Preschool for All/ Preschool for All Expansion

Implementation Manual

isbe.net

Illinois State Board of Education

March 2022

Contents

Introduction 1
ISBE Position Statement 1
Law 1
Priority Populations 1
History 2
Preschool for All and Expansion Key Points 2
Recruitment, Enrollment, and Records 3
Children with Disabilities 3
English Learners 3
The Early Learning Environment 3
Scheduling 3
Early Learning Curriculum and Assessment 4
Social-Emotional Learning 4
Parent and Family Engagement 4
Community Collaboration 4
Educator Licensure Requirements 5
Professional Development and Program Improvement 5
Budget and Reporting 5
Program Accountability 5
Preschool for All Expansion Grant 5
Recruitment, Enrollment, and Records 6
Child Find, Recruitment, and Outreach 6
Screening 6
Child Find Screening Data Collection Form 7
Initial Evaluations for Special Education 8
Eligibility Criteria 8
Residency 8
Age 8
Birth Certificates 9
Income Verification 9
Homeless Status 9
Child Welfare Involvement 10
Children's Records 11
Additional Resources 11
Children with Disabilities 12
Recommended Practices 12
Initial Eligibility 12
Child Find Screening Date Collection Form 12
Inclusion 13
Preschool Environment Codes 13
Early Childhood Outcomes System 14
Additional Resources 14
English Learners 15
Identification and ELP Screening of EL Students 15
Establishment of Programs 16
Instructional Design 16
Early English Language Development Standards 17
Parent Notification 17
EL Teacher Certification 17
TBE/TPI Program Director 17
Kindergarten Placement 17

Professional Development 18
Program Funding 18
Additional Resources 18
The Early Learning Environment 19
Physical Environment 19
Interest Centers 19
Sample Classroom Floor Plans 24
Gross Motor Environment 24
Additional Resources 25
Schedule 26
Schedule Components 26
Greeting/Departing 26
Interest Centers/Free Play 27
Gross Motor 27
Whole Group 27
Meals/Snacks 27
Nap/Rest 28
Transitions 28
Toileting 28
Personal Care Routines 28
Sample Daily Schedules 28
Additional Resources 29
Early Learning Curriculum and Assessment 30
Best Practices for the PFA/PFAE Classroom 30
Field Trips 31
Assessment 31
Portfolios 32
Lesson Plans 32
Common Core and IELDS 33
Use of Technology 33
Additional Resources 34
Social-Emotional Learning 35
SEL Instruction 35
The Pyramid Model 35
Relationships 36
Positive Behavior 36
Expulsion and Suspension 36
Public Act 100-105 Suspension – Expulsion of Children Birth to 5 37
Additional Resources 37
Transition Plans 38
Transitioning into Preschool 39
Transitioning into Kindergarten 40
Individualized Transition Plans 40
Collaboration Between Prekindergarten and Kindergarten Teachers 40
Additional Resources 41
Parent and Family Engagement 42
Engaging Parents and Families 42
Communication 42
Parent/Family Education 42
Child Learning 42
Involvement 43
Decision-Making and Advocacy 43
ISBE Family Engagement Framework 43
Indicators of Parent and Family Engagement 44

Family Engagement Records....44
Additional Resources....44
Community Collaboration....45
Memorandum of Understanding....45
Collaboration....46
Comprehensive Plan for Collaboration....46
Additional Resources....46
Personnel....47
Professional Staff....47
Special Education....47
English Learner Licensure....47
TBE/TPI Program Director....47
Noncertified Staff....47
Noncertified Personnel....48
Administrators....48
Directors of Child Care Centers Offering Preschool Programs....48
School Administrators....48
Sample Job Descriptions....48
Teacher....48
Sample Duties for Teachers....49
Teacher Assistant/Paraprofessional....50
Family Educator/Family Support Specialist....50
Additional Resources....50
Professional Development....51
Professional Development Resources....51
Early Childhood Professional Learning....51
Early Choices: An Inclusive Initiative of ISBE....51
Illinois Early Learning Project....52
Illinois STARNET....52
Additional Resources....52
Budget and Reporting....53
ISBE Web Application Security System....53
Project Timeline....53
Joint Agreement/Cooperatives....53
Licensed Sites or Exempt Sites....53
Budget Considerations....53
Supplement vs. Supplant....54
Supplement, Not Supplant Tests....54
Budget Detail Page....54
Detailed Function Descriptors and Subcategories....55
Daily Snack/Meal Reimbursement....56
Detailed Function Descriptors and Subcategories....56
Examples of Unallowable Expenditures....58
Payment Schedule....58
Expenditure Reports....59
Excess Cash on Hand....60
Final Expenditure Reports....60
Carryover/Return of Funds....60
Amendments....60
Outstanding Obligations....61
Grant Accountability and Transparency Act....61
Record Retention....61
Financial Monitoring....62
Student Information System: Early Childhood Data....62

Data Elements 62
Behavior Support and Transition Plans 63
Student Health Data 63
Employment Information System 63
Program Accountability 64
Tips for Compliance Monitoring 64
Initial Continuous Quality Improvement Plan 64
Reviewing CQIP Yearly 65
Coaching 65
Program Self-Evaluation 65
ExceleRate Information 66
Additional Resources 66
Preschool for All Expansion 67
Requirements 67
Eligibility and Weighted Priority Enrollment Form 67
Age Eligibility 67
Income Eligibility 67
Household Size and Income 68
Categorical Eligibility 68
Eligibility for Blending and Braiding 68
Active Recruitment 68
Priority Factors 69
Documentation/Evidence of Priority Selection Factors 70
Waiting List 70
Reserving Slots 70
Establishing Referral Relationships 70
Comprehensive Family Services 71
Mental Health 71
Health and Dental 72
Family Support and Resource Referral 72
Family Education 72
Family Engagement 73
Staffing 73
Salary Parity 74
Sample Schedule 74
Additional Resources 74
Acronym Glossary 76

Introduction

ISBE Position Statement

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

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

For the purposes of the Prevention Initiative (PI), Preschool for All (PFA), and Preschool for All Expansion (PFAE) programs, early childhood is defined as the period in a child's life from birth through 8 years of age. Appropriate early childhood programs, practices, and services are defined as:

- Grounded upon research-based knowledge about child development;
- Promote the child's emotional, physical, mental, and social well-being; and
- Support nurturing families.

ISBE 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. ISBE believes the following commitments are essential in supporting the development of the whole child:

- 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 age 8.
- 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, aged 3 through 8 years.
- 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.
- Support the availability of full-day kindergarten programs for all Illinois children.
- Collaborate with families and relevant social service providers to provide early identification of and response to educational risk factors among children from birth through 3 years of age.
- 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.
- Emphasize the quality of instructional staff and leadership for early childhood programs in Illinois.

Law

ISBE is committed to supporting early childhood education to ensure that all Illinois children develop a strong foundation for learning. Public Act 096-0948 amends Section 2-3.71 of the School Code (105 ILCS 5/2-3.71) to establish the Preschool for All program to be administered on a competitive basis. The PFA program emphasizes the relationship among early childhood education, parenting education and involvement, and future success in school.

Priority Populations

In awarding PFA/PFAE grants, ISBE shall address two legislatively mandated priorities:

- The first priority in awarding grants must be given to applicants that propose to serve children who have been identified as at risk of academic failure. At-risk children are those who, because of their home and community environment, are subject to language, cultural, economic, and like disadvantages. They have been determined, as a result of screening procedures, to be at-risk of academic failure. A disproportionate share of all children considered to be at-risk come from low-income families, including low-income working families, homeless families, families where English is not the primary language spoken in the home, or families where one or both parents are teenagers or have not completed high school. However, neither a child's membership in a certain group nor a child's family situation should determine whether that child is at-risk.

- The second priority in awarding grants must be given to applicants proposing to serve primarily children whose family's income is less than four times the poverty guidelines updated periodically in the Federal Register by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under the authority of 42 USC 9902(2). The successful applicant must collect evidence of family income level for each child whose participation is based on the family's income.

For purposes of the PFA/PFAE grant, "programs serving primarily at-risk children" are defined as those programs that:

- Have 80 percent or more of the enrolled children identified as at risk; prioritize at-risk students over students who are not at risk when making enrollment decisions; and have taken specific, proactive measures to ensure that parents of potentially at-risk children in the community are aware of the opportunity for preschool education through the program.

History

The Prekindergarten Program for Children at Risk of Academic Failure began with the 1985 School Reform legislation through PA 86-316 and had an effective date of July 18, 1985 (105 ILCS 5/2-3.71).

- $9 million in grants for services
- $3.1 million in grants for screening

The Early Childhood Model Parental Training Program was established with PA 85-1046 and became effective July 13, 1988 (105 ILCS 5/2-3.71a). After July 1, 2006, any parental training services funded pursuant to this Section on the effective date of this amendatory Act of the 94th General Assembly continued to be funded pursuant to this Section, subject to appropriation and the meeting of program standards. Any additional parental training services must be funded, subject to appropriation, through preschool education grants pursuant to subdivision (4) of subsection (a) of Section 2-3.71 of this Code for families with children ages 3 to 5 and through Prevention Initiative grants pursuant to subsection (b) of Section 2-3.89 of this Code for expecting families and those with children from birth to 3 years of age.

Prevention Initiative was established with PA 85-1046 and became effective July 13, 1988 (105 ILCS 5/2-3.89). PA 94-0506, which stated that grantees would conduct intensive, research-based, and comprehensive prevention services for expecting parents and families with children from birth to age 3 who are at-risk of academic failure, became effective July 1, 2005.

PA 88-555 (105 ILCS 5/1C-2) combined the three programs into the Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) in 1998.

From 1998 to 2003, 8 percent of ECBG funding was to be used for programs serving children 0 to 3. PA 93-0396, effective July 29, 2003, specified that the percentage be increased to 11 percent. PA 096-0423, effective August 13, 2009, specified that the percentage was to increase to at least 20 percent by fiscal year 2015.

PA 98-0645 provided that not less than 14 percent (instead of 11 percent) of the Early Childhood Education Block Grant be used to fund programs for children ages 0-3; this percentage increased to at least 20 percent by FY 2016 (instead of 2015). The Act became effective July 1, 2014.

The Preschool for All Children program was established by PA 94-1054 and became effective for two years on July 25, 2006. In 2008, the sunset was extended to 2010. PA 96-0948, effective June 25, 2010, extended the Preschool for All Children program by removing the date restrictions of July 1, 2006, through June 30, 2010 (105 ILCS 5/2-3.71).

Illinois School Code (105 ILCS 5/)

Preschool for All and Expansion Key Points

The sections below describe a high-quality preschool program that will enhance the development of young children. Preschool for All and Preschool for All Expansion offer an appropriate educational program for children who are eligible to participate, as determined by the screening process. This section consists of an overview of requirements that a PFA/PFAE program must meet, with further detail provided in subsequent sections.

Recruitment, Enrollment, and Records

- Recruitment and outreach should be a year-round process to ensure the program is continually reaching out to unserved and/or underserved populations.
- Programs are expected to maintain total enrollment consistent with their current fiscal year, approved PFA/PFAE grant.
- Programs are required to serve all children identified as being at risk of academic failure before enrolling other children. A waiting list system is utilized when maximum program enrollment is reached.
- The PFA/PFAE program is for children ages 3 through 5 who are not age eligible for kindergarten (i.e., age 5 on or before September 1 of the school year in which the early childhood program is to be implemented) and who are determined by multiple weighted at-risk factors.
- PFA/PFAE eligibility criteria may not discriminate against children who are not toilet trained.
- **If needed**, files must include documentation using the ISBE Behavior Support Plan and ISBE Program Transition to address serious, ongoing challenging behavior. (See Social-Emotional Learning section on page 40 for more information.)
- Student records must be kept intact in a secure place and may be electronic or hard copies.

Children with Disabilities

- The goal for local school districts/public schools, academies, and agencies should be to provide high-quality preschool experiences for all preschool-age children, including children with disabilities, in the least restrictive environment.
- Provisions are made for children with disabilities to participate in the program. No more than 30 percent of the children in a PFA/PFAE classroom may have an Individualized Education Program (IEP), not including speech-only IEPs.
- Local Education Agencies (LEAs) must ensure that children who receive early intervention services before they turn 3 and who will receive Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) services experience a smooth and effective transition and have an IEP developed and being implemented by their third birthday [34 CFR 300.124].

English Learners

- Programs must administer a Home Language Survey for all children who come from a language background other than English.
- Programs must offer an appropriate English language learning program based on the needs and population of their students.
- Preschool teachers who provide native language/English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction to English Learner (EL) students must also hold the ESL or bilingual endorsement that corresponds with the teaching assignment.

