



ILLINOIS

Child Care Collaboration Program



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

INITIATIVE SUMMARY

The Illinois Child Care Collaboration Program promotes collaboration between child care and other early care and education providers, including Early Head Start (EHS), by creating policies to ease blending of funds to extend the day or year of existing services. While no funding is provided through the initiative, participating programs may take advantage of several child care rule exceptions that make it easier to access child care subsidy dollars to extend the day/year of EHS services, including:

- Annual re-determination of family eligibility;
- Ninety-day job loss grace period; and
- Maintaining indefinite eligibility for families whose Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Responsibility and Service Plan specifies the child or family's participation in the collaboration.

The program was piloted in 1997-1998 when the needs of families started to change due to Head Start expansion and the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, which instituted TANF and increased work requirements for benefit recipients. Using lessons learned from the pilot, state administrators implemented the program statewide in 2003, with the goal of supporting quality collaboration among early care and education providers and minimizing transitions for children in full-day care.

APPROACH USED TO BUILD ON EHS

- ✓ Extend the day or year of existing EHS services.

PROGRAM

Child and Family Eligibility

- **Family Income:** Children must be from families earning less than 50 percent of the State Median Income (\$2,533 per month for a family of three). Income eligibility is the same as the Illinois child care subsidy program.

- **Parental Work Status:** Parent must be employed, attending school, or in job training. If the child is in a Head Start/Early Head Start collaboration slot, the parent must be in an approved activity for at least the number of hours the child is in child care or Head Start/Early Head Start.
- **Child Age:** No requirement
- **Other Risk Factors:** None
- **Length of Eligibility:** While child care subsidy policy requires that families re-establish eligibility every six months, families in the collaboration program must do so annually. Families are required to report changes during the year. If family income increases beyond the eligibility requirement during the year, they may lose their eligibility for child care subsidy, but would not lose eligibility for Head Start/Early Head Start.
- **Expectant Mothers Served:** Not applicable to this model.

Number Served by State Initiative: 975 children in EHS programs 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
- Family child care homes

Co-pay

Yes, there is a sliding scale based on income and part-or full-time child care.

Program Standards

- **Federal Head Start Program Performance Standards Required?** No, although children must remain in the same location for the entire day.
- **Additional State Standards:** All programs must meet state licensing requirements.

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

Not applicable to this initiative.

Length of Day/Year

The length of day/year varies by program.

FUNDING AND SUPPORTS

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

Not applicable; initiative does not make specific funding available beyond federal EHS allocation.

What support and technical assistance does the state offer?

The Illinois Department of Human Services works with the state Good Start Grow Smart team to provide technical assistance and professional development opportunities for effective collaboration. The Good Start Grow Smart team is a state/federal partnership that meets regularly to share information about early care and education programs and discuss collaboration issues at the state, federal, and local level. It includes representatives from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Region V office, state child care and Pre-K administrators, the Head Start-State Collaboration Director, and the state Head Start Association.

What incentives are there for child care providers to participate?

Participating programs receive technical assistance to improve the continuity of care they provide and are connected to the state's system of early childhood services and professional development. Local EHS collaboration brings additional resources to child care partners.

GOVERNANCE AND COORDINATION

What state agency administers the funding for this initiative?

The Illinois Department of Human Services

How does the funding flow to local providers?

Not applicable; initiative does not make specific funding available beyond federal EHS allocation.

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

Yes.

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

The Illinois Department of Human Services works with state Good Start Grow Smart team, which includes the ACF Region V office, child care partners, state Pre-K partners, the Head Start-State Collaboration Director, and the state Head Start Association, to provide technical assistance and professional development opportunities for effective collaboration.

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

The Illinois Department of Human Services houses the Head Start-State Collaboration Office in its Bureau of Child Care & Development. Together, staff plans the initiative,

selects programs to participate, monitors program quality, and provides technical assistance and professional development.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

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

There is no specific requirement for monitoring. However, the Illinois Department of Human Services monitors programs that receive child care subsidy funds every three years, and all child care programs must be licensed by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, which conducts three site visits per year.

All Head Start/Early Head Start programs are monitored by the Office of Head Start every three years using the federal review process.

Are there specific measurement tools used to monitor services provided?

The Illinois Department of Human Services uses a monitoring tool and checklist that examines classroom appearance and interaction between children and teachers.

Are programs also monitored by federal agencies?

Yes, if the participating program is a federal Head Start/Early Head Start grantee.

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

The Illinois Department of Human Services and the Head Start-State Collaboration Office, with the assistance of a research consultant, completed an evaluation of the initiative in November 2007. The evaluation found the following five benefits of the initiative:

- *Longer eligibility period and services in one location:* more manageable for families, improved continuity of care, sibling benefits.
- *Extended job loss grace period:* increased average daily attendance, children stay longer, lower child turnover rates.
- *Overall program quality and parent involvement and additional services for families:* program quality increased in a variety of ways, parent involvement increased, and families receive additional services, especially in times of crisis.
- *New and increased community partnerships and collaboration:* with community based organizations, school districts, and at the state level.
- *Professional development, staff qualifications, and retention:* increased professional development opportunities, and staff qualifications and retention.

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

Programs must report enrollment numbers by age grouping and classroom and must also submit an annual report to the Illinois Department of Human Services on programmatic features and collaboration efforts.

SOURCES

Interviewed

[Gina Ruther](#), former Director, Illinois Head Start-State Collaboration Office; and
[Linda Saterfield](#), Chief, Illinois Department of Human Services Bureau of Child Care & Development
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Online Information

- The Illinois Department of Human Services maintains a website for the [Illinois Child Care Collaboration program](#), including the recent [Evaluation Report](#).
- 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 [Elizabeth DiLauro](#), ZERO TO THREE, and [Rachel Schumacher](#), Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), 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://www.zerotothree.org/stateEHS> or http://childcareandearlyed.clasp.org/state_ehs.html.*