RFP) and the [review rubric](#) for grant proposals.
- The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) has individual [state profiles](#) analyzing the Head Start Program Information Report (PIR) data from 2006.

*This profile was written by [Rachel Schumacher](#), Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) and [Elizabeth DiLauro](#), ZERO TO THREE, as part of the **Building on the Promise: State Initiatives to Expand Access to Early Head Start and Their Families** report.*

*To download the full report and view other state profiles, visit*

*[http://childcareandearlyed.clasp.org/state\\_ehs.html](http://childcareandearlyed.clasp.org/state_ehs.html) or <http://www.zerotothree.org/stateEHS>.*