The Early Learning Environment

- Multi-Age grouping in classrooms is recommended.
- PFA and PFAE programs must provide a safe and healthy environment that provides appropriate and well-maintained indoor and outdoor physical spaces. ISBE expects each PFA/PFAE classroom to serve 20 children, excluding PFA ECSE and Head Start children, unless Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) guidelines restrict the number of children allowed in the PFA/PFAE classroom due to square footage limitations. In addition, the total number of students in an inclusive classroom may be reduced to a minimum of 15 students depending on the needs of the children with IEPs.
- The staff-child ratio for each classroom must not exceed one adult to 10 children, and no more than 20 children can be served in a single classroom per session.

Scheduling

Scheduling guidelines are based on the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-3rd edition (ECERS-3) recommendations.

- The daily schedule needs to include a balance of large group, small group, and individual activities.

- PFA programs meet a minimum of two and a half hours each day, five days a week. PFAE programs meet for the length of instructional time equivalent to that provided by the first-grade teacher(s) in the local district, but no less than five hours.
- Start and end dates are identified, with children in attendance a minimum of 165 days.
- Any days beyond 165 in the program calendar may be used for parent/guardian conferences, home visits, and professional development OR attendance days.
- If the program has regular weekly or monthly planning dismissal times that affect the weekly class time, the program must ensure that PFA weekly class time equals at least 12.5 hours per week and PFAE total weekly hours align with the instructional time of the first-grade teacher in the local district.
- The program schedule should allow staff to assist families and children who need help with toilet learning.

Early Learning Curriculum and Assessment

- The curriculum and instructional practices are aligned with the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards (IELDS). NOTE: The curricula highlighted through ExceleRate Illinois are aligned with IELDS; however, they may not meet all requirements of PFA/PFAE.
- A research-based authentic assessment system is used to determine the educational program for each child.
- Portfolio collections should represent work done by the child that illustrates progress over time.
- Lesson plans reflect individualization for students and connect to the IELDS or curriculum standards that have been cross-walked to the IELDS.

Social-Emotional Learning

- Identifying and talking about feelings is critical to a preschooler's social-emotional development; this strategy contributes to positive social interactions and is a predictor of school success.
- Building relationships is an important component of social and emotional development.
- Teachers and administrators should play a vital role in assisting children and families through the transition process by planning ahead and working together.
- Successful transitions engage parents and teachers in developing the transition team, focusing on strengths to identify goals and challenges, sharing information between families and the sending and receiving programs, preparing the child for change, monitoring child and family experiences, and evaluating the transition process.
- Ensuring that programs are engaging in best practices in their disciplinary actions by prohibiting the use of expulsions due to child behavior and, if needed, using ISBE-created forms and protocols for addressing significant, ongoing challenging behavior.
- Building the bridge between prekindergarten and kindergarten is essential to our youngest learners and their families.

Parent and Family Engagement

- No fees may be charged to parents/guardians of enrolled children who participate in PFA/PFAE programs. Programs are not allowed to charge fees for field trips, snacks, registration, supplies, and materials, nor are families to be asked to provide supplies or snacks.
- A system should exist to facilitate ongoing, two-way communication between school and home on at least a weekly basis, daily if needed.
- Programs must provide and document opportunities for parent education and involvement as well as have a system for ongoing, two-way communication with parents and guardians.
- Programs should develop a system for tracking the level of parent engagement/family involvement in their program.

Community Collaboration

- PFA/PFAE programs should develop relationships with other community service providers and create formal agreements that will clarify and strengthen the mutual understanding of each entity's roles and responsibilities.
- PFA/PFAE grantees must have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the local Head Start agency.

Educator Licensure Requirements

- PFA/PFAE teacher holds a current, registered Professional Educator License (PEL) with an early childhood education (ECE) endorsement.
- PFA/ PFAE/ECSE blended classroom teacher has current PEL with ECE endorsement and ECSE approval unless itinerant services are provided per the IEP.
- PFA/PFAE classroom paraprofessional holds current, registered Paraprofessional Approval.
- ISBE website provides information on Alternative Provisional Educator Licensure.

Professional Development and Program Improvement

- Programs are required to have a written professional development plan for all staff members (teachers, paraprofessionals, and parent coordinators).
- ISBE funds and collaborates with several statewide professional development providers.

Budget and Reporting

- PFA/PFAE grant applications are created each fiscal year in the ISBE Web Application Security (IWAS) System.
- The Budget Detail page is to be used to indicate itemization and descriptions of budget expenses that are to be listed and identified within the proper Function Code/Object Code. This page also indicates the current fiscal year's allotment of funds for the PFA program.
- The provision of most federal and state funded programs provides that only supplemental costs may be charged.
- All payment requests should be based on the projected date of expenditures.
- Programs must submit quarterly expenditure reports to reflect the progress of the grant program.
- All amendments must be submitted in IWAS and are due to ISBE 30 days prior to the project end date.
- All PFA/PFAE programs are required to enroll all students attending any preschool program, including those with speech-only IEPs, in the Student Information System (SIS).
- Programs must keep up-to-date immunization/health examination records on file for all children, PreK-12th grade.

Program Accountability

- Monitoring visits are typically conducted every two to four years.
- The visit consists of classroom observations using ECERS-3 and a program compliance review using the ISBE Early Childhood Block Grant 3-5 Compliance Checklist.
- PFA/PFAE sites located in a school-based setting are awarded an ExceleRate Circle of Quality based on compliance and ECERS-3 scores obtained during regular monitoring visits.
- PFA programs located in a licensed center that also includes classrooms not funded by PFA will be rated with the rest of the center through the ExceleRate Licensed Childcare path. These PFA programs will not receive a rating from ISBE.

Preschool for All Expansion Grant

- Preschool for All Expansion is funded with a goal to expand access to full-day early childhood education and comprehensive services to the most at-risk 3-5-year-old children in their communities.
- Comprehensive services may include medical, dental, and mental health supports; family engagement; and education.

Recruitment, Enrollment, and Records

Child Find, Recruitment, and Outreach

This section contains information related to PFA/PFAE Compliance Checklist items 1, 14 and 24.

Recruitment and outreach should be a year-round process to ensure the Preschool for All and Preschool for All Expansion programs are continually reaching out to unserved and/or underserved populations. The targeted populations may change from year to year depending on the dynamics of the community in which the program or site is located. Recruitment activities and strategies must adapt to ensure the agency stays connected to the community. The recruitment and outreach activities should include the local Head Start agency and all area early childhood programs. Programs should be prepared to assist families in completing an application during recruitment and outreach efforts.

Programs are expected to maintain total enrollment consistent with their current fiscal year, approved PFA/PFAE grant. Recruitment and outreach strategies may include, but are not limited to:

- Monitor waiting lists. The waiting lists are a good indication of the effectiveness of the recruitment activities and can help to better plan the location of classrooms, programs, and services in order to ensure full enrollment is achieved and maintained.
- Focus on recruiting homeless families. Contact the Regional Office of Education/Intermediate Service Center Lead Area Homeless Liaison and/or the School District Homeless Liaison, local shelters, community-based organizations, and local churches that are offering services to homeless families and have developed partnerships with them.
- Identify and recruit underserved communities/populations (e.g., families experiencing homelessness, families utilizing transitional housing, families that may be undocumented, families that are experiencing poverty or severe poverty, children in the Illinois Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS) system or youth in care system, intact families receiving services from DCFS, children with disabilities, etc.). Develop informational flyers and brochures and disseminate to all agencies and community providers working with these populations.
- Build relationships with community organizations that work with targeted populations, such as Easter Seals; Child and Family Connections; Early Intervention; special education cooperatives, etc.; Head Start and EarlyHead Start programs; DCFS and foster care agencies; Public Health Departments; and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices; etc.
- Formalize relationships by developing an MOU specifically to define the referral system and follow-up procedures.
- Conduct community outreach by participating in and setting up a display at local community events, such as health fairs, job fairs, church, etc.
- Contact local elementary schools and/or child care centers and participate in events, such as back-to-school night, open house, fairs, and other events, that are held throughout the year.
- Send home flyers with children enrolled in the local elementary school or child care centers.
- Display advertisements at local health departments, low-income housing, libraries, post offices, hospitals, community mental health agencies, laundromats, grocery stores, doctors' offices, and area health fairs and festivals.
- Place advertisements in the local newspapers and other local publications.
- Conduct door-to-door recruitment activities.

Screening

This section contains information related to PFA/PFAE Compliance Checklist items 4 and 5.

The goal of screening is to identify and serve Illinois' neediest children. Programs must develop procedures to screen all children and their families to determine their need for services. Screening should be conducted on a communitywide basis and be developed and implemented with cooperation among programs serving young children in the community (e.g., Early Intervention, public schools, child care providers, special education cooperatives, Head Start, Prevention Initiative, Child and Family Connections, and Child Find). Child care centers with PFA or PFAE programs must screen students in the community, not only children enrolled in the center.

The screening process includes a quickly administered research-based screening tool that identifies children needing further assessment/evaluation or identifies participants for a given program. A comprehensive PFA/PFAE screening process includes the following:

- Written parental/guardian permission for the screening must be obtained and a copy of the signed consent should be maintained in the child's PFA/PFAE record.
- Criteria will be used to determine at what point performance on a research-based screening instrument indicates a child is at risk of academic failure. In addition, the team must assess other environmental, economic, and demographic information that may contribute to the likelihood that a child is at risk for academic failure.
- All screening instruments and activities must relate to and measure a child's development in these specific areas: (1) vocabulary, (2) visual-motor integration, (3) language and speech development, (4) English proficiency, (5) fine motor skills (6) gross motor skills, (7) social skills, and (8) cognitive development.
- All screening procedures must include a parent/guardian interview (to be conducted in the parents' home/native language, if necessary). This interview should be designed to obtain a summary of the child's health history and social development and may include questions about the parents' education level, employment, income and age, the number of children in the household, and, if applicable, the number of school-age siblings experiencing academic difficulty.
- Vision and hearing screening tests shall be conducted in accordance with the Illinois Department of Public Health's (IDPH) rules titled Hearing Screening (77 Ill. Adm. Code 675) and Vision Screening (77 Ill. Adm. Code 685).
- The PFA/PFAE teaching staff should be involved in the screening process.
- Results of the screening are to be shared with the parent(s)/guardian(s) during an exit interview. Evidence of the exit interview should be placed in the student's record.
- The screening results should also be maintained in the child's temporary record and made available to the teaching staff for review.

Examples of Research-Based Screening Instruments:

- Ages and Stages Questionnaire
- American Guidance Service Early Screening Profiles
- Battelle Developmental Inventory
- Brigance Screens
- Comprehensive Identification Process Screen
- Denver Developmental Screening II
- Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning–Third Edition or Fourth Edition
- Early Screening Inventory (ESI-Revised or ESI-Preschool)
- First Screening Test for Evaluating Preschoolers
- (Other screening instruments not included in this list of examples may meet the requirements.)

Child Find Screening Data Collection Form

ISBE operates the Child Find Project, funded through Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B, Preschool Discretionary funds to develop and disseminate public awareness materials to LEAs, special education cooperatives, and Child and Family Connection (CFC) offices. Besides creation and distribution of materials, the Child Find Project also collects data on the number and location of developmental screenings taking place across the State of Illinois for children between birth and 5 years of age using the 0-5 Child Find Screening, Reporting and Data Collection Form (the "Form").

Each CFC office sends screening data to the Child Find Project monthly. As your program administers developmental screenings, you should report screening data to the CFC using the Form. This applies to developmental screenings only and not to other types of screenings, such as those for vision or hearing. Agencies are required to complete each section of the Form.

Fax or email completed forms to the local CFC office, attention LIC Coordinator. The reports must be sent within one month of the screening event. The LEA may send multiple reports at once as long as the reports are still sent within one month of the event. The Local Interagency Council LIC coordinator is responsible for collecting all 0-5

Screening Collection forms relating to screening activities for children 0-5 years of age occurring in the service area. These reports are forwarded monthly to the state's Child Find project coordinator for statewide analysis and data compilation.

Initial Evaluations for Special Education

When a child who may be eligible for special education and related services is identified through screening, an initial evaluation may be warranted. A referral should be made for a special education evaluation as a part of Child Find requirements.

Eligibility Criteria

This section contains information related to PFA/PFAE Compliance Checklist items 6 and 23.

The PFA/PFAE program is for children ages 3 through 5 who are not age eligible for kindergarten (i.e., age 5 on or before September 1 of the school year in which the early childhood program is to be implemented) and who are determined to be eligible by multiple weighted at-risk factors. Students with an IEP who are age eligible for kindergarten can attend a PFA/PFAE program if the IEP team decides it is appropriate. Eligibility requirements are based on local need to identify children at risk of academic failure. At-risk children are those who, because of their home and community environment, are subject to such language, cultural, economic, and like disadvantages to be at risk of academic failure. A disproportionate share of all children considered to be at risk come from low-income families, including low-income working families, homeless families, families where English is not the primary language spoken in the home, or families where one or both parents are teenagers or have not completed high school. **Children who are youth in care or meet the federal definition of homeless are prioritized as most at risk on the weighted eligibility criteria form.**

Eligibility criteria may also be established for PFA to meet the needs of the program and community. NOTE: PFA eligibility criteria may not discriminate against children who are not toilet trained. Programs should use a weighted eligibility checklist that includes local risk factors and a scoring system to identify each child's risk factors, creating a prioritized list for enrollment. The priority for enrollment must be children identified most at risk based on their scores on the weighted eligibility checklist [23 Ill. Adm. Code 235.30(b)(c) and 235.20(c)(4) and 235.50(a)(1)(A- C)] and ISBE policy].

PFA programs should include what research has shown are effective eligibility practices:

- The at-risk factors to determine eligibility are agreed upon by all partners.
- The at-risk factors used for program eligibility are based upon the risk factors present in the community.
- The most at-risk children/families, those exhibiting the greatest number of at-risk factors as determined by the eligibility criteria, are given priority for enrollment in the program.
- ISBE's PFAE Weighted Eligibility Form may be used as an example for PFA programs.

Eligibility for the PFAE program is based on the systems designed for enrolling children that adhere to the required weighted eligibility form, including scoring and placement guidance for staff. The PFAE weighted eligibility form is required to be used by all PFAE programs. The PFAE requirements state that a minimum of 80 percent of enrolled children must have at least two risk factors or one highest-priority selection factor according to the weighted eligibility form. The weighted eligibility form incorporates community-specific risk factors if determined to be necessary by the program based on program needs assessment.

Residency

All children who attend a state-funded Illinois PFA/PFAE program must live in Illinois and be eligible to attend Illinois public schools. A child who lives in a bordering state is not eligible to attend an Illinois PFA program even if their parent travels into the state daily for work.

The PFA/PFAE program does not require district residency. A district may collaborate with neighboring districts to fill its PFA/PFAE slots with PFA/PFAE-eligible children.

Age

PFA/PFAE programs must serve only 3-5 year-old children who are not age-eligible for kindergarten (i.e., age 5 on or before September 1 of the school year in which the PFA/PFAE program is implemented) unless determined by

the IEP team. A copy of the birth certificate must be kept in the child's record for monitoring purposes. Only the most at-risk children who turn 3 after the September 1 deadline should be enrolled on their third birthday. A copy of a legal birth certificate may document a child's age eligibility. Homeless children may not have a copy of a legal birth certificate available. Other documentation, including a letter from shelter staff, a letter from a homeless liaison, a hospital birth certificate, medical records, baptismal certificates, or a statement signed by the parent or guardian, should be acceptable for homeless families.

Birth Certificates

The purpose of requiring a certified copy of the child's birth certificate is to ensure that the student has not been listed as a missing child. Although it can be used to verify age and gender of a child, it is not a document designed to verify residency for school enrollment purposes. A pupil must provide a certified copy of his/her birth certificate to the school district within 30 days of enrollment, according to the Missing Children Records Act [325 ILCS 50/5]. If a birth certificate is unavailable, the parent may present other reliable proof of the child's identity and age, supported by a sworn statement explaining why the birth certificate is not available. Other reliable proof of the child's identity and age shall include a passport, visa, or other governmental documentation of the child's identity. If the student was not born in the United States, the school must accept birth certificates or other reliable proof from a foreign government.

Upon failure to comply, the school or other entity shall immediately notify the local law enforcement agency of such failure and shall notify the person enrolling the child in writing that he has 10 additional days to comply [325 ILCS 50/5]. There is no basis in law to exclude a student for failure to produce a birth certificate or other proof even if the parent fails to provide such proof after the 10 additional days.

Income Verification

Programs are required to collect and review proof of family income to determine eligibility and priority points for every student (see exceptions below) as a part of the screening process for eligibility into ECBG programs.

PFA programs should request income verification if a child with an IEP is to be enrolled. However, IEP services cannot be denied for failure to provide verification.

The program cannot ask families within the categories of children experiencing homelessness, youth in care, or undocumented immigrants for income documentation.

Income does not need to be collected in subsequent years unless a child is changing programs (e.g., moving from PFA classroom to PFAE classroom). Proof of family income must be placed in each child's folder or a secure location and must be accessible to monitors during compliance visits.

Please refer to the Income Verification FAQ document for further information.

Homeless Status

This section contains information related to PFA/PFAE Compliance Checklist item 3.

ISBE considers the school enrollment, attendance, and success of homeless children and youth throughout Illinois to be a high priority. It is the policy of ISBE that every homeless child and youth be sensitively identified as required by the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (McKinney-Vento), 42 USC § 11431 et seq., that every such child or youth be enrolled in and attend the appropriate school on every school day, and that school admission for such children and youth be immediate and be handled sensitively and in a child- and family-centered manner in accordance with McKinney-Vento and the Illinois Education for Homeless Children Act (105 ILCS 45/1-1 et seq.).

Children defined as homeless under the McKinney-Vento Act must be enrolled immediately regardless

of the parent/guardian's ability to provide birth certificates or health and immunization records. The McKinney-Vento liaison and/or PFA/PFAE parent coordinator/designee should make every effort to assist the family in obtaining this information, as well as to assist in the coordination of obtaining any needed health checks or immunizations.

Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (as reauthorized by Title X, Part C of the No Child Left Behind Act) defines "homeless" as follows:

The term "homeless children and youths"

(A) means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (within the meaning of section 103(a)(1)); and

(B) includes--

(i)children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;

(ii)children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings (within the meaning of section 103(a)(2)(C));

(iii)children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and

(iv)migratory children (as such term is defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii). 42 USC § 11431 et seq.

Illinois has created a PFA Homeless Plan for programs to complete in order to better serve homeless children in LEA preschool programs. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Common Form has also been created to assist with identifying preschool-aged children as well as children for Prevention Initiative (birth to age 3) families.

Research has shown that parents are often not aware or do not readily share that they meet the definition of homeless according to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Programs are advised to have a conversation with parents to assess their living situation. Listed below are questions that should be part of the interview to ensure that children who meet the definition of homeless are accurately identified:

- What is your current living situation?
- How long have you been in your current place?
- Is it permanent or just temporary?
- How many times have you moved in the past year? What is the reason for the moves?
- Where would you go if you couldn't stay where you are?
- Are you staying in your own place or with friends/relatives?
    - If you are staying with friends/relatives: Did you and your friends/relatives decide to move in together and share expenses for the long term? Or is this a temporary situation?
    - How many people share the housing?
    - How many people are staying in one room?
    - Are you and your children sleeping in a bedroom or in a public area, like a dining room?
    - Could your friends/relatives ask you to leave if they wanted to?
- Do you feel safe and comfortable in the place you're staying now?
    - What condition is the home in?
    - Is it safe?
    - Does it keep out rain and wind?
    - Is it warm and dry?

Child Welfare Involvement

As with homelessness, families do not always offer information that would allow a program to determine that a child should be considered as having current or recent involvement with the child welfare system. Therefore, the following questions are suggested for inclusion in the parent interview:

- Is the child currently in foster care?
- Has the child been in foster care at any point during the past year?
- Do you have an open intact family services case with the Department of Children and Family Services?
- Have you had an open intact family services case at any point during the past year?
- Is either parent currently in foster care? Has either parent of the child been in foster care during the past year?

Children's Records

This section contains information related to PFA/PFAE Compliance Checklist item 2.

A temporary student record with the information below must be maintained for each child.

- Name, address, and phone number.
- Copy of child's birth certificate (passport or other governmental document).
- Copy of the Home Language Survey signed by parent/guardian and screening results of children identified as speaking a language other than English in the home.
- Copy of current physical and immunization records. (Physicals must be submitted by October 15. Immunizations due at enrollment or within 30 days if moving from out of state.)
- Documentation of a minimum of two risk factors used for eligibility in the program.
- Income verification.
- Name and numbers of anyone else to whom the child can be released.
- Signed parent/guardian consent allowing the child to participate in the PFA screening.
- Vision and hearing screening results.
- Evidence of screening results and/or IEP.
- Parent/Guardian interview.
- Copy of the ISBE Behavior Support Plan and the ISBE Program Transition Plan, **if needed**, to document how program is addressing serious, ongoing challenging behavior. (See section on Social-Emotional Learning on page 39 for more information.)

Districts may determine if this temporary student record will become part of the child's permanent record at time of program exit and should follow local school board policy. School Code (105 ILCS 10/4) (from Ch. 122, par. 50-4) dictates specific record retention timeframes after the child/student leaves the PFA program/school for temporary (five years) and permanent (60 years) student records. Additionally, student records are subject to rules outlined in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 USC 1232(g) and the regulations promulgated under that Act (34 CFR 99).

Student records should be kept intact in a secure place and may be in electronic or hard-copy format. If stored in more than one location (e.g., one copy at the PFA administrative office AND one copy at the district office), photocopies of original documents may be created to ensure both locations have complete records at all times.

Programs are required to have confidentiality policies and to limit access to sensitive information. Families have the right to review any documentation being stored in their child's record. Assessors must be provided with complete student records when programs are monitored.

Additional Resources

Illinois State Board of Education Homeless Web Page
National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY)
National Center for Homeless Education
Determining Eligibility for Rights and Services Under the McKinney-Vento Act
ISBE Income Verification Frequently Asked Questions document

Children with Disabilities

Recommended Practices

The Council for Exceptional Children's Division of Early Childhood has recommended practices that summarize research-based practices found to be most effective in achieving the greatest improvement in students with disabilities in the preschool environment. The practices are not disability-specific. The recommendations address eight areas -- leadership, assessment, environment, family, instruction, interaction, teaming and collaboration, and transition. Recommendations should be considered when planning programming for students with disabilities.

Initial Eligibility

Local Education Agencies must ensure that children who receive early intervention services before they turn 3 and who will receive Early Childhood Special Education services experience a smooth and effective transition and have an IEP or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) developed and implemented by their third birthday [34 CFR 300.124]. ISBE Guidance 10-2 Relating to Transitioning from Early Intervention to Early Childhood Special Education Services when Children Turn Three and Early Intervention to Early Childhood Transition Frequently Asked Questions provide more details on the transition process. When children who are 27 months or older receive early intervention services, they are listed in the Early Childhood Transition System in SIS with basic identifying information that allows districts to know students who will be potentially entering their program. During this process, the LEA must implement all required procedural safeguards, including, but not limited to, providing any necessary parental notifications and requesting any necessary parental consent.

Each school district shall ensure that a full and individual evaluation is conducted for each child being considered for special education and related services. The purpose of an evaluation is to determine:

- Whether the child has one or more disabilities.
- The present levels of academic achievement and functional performance of the child.
- Whether the disability is adversely affecting the child's education.
- Whether the child needs special education and related services.

Goals, objectives, services, and placement should be discussed and determined if the child is found eligible for special education services. Section II of the Early Intervention to Early Childhood tracking form should be completed and returned to the CFC office within 20 calendar days of the child's third birthday.

A parent/guardian of the child, an employee of ISBE or another state agency, an LEA, or a community agency may request a special education evaluation for a child age 3 through 5.Those requesting an evaluation have the option of using the standardized request for evaluation form and accompanying referral fax back form.

The district must determine whether an evaluation is warranted and notify the parent/guardian using the Parent/Guardian Notification of Decision Regarding a Request for an Evaluation within 14 school days after receiving such a request. This document and others translated into other languages may be found on the ISBE Special Education Services Required Notice and Consent Forms website.

Child Find Screening Data Collection Form

ISBE operates the Child Find Project, funded through IDEA Part B, Preschool Discretionary funds, to develop and disseminate public awareness materials to LEAs, special education cooperatives, and CFC offices. Besides creation and distribution of materials, the Child Find Project also collects data on the number and location of developmental screenings taking place across the State of Illinois for children between birth and 5 years of age using the 0-5 Child Find Screening, Reporting and Data Collection Form (the "Form").

Each CFC office sends screening data to the Child Find Project monthly. As your program administers developmental screenings, you should report screening data to the CFC using the Form. This applies to developmental screenings only and not to other types of screenings, such as those for vision or hearing. Agencies are required to complete each section of the Form.

Fax or email completed forms to the local CFC office, attention LIC Coordinator. The reports must be sent within one month of the screening event. The LEA may send multiple reports at once as long as the reports are still sent

within one month of the event. The LIC coordinator is responsible for collecting all 0-5 Screening Collection forms relating to screening activities for children 0-5 years of age occurring in the service area. These reports are forwarded monthly to the state's Child Find Project coordinator for statewide analysis and data compilation.

Inclusion

The goal for local school districts, public schools, academies, and agencies should be to provide high-quality preschool experiences for all preschool-aged children, including children with disabilities, in the least restrictive environment (LRE). The Clarification Document explains that ISBE recommends PFA and PFAE programs utilize inclusive classrooms. Furthermore, Illinois has an inclusion vision statement that ISBE supports. Local school districts and/or special education cooperatives may determine through the IEP team process that a PFA or PFAE classroom is the most appropriate placement for students to receive their ECSE services. The following information on inclusion is important in providing education and care for all students — especially for those with differing abilities.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) outlines the LRE requirements for children with disabilities, including preschool-aged children with disabilities. The U.S. Department of Education (ED) and HHS released a policy statement on inclusion of young children with disabilities in high-quality inclusive early childhood programs on September 14, 2015. An executive summary is also available. Early CHOICES has created modules regarding the joint position statement.

In addition, a Preschool LRE Dear Colleague letter was issued to states on January 9, 2017. Both the letter and the policy statement express the importance of educating students in the least restrictive environment, including preschool-aged students regardless of if a school district has a preschool program. Regular classes at the preschool level may include PFA, Head Start, child care, and private/community preschools. The clarification letter stresses the preference to educate students with disabilities with their same-aged peers without disabilities. IEP teams must determine the LRE for each child based on what he or she needs in order to receive a free and appropriate public education and not base it on "slot or program availability."

Recent research supports the benefits and positive outcomes children with and without disabilities can gain from inclusion in regular preschool settings with typically developing peers. The following facts are taken from a research compilation by Erin E. Barton and Barbara J. Smith, June 2014:

- Inclusion benefits children with and without disabilities.
- Children with disabilities can be effectively educated in inclusive programs using specialized instruction.
- Parents and teachers influence children's values regarding disabilities.
- Individualized embedded instruction can be used to teach a variety of skills, including those related to early learning standards, and promote participation in inclusive preschool programs to children with and without disabilities.
- Families of children with and without disabilities generally have positive views of inclusion.
- Inclusion is not more expensive than having separate programs for children with disabilities.
- Children with disabilities do not need to be "ready" to be included. Programs need to be "ready" to support all children.

ISBE's Preschool Special Education webpage includes resources and links for these topics as they pertain to early childhood education:

- School District Preschool Program Models and Guidance Document
- Early Childhood Block Grant Administrative Rules Clarification Document
- Preschool Inclusion/LRE Webpage
- ECSE Services – Training and Technical Assistance Projects
- The Federal Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs Module LEA and Community-Based Program MOU

Preschool Environment Codes

Preschool Environment codes identify the type of early childhood education program children with an IEP attend and where their services are provided. Preschool Environment codes are defined in Illinois by ISBE and reported

using the IEP-Student Tracking and Reporting (I-Star) system. The ED Office of Special Education Programs requires each state to submit a State Performance Plan (SPP) and an Annual Performance Report (APR) yearly. ISBE reports on the 21 indicators in the SPP. Indicator 6 focuses on preschool LRE. The data for this indicator is collected at the December 1 Child Count for children who are aged 3-5 on December 1. The Educational Environment Code Generator and Decision Tree for Coding Preschool Environments can be used to assist in determining proper Preschool Environment codes.

Early Childhood Outcomes System

Early Childhood Outcomes (ECOs) are measured using authentic assessment practices through which providers and families observe children in their everyday routines, activities, and places, and collect documentation that illustrates what children know and are able to do in areas key to future success. Three ECOs are used nationwide to reflect the integrated nature of child learning and development and make it possible for comparable data from a variety of assessment instruments to be combined for further analyses.

The three ECOs are:

1. Children have positive social skills, including positive social relationships.
2. Children acquire and use knowledge and skills, including language and early literacy.
3. Children take appropriate action to meet their needs.

Upon entry into ECSE services, each child ages 3-5 with an IEP must receive ECO ratings within 45 days. Progress ratings are required yearly between February 1 and July 31. No exit ratings are needed; however, the last progress rating should be no more than six months old upon exiting enrollment. The Early Childhood Outcomes in Illinois module reviews the three Early Childhood Outcomes that are used to help measure the impact early childhood intervention has on a child's ability to have positive social relationships, acquire and use knowledge and skills, and take appropriate action to meet their needs.

The Early Childhood Outcomes Rating Generator and the Decision Tree for Summary Rating Discussions can be used to determine Progress Ratings. The Family Fact Sheet also helps explain to parents the purpose of ECOs and their role in the process. Additional information on the Early Childhood Outcomes System can be found at the ISBE ECO webpage.

Additional Resources

Illinois State Board of Education
National Association for the Education of Young Children
Joint Position Statement: Early Childhood Inclusion United States Department of Education
LRE and IDEA requirements as applied to preschool children
Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs
Executive Summary University of Colorado, Denver
Inclusion for Preschool Children with Disabilities: What We Know and What We Should Be Doing
IDEA Provisions Supporting Preschool Inclusion

English Learners

This section contains information related to PFA/PFAE Compliance Checklist items 15, 17 and 18.

Under 23 Illinois Administrative Code Part 228 Transitional Bilingual Education (Part 228), public school districts must uniformly identify children who are English Learners (ELs) by administering a Home Language Survey (HLS) to all children new to the district and by conducting an English language proficiency (ELP) screening process for children who come from a language background other than English. Preschool programs must offer a language instruction program for ELs consistent with the requirements of Part 228 to all preschool children identified as ELs. The ISBE Multilingual Department and Early Childhood Department webpages, in addition to other ISBE links in this document, offer many tools and resources to support the Preschool for All EL requirements.

An EL student in preschool:

- Comes from a home where a language other than English is spoken by the student and/or by the student's parent, guardians, or anyone else who resides in the household.
- Demonstrates limited English proficiency during a research-based ELP screening procedure that is developmentally appropriate for the student.

All preschool programs for children ages 3 -5 that are administered by a public school district, including charter schools, must adhere to the rules under Part 228. This includes preschool programs that are subcontracted by districts to community organizations and preschool programs that districts administer regardless of the source of funding for the programs.

Identification and ELP Screening of EL Students

The district must ensure that families of all children new to the district, including preschool children, complete the HLS by the first day the student participates in the early childhood program. The HLS contains two questions:

1. "Is there a language other than English spoken in the student's home?"
2. "Does the student speak a language other than English?"

If the answer to one or both of the questions is "yes," then the district must screen the potential English Learner to determine eligibility for EL services.

The district must establish research based standard ELP screening procedures to determine each potential EL preschool student's ELP level, minimally in the domains of listening and speaking. The procedures may include use of an established assessment, such as the Pre-IPT Oral (Ballard and Tighe), and follow screening procedures found at the ISBE Identification and Screening Site. State rules indicate that the screening procedures must:

- Be age and developmentally appropriate.
- Be culturally and linguistically appropriate for the children being screened.
- Include one or more observations using culturally and linguistically appropriate tools.
- Use multiple measures and methods (e.g., home language assessments; verbal and nonverbal procedures; various activities, settings, and personal interactions).
- Involve family by seeking information and insight to help guide the screening process without involving them in the formal assessment or interpretation of results.
- Involve staff who are knowledgeable about preschool education, child development, and first and second language acquisition.
- Allow for modification to accommodate the special need of students with an IEP.

There are no annual ELP testing requirements for ELs in preschool programs after the initial testing. Districts are not required to rescreen preschool EL students in their second year of participation. The student is considered to be an EL and eligible for EL program services in the second year of participation based on the initial ELP screening results. However, the district may choose to assess students' progress in English acquisition and modify the level of EL services provided in the second year based on assessment results. In order to determine ELP and placement for kindergarten, students who were initially identified as a potential EL entering preschool must be screened with the WIDA K-MODEL™.

Qualified preschool staff must be trained on the use of the specific screening tool that is regularly used in the program in order to ensure consistent administration and valid results. Qualifications for staff who can administer the screening instruments (including the Pre-IPT) can be found at the ISBE Multilingual Department's Identification, Placement and Assessment webpage.

Establishment of Programs

An attendance center that enrolls 20 or more preschool ELs who have the same home language must offer a Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) program that includes instruction in the home language as well as English as a Second Language (ESL). TBE services may be offered by the self-contained classroom teacher or by another collaborating teacher who pushes into the classroom. A pull-out model for language support may be used in some circumstances but generally is not recommended.

An attendance center that enrolls 19 or fewer preschool ELs who have the same home language must offer either a Transitional Program of Instruction (TPI) or a TBE program for these students. This attendance center may have more than 19 EL students enrolled who have different home languages. TPIs provide language instruction that typically include ESL and may include home language instruction or support based on the needs of the students.

Preschool ELs are counted separately toward determination of either a TBE program and/or a TPI within a stand-alone center or shared attendance center with grades kindergarten and up.

Enrollment in preschool does not count toward the number of years a child has been enrolled in the TBE program/TPI under Article 14C.

Instructional Design

Language instruction may be delivered by the self-contained classroom teacher or by a collaborating teacher. EL students may be integrated with non-EL students in the classroom as long as the preschool program provides the EL children with daily language instruction that specifically addresses second language acquisition and makes the curriculum accessible for ELs. This includes the use of the student's native language. A pull-out model for language support may be used in some circumstances, but generally is not recommended.

Whenever possible, the preschool program should offer an instructional design for language acquisition that aligns with the program model used in the kindergarten that the child will attend to provide continuity and best prepare the child for successful entry into kindergarten. For example, if students are moving to a kindergarten class or center that has a TBE or dual language program for ELs, the preschool should make every attempt to support the student with similar supports that exist in the receiving kindergarten program.

The district may select the instructional design(s) best suited to its preschool population. Many configurations meet the requirements of the TBE program and TPI. Models most commonly used include:

Appropriate for TBE program or TPI:

- Transitional Bilingual Education: This is one of the instructional designs allowed, not to be confused with the broader use of the term in state rules. Instruction is in the students' home language and English to enable them to transition into English. ESL is provided in addition to content area instruction. The goal is to help students transition to the general education classrooms by using the native language to make connections to content as they acquire English.
- Dual Language: Instruction is provided in English and a target language with the goal of achieving bilingualism and biliteracy.
    - Two-Way Immersion: Instruction is given in English and a target language to English-speaking students and students who speak the target language together in the same classroom, with the goal of developing proficiency in both languages for all students in the class.
    - One-Way Immersion/Developmental Bilingual: ELs receive instruction in their home language for an extended duration, accompanied by education in English and ESL. The goal is proficiency in English and the home language.

Appropriate for TPI only:

- English as a Second Language: Teachers focus on building English language skills. The language of instruction is English, but some support may be provided to students in their native language. Teachers also use sheltered English instruction strategies to modify instruction for ELs to facilitate student comprehension of learning area content. Classes may be composed of ELs from many different language backgrounds who do not share the same home language.

Early English Language Development Standards

No matter what instructional design is used, the use of Early English Language Development Standards should be incorporated in the instruction of preschool English Learners. Illinois is a member of the WIDA Consortium and WIDA Early Years, which have developed and enhanced the language development standards for preschool ELs. These standards will guide educators in the expectations of what young language learners can do in early learning content areas.

Parent Notification

The district must notify the parent in writing that the child has been placed in a TBE program or TPI for ELs within 30 days after the beginning of the school year or 14 days after enrollment in the program during the middle of the school year. The notification letter must be in English and the home language of the student and must address the areas required under Section 14C-4 of the Illinois School Code. An example of the letter can be found on the ISBE website. A parent may withdraw a student from the TBE program/TPI at any time by submitting the request in writing to the school or district.

EL Teacher Certification

Teachers must hold a PEL with an early childhood endorsement (ECE) to teach preschool students. As of July 1, 2016, preschool teachers who provide native language/ESL instruction to EL students must also hold the ESL or bilingual endorsement that corresponds with the teaching assignment. A teacher who provides bilingual instruction, which may include instruction in the home language and ESL, must hold the bilingual endorsement. A teacher with the ESL endorsement may provide ESL instruction to help EL students learn English. The teacher who provides the native language/ESL instruction may be the classroom teacher or another teacher who pushes into the classroom for part of the day. A pull-out model is not generally recommended but may be used in some circumstances. Teachers not providing these services are not required to hold the endorsements.

A teacher must hold (1) a PEL with endorsements in early childhood and bilingual education or (2) both a PEL with an ECE and an Educator License with Stipulations with a bilingual education endorsement to qualify as an instructor in order to provide bilingual instruction to preschool children.

A teacher must hold (1) a PEL with endorsements in ECE and either bilingual education or ESL or (2) both a PEL with an ECE endorsement and an Educator License with Stipulations with a bilingual education endorsement to qualify as an instructor in order to provide ESL instruction to preschool children.

In a classroom, the licensure requirements for either bilingual or ESL instruction may be met through a co-teaching or push-in model in which a licensed early childhood teacher serves as the classroom teacher and a teacher with the bilingual and/or ESL endorsement co-teaches or pushes into the classroom, and both teachers work together to plan and deliver instruction for ELs.

TBE/TPI Program Director

The TBE/TPI program director in the district should meet the requirements for administrator qualifications included under Part 228.35(d). This individual may often be someone other than the early childhood director in the district. As such, implementation of a successful preschool EL program will require ongoing communication and coordination between the TBE/TPI program director and the staff who oversee the early childhood program.

Kindergarten Placement

Preschool screening results may not be used to determine placement in kindergarten. All children previously identified, even those who are screened as proficient in preschool as coming from homes where a language other

than English is spoken on the Home Language Survey must be screened in the listening and speaking domains with the WIDA K-MODEL™ to determine EL status and placement in the TBE program/TPI in kindergarten.

Children who were identified as ELs in preschool but meet the state English proficiency standard when screened for kindergarten should be enrolled in the same manner as other students who demonstrate English proficiency on the WIDA K-MODEL™. No parent permission is required to place these children in the general education program.

Professional Development

Districts must offer professional development opportunities to all staff in the TBE program/TPI, including certified and noncertified staff in the preschool TBE program/TPI. The district must offer at least two professional development activities a year that focus on at least one of the following topics related to the education of EL students -- current research in bilingual education; content-area and language proficiency assessment of ELs; research-based methods and techniques for teaching ELs; research-based methods and techniques for teaching ELs who also have disabilities; and the culture and history of the United States and of the country, territory, or geographic area that is the native land of the students or of their parents. Districts must also provide newly hired TBE program/TPI staff with an orientation that includes information about the TBE program/TPI requirements. Districts should offer professional development that is relevant and addresses developmentally appropriate practices for preschool teachers who work with EL students.

Preschool staff may be included in training related to the implementation of the Spanish language arts standards that districts must offer yearly, and the training should include information about how preschool programs can use developmentally appropriate practices to help prepare children for Spanish literacy. Also, resources and tools are available for all early childhood educators who serve multilingual children. WIDA Early Years eLearning resources focus on supporting young multilingual children in early care and education settings. The early care and education community in Illinois has free access to the resources, which are provided through Early Childhood Professional Learning (ECPL) and ISBE. WIDA Early Years eLearning offers self-paced, interactive modules that provide opportunities for reflection and offer suggestions for applying content to local practice. Up to five hours of ISBE and/or Gateways credit is available.

Program Funding

The Evidence-Based Funding (EBF) for Student Success Act, which was passed on August 31, 2017, requires the Illinois State Board of Education to notify school districts of the total EL funding generated by each district's students. This composite amount of funds includes any EL funds generated under the Base Funding Minimum and Tier Funding. It does not include funding generated by the core investment cost factors of the EBF formula, the money from which also benefits ELs. Prekindergarten students are included in a district's total EL count.

ISBE maintains a list of the Fiscal Year EL funding totals per district. Districts are reminded that state funding attributable to ELs was to be spent on EL services per the requirements of Article 14C of the School Code. Article 14C also requires that at least 60 percent of EL funds must be spent on instructional costs of ELs.

Additional Resources

ISBE Early Childhood Multilingual Early Learners webpage

Access to free WIDA Early Years eLearning

Archived resources from Project LCExcel: Supporting Linguistically and Culturally Appropriate Practice in the Early Years

The Early Learning Environment

This section contains information related to PFA/PFAE Compliance Checklist item 1.

It is the expectation of the Illinois State Board of Education that Preschool for All and Preschool for All Expansion programs provide a safe and healthy environment that provides appropriate and well-maintained indoor and outdoor physical spaces. An organized, properly equipped, and well-maintained environment facilitates the learning, comfort, health, and safety of the children and adults in the program. PFA/PFAE classrooms are expected to serve 20 children maximum per session. The number of children enrolled per session may be affected by the number of enrolled children with IEPs and/or Head Start regulations. DCFS guidelines restrict the number of children allowed in the PFA or PFAE classroom due to square footage limitations. The staff-child ratio for each classroom must not exceed one adult to 10 children, and no more than 20 children can be served in a single classroom per session. Provisions are made for children with disabilities to participate in the program. No more than 30 percent of the children in a PFA or PFAE classroom may have an IEP, not including speech-only IEPs.

Physical Environment

This section contains information related to ECERS-3 items 1-7.

For more information, please refer to Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – 3rd Edition, All About the ECERS-3, and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Program Standards.

Interest Centers

This section contains information related to ECERS-3 items 17-27.

The foundation of quality teaching and learning involves engaging interactions that take place within an early learning environment with developmentally appropriate materials organized into interest centers. High-quality preschool classrooms include a well-organized and managed classroom with materials that stimulate children's thinking skills and provide for a range of developmental abilities.

Consider the following when organizing an interest center:

- Accommodate several children at one time.
- Clearly define centers to align with a particular type of play.
- Include materials organized by type and stored so that they are accessible to the children.
- Incorporate user labels with names and pictures that are easily understood by children.
- Use the Illinois Early Learning and Developmental Standards (IELDS) to guide what each center addresses.
- Arrange interest centers so that compatible areas are near each other and non-compatible areas are kept apart. Examples include placing the block center near the dramatic play center to support mutual play and learning, placing the art center near a sink to accommodate messy play, and placing the reading/cozy center apart from the block and dramatic play centers to minimize noise distraction.

The following chart includes centers and examples of materials, as well as examples of the IELDS benchmarks that apply to each.

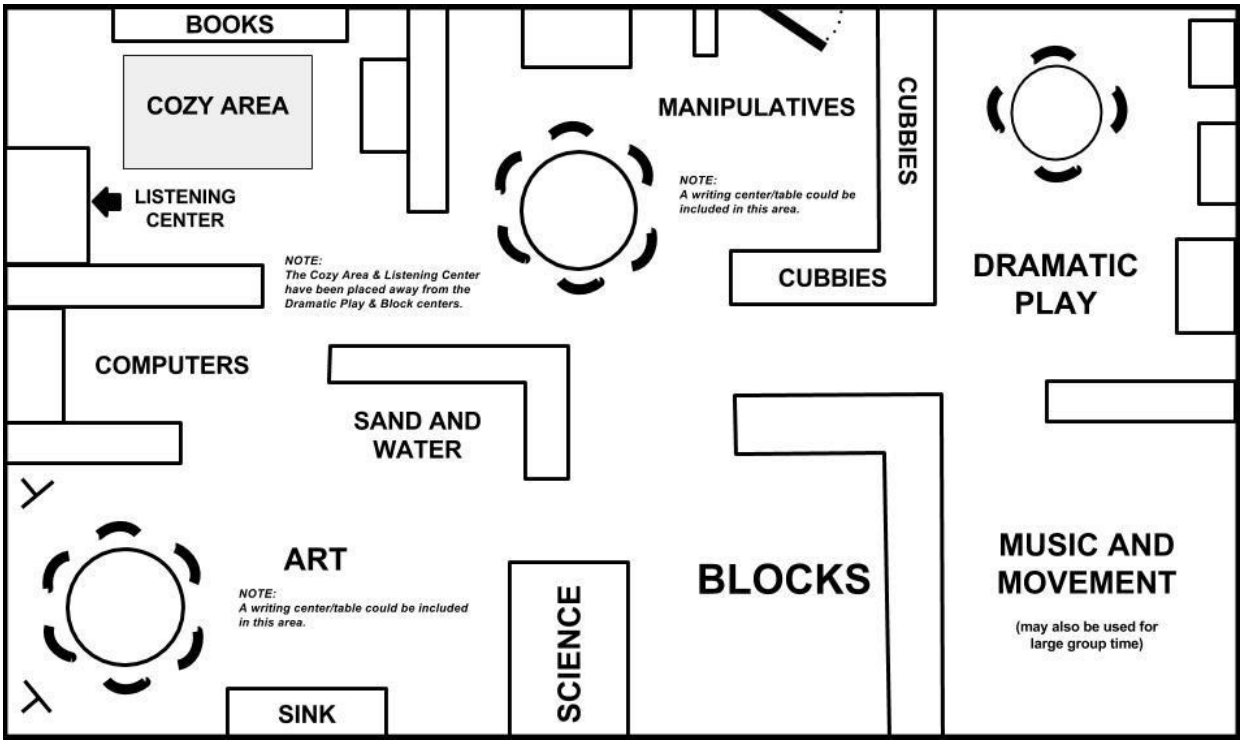
Interest Centers	Examples of Materials	Examples of IELDS Benchmarks
Fine Motor	**Small building materials:** Lincoln Logs, bristle blocks, and magnetic blocks. Beads and strings in various sizes, colors, and shapes. Lacing cards with strings, pegs and pegboards, snap blocks, nuts and bolts, puzzles, and teddy bear counters.	**1.A.ECa** Follow simple one-, two- and three-step directions. **8.A.ECa** Sort, order, compare, and describe objects according to characteristics or attributes. **8.A.ECb** Recognize, duplicate, extend, and create simple patterns in various formats. **8.B.ECa** With adult assistance, represent a simple repeating pattern by verbally describing it or by modeling it with objects or actions.
Art	**Art Supplies** Crayons, markers, pens, pencils, chalk, finger paint, tempera paint, watercolor paint, clay, pipe cleaners. **Collage materials:** Cotton balls, pom-poms, feathers, buttons, safe scissors, stapler, and hole punch.	**25.A.ECd** Visual Art: Investigate and participate in activities using visual art materials. **25.B.ECa** Describe or respond to their creative work or the creative work of others. **26.B.ECa** Use creative arts as an avenue for self-expression.
Music & Movement	Musical instruments, cassettes and CDs, music players, and microphones.	**25.A.ECa** Movement and Dance: Build awareness of, explore, and participate in dance and creative movement activities. **25.A.ECb** Drama: Begin to appreciate and participate in dramatic activities. **25.A.ECc** Music: Begin to appreciate and participate in music activities.
Blocks	Unit blocks, foam blocks, large hollow blocks, and homemade blocks. **Additional Items Part of Block Play:** Plastic animals, figurines, toy cars and trucks, and road signs.	**7.A.ECc** Use vocabulary that describes and compares length, height, weight, capacity, and size. **9.A.ECb** Sort collections of two- and three-dimensional shapes by type (e.g., triangles, rectangles, circles, cubes, spheres, pyramids). **17.A.ECb** Express beginning geographic thinking. **25.B.ECa** Describe and respond to their creative work or the creative work of others.
Sand & Water Note: At a minimum, sand and/or water should be accessible daily for at least 1 hour to children in a full-day program and at least 30 minutes for children in a half-day program.	Measuring cups, unbreakable containers, funnels, shovels, scoops, trucks, and plastic animals. **Water-Specific Toys:** Pumps, sponges, items that sink or float, turkey basters, and spray bottles.	**7.B.ECa** Practice estimating in everyday play and everyday measurement problems. **7.C.ECa** With teacher assistance, explore use of measuring tools that use standard units to measure objects and quantities that are meaningful to the child. **12.E.ECa** Observe and describe characteristics of earth, water, and air.

Dramatic Play (Role Play/House Area)	**Clothing (for both boys and girls):** Dresses, skirts, pants, jackets, ties, scarves, aprons, footwear, hats, accessories, uniforms for various work roles. **Child-sized Furniture:** Kitchen sink, stove/oven, refrigerator, microwave, toaster, pots and pans, dishes, tea set, play food (including ethnic food), table and chairs, couch, telephones, mirrors, dolls, dollhouse, and stuffed animals.	**1.A.ECd** Identify emotions from facial expressions and body language. **1.B.ECa** Use language for a variety of purposes. **15.A.ECa** Describe some common jobs and what is needed to perform those jobs. **15.A.ECb** Discuss why people work. **15.D.ECa** Begin to understand the use of trade or money to obtain goods and services. **18.B.ECa** Understand that each of us belongs to a family and recognize that families vary.
Nature & Science	Magnets, magnifying glasses, plastic translucent color paddles, **Collections of Natural Objects:** Leaves, seashells, rocks, bird nests, and pinecones. **Living Natural Objects:** Butterfly hatching kit, worm farm or ant farm, class plant, and class pet.	**11.A.ECc** Plan and carry out simple investigations. **11.A.ECd** Collect, describe, compare, and record information from observations and investigations. **12.A.ECa** Observe, investigate, describe, and categorize living things. **12.B.ECa** Describe and compare basic needs of living things. **12.B.ECb** Show respect for living things. **12.C.ECa** Identify, describe, and compare the physical properties of objects. **13.A.ECa** Begin to understand basic safety practices one must follow when exploring and engaging in science and engineering investigations. **13.B.ECa** Use nonstandard and standard scientific tools for investigation.
Library/Book/ Reading (Cozy Area)	Books organized by theme/topic. **Types of Books**: Fiction, nonfiction, predictable, poems, books on CD/tape. Props for retelling stories, book characters, soft chairs/beanbag chairs.	**2.A.ECa** Engage in book-sharing experiences with purpose and understanding. **2.A.ECb** Look at books independently, pretending to read. **2.B.ECb** With teacher assistance, retell familiar stories with three or more key events. **2.C.ECa** Interact with a variety of types of texts (e.g., storybooks, poems, rhymes, songs). **2.C.ECb** Identify the front and back covers of books and display the correct orientation of books and page-turning skills. **4.A.ECb** Begin to follow words from left to right.

Math & Number	Toys and games that require children to figure out "more and less," cubes for stacking, height chart, foot size measurer, nesting cups, chart and graph activities, pattern or matching cards, magnetic shapes, geoboards, dice.	**6.A.ECa** Count with understanding and recognize "how many" in small sets up to 5. **6.A.ECb** Use subitizing (the rapid and accurate judgment of how many items there are without counting) to identify the number of objects in sets of 4 or less. **6.A.ECd** Connect numbers to quantities they represent using physical models and informal representations. **6.A.ECe** Differentiate numerals from letters and recognize some single digit written numerals. **6.B.ECa** Recognize that numbers (or sets of objects) can be combined or separated to make another number. **6.D.ECa** Compare two collections to see if they are equal or determine which is more, using a procedure of the child's choice. **6.D.ECb** Describe comparisons with appropriate vocabulary, such as "more," "less," "greater than," "fewer," "equal to," or "same as." **9.A.ECa** Recognize and name common two- and three-dimensional shapes and describe some of their attributes (e.g., number of sides, straight or curved lines). **9.A.ECd** Combine two-dimensional shapes to create new shapes.
Writing	**Utensils:** Pencils, pens, crayons, markers, chalk and boards, write-and-wipe boards and markers, children's names on note cards, envelopes, mailbox **Paper:** Construction, tag board, colored, and white. Alphabet and number stamps, alphabet and number stencils, a poster/display showing numbers and the alphabet (upper and lowercase).	**4.A.ECa** Recognize the differences between print and pictures. **4.A.ECc** Recognize the one-to-one relationship between spoken and written words. **4.A.ECd** Understand that words are separated by spaces in print. **4.A.ECe** Recognize that letters are grouped to form words. **4.A.ECf** Differentiate letters from numerals. **4.B.ECb** Recognize and name some upper/lowercase letters of the alphabet, especially those in own name. **4.B.ECd** With teacher assistance, begin to form some letters of the alphabet, especially those in own name. **5.A.ECa** Experiment with writing tools and materials. **5.A.ECb** Use scribbles, letter-like forms, or letters/words to represent written language. **5.A.ECc** With teacher assistance, write own first name using appropriate upper/lowercase letters.

Computer/ Technology (not a required center)	Desktop computer, child-size mouse or touchscreen, tablet, educational apps, developmentally appropriate computer games/activities. Note: The 2011 version of Caring for Our Children (pages 66-67) recommends no more than 30 minutes -- total -- of video, DVD, computer, and television viewing time per week. Computer use time should be limited to no more than 15 minutes per day for children in a program of any length with the exception of children with disabilities who require assistive computer technology.	**1.A.ECa** Follow simple one-, two-, and three-step directions. **19.A.ECd** Use eye-hand coordination to perform tasks. Note: Additional benchmarks may apply depending on what games/activities are being provided for use with the computer.

Sample Classroom Floor Plan



Gross Motor Environment

This section contains information related to ECERS-3 items 6 and 7.

The gross motor environment should be created with intentionality and include an outdoor area as well as an indoor alternative to accommodate these activities during inclement weather days. Gross motor skills can be enhanced through the use of stationary equipment as well as through simple portable materials, such as balls, tricycles, beanbags, low balance beams, hula-hoops, and parachutes. Gross motor spaces can support learning and development and should be guided by the IELDS. Materials and experiences, such as sand and water play, a blanket or bench with a basket of books and props, a dollhouse with play family figures, musical instruments, etc., may be made available to take outside or to the indoor gross motor area.

Considerations for a gross motor environment:

- Fences or natural barriers that prevent access to streets and other hazards.
- Adequate space with different surfaces in order for children to participate in different types of active play.
- Enough stationary and portable equipment and materials to support at least seven to nine large motor skills, such as:

Running
Jumping
Hopping
Balancing
Swinging
Sliding
Climbing
Throwing
Catching
Tossing
Kicking
Digging
Jumping rope
Pulling up by arms
Pushing and pulling
Pedaling and

- Areas that protect children from the elements of nature, such as shade trees or other types of covering, and windbreaks in the winter.
- A storage space for equipment.
- Staff actively assist in the development of gross motor skills.

NOTE: When creating outdoor play areas, programs are expected to follow the guidance in the Consumer Product Safety Commission Public Playground Safety Handbook and the Playground Information to use with the ECERS Environmental Rating Scales document.

Additional Resources

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
NAEYC Program Standards
The National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning

Schedule

Preschool for All and Preschool for All Expansion programs are expected to implement research-based best practices in early childhood education. This includes creating a program with a consistent daily schedule, routines, and learning experiences that support children's developmental levels, abilities, and interests. Scheduling guidelines are based on developmentally appropriate practices. Whether it is snack time, cleanup time, group time, or a planned learning activity, the program should provide opportunities that optimally promote children's learning and development.

Attendance Guidelines and Requirements

This section contains information related to PFA/PFAE Compliance Checklist item 7 and PFAE Compliance Checklist item 21.

Preschool for All programs are required to meet a minimum of two and a half hours each day, five days a week. Start and end dates must be identified, with children in attendance a minimum of 165 days.

Preschool for All Expansion class sessions are required to meet for the length of instructional time equivalent to that provided by the first-grade teacher(s) in the local district, but no less than five hours.

Any days beyond 165 in the program calendar may be used for parent/guardian conferences, home visits, and professional development, OR attendance days. If the program has regular weekly or monthly planning dismissal times that affect the PFA or PFAE weekly class time, the program must ensure weekly class time overall equals at least 12.5 hours per week (PFA) and at least the total weekly hours of instructional time provided by the first - grade classroom teacher (PFAE).

Early Childhood Block Grant funding gives priority to the most at-risk children; therefore, children receiving services provided with ECBG funding should not be dropped from the program for poor attendance.

If attendance is a concern, the program should utilize program staff, including administrators, teachers, social workers, family educators, and/or district attendance officers, to call and/or visit the family. Staff should provide the family with guidance, help, and resources for avoiding chronic absenteeism and promoting regular attendance. After conducting outreach and working with the family to get the child to school, a program may un-enroll the child IF the child has had six weeks of consecutive absences (no attendance for six weeks with no intermittent attendance days). This does not include planned, extended absences. The program should document all attempts made to work with the family. The child's family should be notified of the disenrollment, and a child from the program's waitlist should be enrolled in the empty spot. If there is no waitlist, the student should remain enrolled in the program. This is not an expulsion for behavioral reasons. See the Early Childhood Block Grant Attendance Guidance document.

Schedule Components

The daily schedule needs to include a balance of large group, small group, and individual activities that reflect children's developmental abilities, interests, and attention spans. There should be a balance of active and quiet play. Children should spend at least one-third of their day in play activities, which consist of a combination of indoor and outdoor, teacher-directed (small group or whole group), and child-directed (self-selected) play. The daily schedule should be posted in each classroom, including words and pictures, so staff and students can access readily. The schedule should allow flexibility to meet student needs, but overall should be accurate and consistent so students know what to expect.

Greeting/Departing

- Each student should receive an individual greeting upon entry to the room. This should include using the child's name, providing a greeting in their primary language, giving a smile or physical contact, and asking something personal about them (e.g., How was your dance class?). Students should also be given time to talk informally with the teacher.
- Each student should be given a farewell at departure time.

- Appropriate greeting and farewell practices help students feel welcome, build relationships with parents, and help the transition from school to home and home to school. This also provides a safety component, so staff is aware of who dropped off/picked up students and who is present in the classroom.

Interest Centers/Free Play

This section contains information related to ECERS-3 item 34.

- The program plans purposeful, high-interest, developmentally appropriate learning activities that support all domains of development and emphasize language and higher-level thinking skills.
- Interest centers allow children to carry out their individual plans and choices, to move freely between centers, and to use materials in open-ended and creative ways.
- Three to five choices of different items within each center are present.
- Adults are actively involved in interest centers, initiating meaningful interactions, asking open-ended questions to prompt thinking, reinforcing vocabulary and concept development, and promoting positive social interactions among children.

Gross Motor

This section contains information related to ECERS-3 items 26 and 28.

- Gross motor activities are scheduled daily and take place outdoors whenever weather permits. In Illinois the term "weather permitting" means temperatures between 25 and 90 degrees, taking into consideration the wind chill. For example, if the temperature is 30 degrees, but only 18 degrees with wind chill, it is not expected that children will have outdoor play time. In cold weather and especially between 25 and 30 degrees, children should be monitored to ensure they are well-dressed. In warm temperatures and especially at 90 degrees, adults should monitor children carefully to ensure that they have appropriate sun protection and hydration.
- Adults supervise and participate in gross motor and outdoor play and support children's interactions and skill development
- Gross motor activities are provided for 30 minutes (half-day programs) or 60 minutes (full-day programs) daily.
- Children have daily access to both age-appropriate stationary outdoor equipment and portable equipment (tricycles, wagons, sleds, balls, sand/digging toys, garden toys, bubbles, chalk, etc.).
- A variety of gross motor activities, such as running, jumping, skipping, climbing, ball handling, etc., are offered to support a range of physical skills.
- Gross motor activities include a balance of planned play and spontaneous/free play.

Whole Group

This section contains information related to ECERS-3 item 35.

- Whole group time includes when all children are participating in the activity.
- Whole group should be limited to short periods of time with activities that are age-appropriate and meet the needs of all children because whole group settings are not the best way for children of this age to learn.
- Teachers should monitor the length of time of whole group through student engagement. If students appear bored or are not paying attention, the time should be shortened. The amount of time must allow all students to participate the entire time.
- Refer to the curriculum for guidance on appropriate duration and activities for large group time.

Meals/Snacks

This section contains information related to PFA/PFAE Compliance Checklist item 11 and PFAE Compliance item 22.

- PFA part-day programs must offer a snack. PFAE programs must offer breakfast, lunch and a snack.
- PFA full-day programs must offer minimally a meal; the addition of a snack is best practice.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) meal guidelines must be followed.

- Snack time should be considered a time for socializing, language development, and building independence in meal/eating routines. Staff should sit with children to guide and support these skills.
- Individual dietary restrictions should be respected.

Nap/rest

- Programs that are longer than four hours must offer a naptime for at least one hour. Students not requiring a nap should be offered an opportunity to participate in relaxation or quiet activities.
- Naps should be offered at a regular time each day, with the environment set up to accommodate the nap period (low lights, quiet environment, and availability of cots/mats).

Transitions

This section contains information related to ECERS-3 item 33.

- The number and duration of transitions throughout the day should be kept to a minimum (fewer than three minutes) and should align with children's attention spans and developmental abilities.
- Whenever possible, efforts should be made to avoid or minimize waiting time (such as waiting in line or waiting for all children to finish an activity) and interactive activities (songs, finger plays, movement) are utilized to support children during transitions. Routines can be completed in small groups to minimize wait time as well.
- Expectations for transitions are clearly communicated in advance and positively reinforced so that children understand the expectations.
- Transition routines and procedures are taught and reviewed regularly so that the process is both smooth and safe.
- Adults support children during transitions, such as cleanup time or moving from one activity to another, with positively stated reminders and guidance.

Toileting

- PFA staff should implement Diapering and Toileting Procedures for the health and safety of both the child and caregiver.

Personal Care Routines

The items in ECERS-3 Personal Care Routines are not included in PFA or PFAE program monitoring; however, these items represent best practices for health and safety and should be followed by PFA and PFAE programs.

Sample Daily Schedules

2.5-Hour Programs

10 minutes: Arrival and Quiet Centers
5 minutes: Cleanup Time
15 minutes: Whole Group Time
65 minutes: Choice Time (includes snack as a center)
5 minutes: Cleanup Time
30 minutes: Gross Motor
15 minutes: Small Group Time
5 minutes: Pack up and Dismissal

3-Hour Program

20 minutes: Arrival and Quite Centers
5 minutes: Cleanup Time
15 minutes: Whole Group Time
80 minutes: Choice Time (includes snack as a center)
10 minutes: Cleanup Time
30 minutes: Gross Motor
15 minutes: Small Group Time
5 minutes: Dismissal

6-Hour Program)

This section contains information related to PFAE Compliance Checklist Item 21.

15 minutes: Arrival and Quiet Centers
5 minutes: Cleanup Time
15 minutes: Whole Group Time
70 minutes: Choice Time (includes snack as a center)
5 minutes: Cleanup Time
30 minutes: Gross Motor
20 minutes: Small Group Time
5 minutes: Prepare for Lunch
30 minutes: Lunch
60 minutes: Rest Time/Quiet Centers
5 minutes: Cleanup Time
30 minutes: Gross Motor
70 minutes: Choice Time (includes snack as a center)
10 minutes: Cleanup Time/Prepare for Departure/Dismissal

Additional Resources

Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)
23 ILLINOIS ADMINISTRATIVE CODE 235 Illinois Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR)
Diapering and Toileting Procedures American Academy of Pediatrics – Healthy Children
Toilet Training Children with Special Needs Environment Rating Scales Institute
Table Washing Procedure
United States Department of Agriculture – Food and Nutrition Service
Nutrition Standards for School Meals
Zero to Three National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families
Learning to Use the Toilet

Early Learning Curriculum and Assessment

This section contains information related to PFA Compliance Checklist item 10.

ISBE does not endorse specific curricula for use in Preschool for All and Preschool for All Expansion classrooms. However, programs must consider the following criteria when selecting a curriculum:

- Alignment with the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards (IELDS).
- Inclusion of content to be taught with intentionality and integration.
- Provision for child initiation and engagement.
- Use of content based on research of how young children learn.
- Provision for parent involvement through meaningful communication with families.
- Alignment with an authentic assessment tool that is ongoing and comprehensive.
- Consideration of the child's linguistic and cultural background.
- Consideration of the range of experience and qualifications of early childhood teachers.
- Consideration of a wide range of children's abilities, including those of children with an IEP.
- Provision of research-based evidence on the effectiveness of the curriculum.

An applicant's proposal will not be rejected solely based on the curriculum included; however, ISBE must determine that a curriculum is appropriate (based on the criteria above) before it will permit any project to use state funds for such curriculum.

Curricula that have been reviewed and are aligned to the Illinois Early Learning Guidelines for Children Birth to Age 3 Years and the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards for Preschool 3 years old to kindergarten enrollment age may be found at the ExceleRate website. Though a curriculum is determined to be aligned with the Illinois Early Learning Guidelines and/or the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards, it may not meet all criteria as set forth by PFA/PFAE guidelines.

Best Practices for the PFA/PFAE Classroom

This section contains information related to ECERS-3 items 12-16, 24 and 25.

- Provides for interactive, hands-on learning that promotes children's construction of learning.
- Allows for concept learning and skill development in an integrated and natural way.
- Allows for active learning and permits children to frequently make their own meaningful choices.
- Provides opportunities to explore and inquire instead of focusing on "right" answers or "right" ways to complete a task.
- Promotes the development of higher-order abilities, such as thinking, reasoning, problem-solving, and decision-making.
- Promotes and encourages social interaction among children and adults.
- Builds and elaborates on children's current knowledge and abilities.
- Encourages development of positive feelings and dispositions toward learning while leading to acquisition of knowledge and skills.
- Provides activities that promote feelings of success, competence, and enjoyment of learning.
- Utilizes a variety of learning experiences, such as interest areas furnished with materials based on program goals and children's interests and their abilities, as well as small group and large group activities.
- Actively involves staff in implementing all aspects of the curriculum.
- Embeds skills in naturalistic environments based upon children's ideas, experiences, and contributions.
- Provides children with opportunities to expand vocabulary, use language, and become familiar with print.
- Encourages children to use books, and adults to use books with children.
- Provides opportunities for understanding written numbers and math is used in daily events.
- Aligns to the IELDS domains.

Curriculum components **not appropriate** for a PFA/PFAE classroom include, but are not limited to:

- Use of workbooks, worksheets, flashcards, and/or other materials that do not engage children's interests.

- Limited materials, used day after day, with few choices and little variety in materials and activities.
- Use of curriculum without alignment to a research-based assessment tool that informs instruction to meet individual and group needs.

Field Trips

PFA/PFAE programs may choose to include educationally appropriate, local field trips as part of the curriculum to enhance classroom learning experiences. All children in the program should be able to participate and parents should be encouraged to participate.

The following questions should be considered when planning field trips:

- Is the field trip destination within a reasonable distance from the program site or community?
- Is the field trip activity developmentally appropriate for 3- to 5-year-old children?
- Does the activity support and enhance the parent-child relationship?
- Does the activity offer an opportunity for enhancing language and developing and supporting literacy?
- Does the activity provide an experience that is affordable and repeatable by families if they choose to attend outside of the program?
- Does the activity align with budgetary and fiscal requirements?

Assessment

This section contains information related to PFA/PFAE Compliance Checklist item 12.

Characteristics of research-based authentic assessment:

- Is an ongoing and a natural part of teacher's daily activity.
- Includes observation of all areas of a child's growth and development over time.
- Occurs in a naturalistic environment.
- Uses information from a variety of sources.
- Helps teachers plan, measure progress, work with families, and individualize curriculum.

The following excerpt is taken from *Authentic Assessment and Early Childhood Education - an Update and Resources*, a publication of the ISBE Early Childhood Department:

> Preschool or early childhood assessment can be seen in the context of the larger push for accountability. It can indicate which skills children in a particular preschool classroom or program have that are needed for the academics associated with elementary education beginning in first grade. State Early Learning Standards are partly an attempt to put early childhood learning on a continuum that leads to higher and different expectations of achievement. The use of formal research-based student assessment is a requirement for funding of all state-supported Preschool for All, Preschool for All Expansion, and Early Childhood Special Education programs.
>
> Early childhood assessment cannot follow the standardized testing or student assessment model that may be appropriate for higher grade levels. Students who are 3 to 5 years of age are developing rapidly, at individual paces, and with different interests. It is important to document their successes and their progress, rather than their failures or lack of progress, as they grow. Some formal testing, of course, is appropriate for diagnostic purposes to prepare for special interventions that may be needed to deal with physical, psychological, or behavioral circumstances. Evaluation for diagnostic or special education eligibility purposes should be distinguished from "authentic assessment.
>
> Young students learn through play; authentic assessment aims to document a student's development and progress in a way that is non-intrusive and captures how a student uses his or her skills while engaging with materials, teachers, parents, and peers. Authentic assessment involves the teacher as an observer and a researcher – working from a background of solid education and specialized training, collecting data over time, selecting and organizing evidence (the portfolio), preparing a hypothesis that can be tested (the curriculum), sharing conclusions with parents and others to refine what will work best in guiding a student

to develop to his or her potential, and developing lesson plans that will help students individually progress toward meeting learning expectations

John Dewey, the progressive educational reformer who spent an important part of his career in Illinois more than one hundred years ago, recognized that education strikes a balance between imparting necessary knowledge and letting students pursue their own learning interests as individuals. He would have been fascinated by the modern trend in early childhood education that recognizes a child at play as a child who is learning, the preschool teacher as guide and facilitator rather than dispenser of information, and the use of authentic assessment as an appropriate way to document development and guide a child's education.

Portfolios

This section contains information related to PFA/PFAE Compliance Checklist item 10.

Portfolios that document children's progress over time are a required component of all PFA/PFAE programs. Collections contained in the portfolio should be representative of the work done by the child, illustrating progress over time. Anyone who works with the child should contribute to the collection of documentation. Children may spend time working on tasks that are not easy to document for inclusion in a portfolio. For example, building with blocks is an activity that a child might pursue with vigor. Progress in the student's ability to work with blocks can be documented to show progress over time by taking photographs of the various structures. A collection is then available for future reference and can serve as a topic of discussion with the family and the child.

A portfolio for each child should contain:

- A research-based developmental checklist that measures progress over time with at least three reporting periods.
- Individualized collections, such as work samples, photos, anecdotal notes, etc., that reflect the IELDS.
- Since FY 2018, portfolios have reflected, **at a minimum**, two benchmarks from the language arts, math, social-emotional, science, social studies, physical, fine arts, and ELL (if applicable) domains of the IELDS per reporting period.
- Narrative summary reports that are used to share assessment information with parents/guardians should:
    - Be factual, brief, relevant, and strengths-based.
    - Contain name, date collected, domain, and IELDS objective or the indicator from the program's researched-based assessment tool that is aligned with the IELDS.

Teachers should select a benchmark to show progress that documents the integration of many skills and capabilities of the child. It should also show the unique ways a child goes about doing something and show how a child is growing and learning over time. Teachers should collect and document information, then use it to reflect on the child and to develop appropriate instruction. Some questions to guide reflection include:

- What was my purpose for observing?
- What similarities or patterns do I notice?
- What do these observations suggest?
- What else might be going on?
- What else do I want to observe or find out?
- How does this observation fit with other things that I know about the child from previous observations?
- How will I document my interpretations?

The Child Portfolio Teacher Reflection Tool may be used by teachers and administrators to improve the quality of child portfolios.

Samples of portfolio collections can be found on the ISBE PFA/PFAE website under Additional Resources.

Lesson Plans

This section provides information related to PFA/PFAE Compliance Checklist item 10.

All PFA/PFAE programs require the development of thoughtful lesson plans. Thoughtfully constructed lesson plans consider the unique learning needs of each child and demonstrate a clear understanding of the IELDS and the program's research-based curriculum. Samples lesson plans can be found on the ISBE PFA/PFAE website under Additional Resources.

STAR NET and Early Childhood Professional Learning, in collaboration with the ISBE Early Childhood Department, have created a FAQ for Lesson Planning to provide guidance on best practices in creating lesson plans.

Further support for writing developmentally appropriate lesson plans that meet ISBE PFA/PFAE Compliance Checklist requirements can be found in the free online course, *Creating Developmentally Appropriate Lesson Plans in Preschool Settings*. The course was developed by STAR NET Regions I and III and is available through Ed Leaders Network.

Programs that are funded by ISBE should follow their curriculum guidelines to implement the curriculum and lesson planning process with fidelity.

Required components for PFA/PFAE lesson plans include:

- Show connections with IELDS benchmarks. (Use key phrases from IELDS benchmarks or objectives from the program's research-based curriculum that are aligned with IELDS.)
- Lesson plans designed to meet individual child's needs when in-person instruction has occurred (at minimum 25 percent of children per week, with individualization for each child at least monthly).
- Outcomes build on child's prior knowledge to move learning forward.
- Designed to meet individual child's needs.
- The formative assessment selected matches the instructional outcomes and evidence exists to support adjustments made based on formative assessment data.

Common Core and IELDS

- The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) have implications for preschool in terms of content and skills expected for success upon entry to and during kindergarten and beyond. While the CCSS are written for K-12, early childhood educators should take time to carefully reflect on the developmental needs of the preschool student and how early childhood education can align to the CCSS. Vertical alignment was completed to ensure that Illinois Early Learning Guidelines for Children Birth to Age 3 align with the IELDS and the IELDS align with CCSS.

Use of Technology

This section contains information related to ECERS-3 item 27.

PFA and PFAE programs should follow research-based guidance on the developmentally appropriate use of technology with preschool aged children.

The following excerpt is taken from the Position Statement on Technology and Interactive Media in Early Childhood Programs issued by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

> Effective uses of technology and media are active, hands-on, engaging, and empowering; give the child control; provide adaptive scaffolds to help children progress in skills development at their individual rates; and are used as one of many options to support children's learning. Technology and interactive media should expand children's access to new content and new skills. When truly integrated, uses of technology and media become routine and transparent — the child or the educator is focused on the activity or exploration itself and not on the technology.

The Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale Third Edition (ECERS-3)
Appropriate use of Technology, item 27 on the ECERS-3 scale, indicates that in a quality early childhood program, children have a maximum of 30 minutes per week using technology with a maximum of 15 minutes per day,

including computers, laptops, tablets, smart boards, television, movies, etc. When whole group technology lessons are being conducted, an alternative non-technology option must be offered.

Additional Resources

Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes
Colorado Department of Education Results Matter Video Library
Observation: The Heart of Authentic Assessment
Division for Early Childhood (DEC)
National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
Technology and Interactive Media as Tools in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8 (Position statement from NAEYC and the Fred Rogers Center)
Early Childhood Curriculum, Assessment and Program Evaluation (Position statement and resources from NAEYC)
Where We Stand on Curriculum, Assessment, and Program Evaluation
National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER)
Preschool Curriculum Decision-Making: Dimension to Consider (NIEER)
National Public Radio (NPR) Q&A: Blocks, Play, Screen Time and the Infant Mind
Common Core State Standards and Early Childhood Literacy Instruction: Confusions and Conclusions

Social-Emotional Learning

This section contains information related to ECERS-3 items 30 and 31.

Social-emotional learning (SEL) is integral to every child's ability to manage feelings and to interact successfully with others. Identifying and talking about feelings and exploring appropriate ways to address feelings is critical to a preschooler's social emotional development and contributes to their positive social interactions and school success. Social-emotional learning provides opportunities for children to acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they need to recognize and manage their emotions, demonstrate caring and concern for others, establish positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle challenging situations constructively.

Key social-emotional skills children need as they enter school:

- Confidence
- Capacity to develop good relationships with peers and adults
- Concentration and persistence on challenging tasks
- Ability to effectively communicate emotions
- Ability to listen to instructions and be attentive
- Ability to solve social problems

SEL Instruction

Quality SEL instruction enables children to learn to process, integrate, and selectively apply SEL skills in developmentally, contextually, and culturally appropriate ways. In conjunction with a safe, caring, participatory, and responsive school climate, this can result in positive outcomes, including prevention of mental health issues, reduction in suspensions, and improved academic outcomes.

Tips for quality SEL instruction that promote social interactions:

- Arrange materials and classroom environment to promote social emotional competency.
- Create learning experiences that promote sharing, cooperating, and collaborating.
- Pay attention to how classroom is set up to avoid potential problems caused by crowding, too few materials, and long wait times for turns.
- Promote looking at each other, if culturally appropriate.
- Encourage use of names and/or appropriate physical contact.
- Model friendship skills for children and reinforce by pointing out children's behavior that exhibits these skills.
- Give children the words and phrases to express their feelings.
- Introduce problem solving concepts by teaching steps that can be used when problems occur.

The Pyramid Model

The Pyramid Model is based on the initial work done by the Center on the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL). The Pyramid Model provides a framework that involves a multi-tiered system of supports for developing social and emotional competencies in young children and helping educators address challenging behaviors. The foundation of this model is an effective workforce that has knowledge of evidence-based practices and can successfully implement them. The pyramid levels:

- Level 1 represents universal supports for all children, including nurturing and responsive relationships and a high-quality supportive environment. When positive relationships have been established and supportive, engaging learning environments are provided and most children will successfully develop social emotional skills.
- Level 2 represents targeted social-emotional supports and strategies that focus on helping young children develop emotional literacy, manage strong emotions, problem-solve, and learn friendship skills. These strategies should be intentionally planned and implemented -- explicit instruction associated with these strategies has benefits for all children.

- Level 3 represents the steps to provide an intensive intervention for children whose challenging behavior persists after implementation of the first two levels. Research on the use of this framework indicates that if the first levels of the Pyramid Model are implemented with fidelity, only about 4 percent of children need an intensive intervention. Intervention should involve creating a specific behavior support plan for the child with input from educators and in partnership with the child's family.

In 2017, Illinois began its much-anticipated journey into implementing the Pyramid Model across the state. Much has been accomplished since the project was launched, specifically pertaining to (a) the training of trainers and offering online E-Pyramid Modules across the state, (b) building collaborations across systems, and (c) implementing a multipronged plan to ensure the Pyramid Model work will continue to grow and sustain for years to come. The Governor's Office of Early Childhood (GOECD) has more information about this initiative.

Relationships

Building relationships is an important component of social and emotional development. The relationships built with children, families, and colleagues are at the foundation of everything educators do. It is important to build positive and trusting relationships early rather than waiting until there is a problem. Children learn and develop in the context of relationships that are responsive, consistent, and nurturing. Parents and other colleagues are critical partners in building children's social-emotional competence.

Children with the most challenging behaviors especially need supportive and nurturing relationships, yet their behaviors often prevent them from benefiting from those relationships. Adults' time and attention are very important to children and must be given at times other than when children are engaging in challenging behavior. Noticing and providing positive feedback on appropriate behavior helps to reinforce it. All adults should work together to ensure children's success and prevent challenging behavior.

How to promote relationships:

- Help each child feel accepted in the group.
- Assist children in learning to communicate and get along with others.
- Encourage the feelings of empathy and mutual respect among children and adults.
- Provide a supportive environment in which children can learn and practice appropriate and acceptable behaviors as individuals and as a group.
- Model respect for diversity.

Positive Behavior

This section contains information related to ECERS-3 Subscale Item 32.

A Comprehensive Positive Approach to Behavior Support for Preschool Children, published by CSEFEL, indicates that a comprehensive and positive approach to behavior support should include the following:

- Building positive relationships.
- Using classroom preventive practices.
- Teaching social skills.
- Individualizing behavior intervention efforts.
- Teaching children replacement skills.
- Providing specialized services.
- Involving families.

Expulsion and Suspension

HHS and ED issued the Policy Statement on Expulsion and Suspension Policies in Early Childhood Settings to assist states and public and private early childhood programs in partnering to prevent and severely limit expulsions and suspensions in early learning settings. Recent data indicates that expulsions and suspensions occur at high rates in preschool settings. This is particularly troubling given that research suggests that school expulsion and suspension practices are associated with negative educational and life outcomes. Early

suspension, expulsion, and other exclusionary discipline practices contribute to setting many young children's educational trajectories in a negative direction from the beginning. This has long-term consequences for children, their families, and the schools that they will later attend. In addition, stark racial and gender disparities exist in these practices, with young boys of color being suspended and expelled much more frequently than other children. These disturbing trends warrant immediate attention from the early childhood and education fields to prevent, severely limit, and work toward eventually eliminating expulsion and suspension and ensuring the safety and well-being of young children in early learning settings.

Public Act 100-105 Suspension - Expulsion of Children Birth to 5

Governor Bruce Rauner signed Public Act 100-105 on August 14, 2017, and the law took effect on January 1, 2018. The goal of PA 100-105 is to ensure that early childhood programs engage in best practices in their disciplinary actions by prohibiting the use of expulsions due to child behavior. Planned transitions, after documented attempts to address the child's needs, are not expulsions. The bill also puts in place a system to track transitions, providing data to better understand the issue and identify the need for additional resources. A frequently asked questions document on PA 100 can be accessed here.

The ISBE Early Childhood Department has created the following documents to support PFA and PFAE programs in addressing serious, ongoing challenging behavior:

- ISBE Behavior Support and Transition Plan FAQ
- ISBE Early Childhood Block Grant Behavior Support Plan
    - PFA and PFAE programs are expected to use this ISBE-created template when there is a need to create an intentional plan, with action steps and resources, to support a child while addressing significant challenging behavior.
- ISBE Early Childhood Block Grant Program Transition Plan
    - PFA and PFAE programs are expected to use this ISBE-created template only when a child's behavior support plan has been fully implemented and a decision is agreed upon by the multidisciplinary team and the family to transition the child to a program that is a better fit.

Additional Resources

The National Center on Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI) is designed to assist states and programs in their implementation of sustainable systems for the implementation of the Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children.
Evidence Based Practices for Implementing the Pyramid Model
Family Engagement
Suspension and Expulsion in Early Childhood
The Center on the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) website contains training modules for Teachers and Families/Caregivers and resources that support the Pyramid Model.
Teaching Your Child to Express and Identify Emotions
Children's Book List
Practical Strategies for Teachers/Caregivers
Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) is a source for knowledge about high-quality, evidence-based social and emotional learning.
CASEL Guide
The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) provides information and resources on child trauma and trauma informed practices.
Administration for Children & Families explains that social-emotional and behavioral health and development are the foundations of learning.
Key Components of Erin's Law provides information about how to prevent sexual abuse.
The Pyramid Model Consortium provides resources that support program wide and statewide implementation of the Pyramid Model.

Transition Plans

This section contains information related to PFA/PFAE Compliance Checklist item 13.

There are many different transitions that occur through the early childhood years, particularly when a child enters the school system for the first time. These transitions -- or times of change -- can be stressful, especially for families with children who have limited experiences outside the home. Moving from home to program or program to program requires adjustments for the child and family. Teaching staff and administrators should play a vital role in assisting children and families through the transition process by planning and working together. For this reason, a formal transition plan is a requirement of the Preschool for All and Preschool for All Expansion grants. The plan should include the transition to kindergarten and transitions into and out of the PFA or PFAE program. Consideration should be given to transitions into the program from home, Prevention Initiative, Early Intervention, group or family child care, and transitions that take place during any time of the year. The program can choose the method of sharing the plan, including placing it in the parent/guardian handbook or sharing it at the program orientation. It should be provided in the family's native language.

A key factor in transition is to ensure continuity in the key elements that characterize good early childhood education and care programs. Children and families go through many transitions in this period of life. PFA and PFAE programs should support them through the transition process and seek to ensure continuity. This is more effectively accomplished through strong community connections and collaborations. Transition practices should be based on an understanding of children's development and developmentally appropriate practices and should support children's social emotional development.

Procedures for transitions are ongoing and should not be limited to one-time efforts at the end of the program year. The following steps should be considered when formulating a transition process:

- Access the existing transition process and procedures in your program. If they do not exist, develop them.
- Provide staff development training on their role in supporting appropriate transitions.
- Develop strategies for informing and involving parents in the transition process.
- Inform families on their rights and procedures, including confidentiality.
- Create confidentiality guidelines that are shared with other programs.
- Encourage families to visit settings where the child is likely to attend.
- Develop and/or utilize materials that outline what parents should look for in quality programs.
- Gather information concerning other training opportunities on transition and encourage staff and parents to attend.
- Offer training workshops to staff to discuss strategies to effectively communicate with parents of diverse backgrounds.
- Develop written transition agreements with schools and other childcare settings that clarify roles, transition responsibilities, and timelines.
- Develop a mentor system in which experienced parents work with newly participating parents.
- Develop a packet of information about the child's progress that the family can take with them to the next program.
- Form special groups or provide other forms of support to parents as they continue to be their children's advocate in new settings.
- Become aware of and inform parents of local education and training on local program options and how to access them.
- Give special assistance to migrant and other culturally and linguistically diverse families in locating services to assure a smooth transition.
- Establish relationships with local early childhood programs. Learn about their programs and tell them about your program to facilitate any transitions that make take place between your programs.
- Identify a contact person for each of your community partnerships. That contact person can work with the child and families to ease the transition if a child transitions to their program.

Transitioning into Preschool

Going to preschool for the first time is a new experience for families with young children. In many families, preschool may be the first time their child will spend part of the day away from home. Often parents talk about feeling anxious when their child begins preschool. Questions like "Will my child be okay?" or "How will the teacher know what my child wants?" are typical. A parent who speaks very positively about his or her child's upcoming experience in a new program is more likely to have a child who is successful in separating from the parent than one whose parent expresses doubt and guilt at leaving the child.

Successful transitions engage parents and teachers in working together as a transition team, focusing on the child's strengths, identifying goals and challenges, sharing information between families and the sending and receiving programs, preparing the child for change, monitoring child and family experiences, and evaluating the transition process. The result of a successful transition is smooth placement of the child into a program.

As a transition to PFA/PFAE approaches, it is a good time for families to begin visiting the program. Many parents find it helpful to picture their child as part of the group and to learn about the structure of the day and what activities their child will be doing. If parents are not able to visit your program, find alternative ways to provide information on what the classroom looks like and how their child will spend the day. There are many ways to help families prepare for this new adventure into early childhood.

The following is an example of the transition process for a child transitioning from a birth-3 program to a PFA or PFAE program:

- The PFA/PFAE program must automatically accept all birth-to-3 program participants if the family has met the agreed upon initial at-risk criteria. This gives parents an incentive to participate in the birth-to-3 program. It also creates the opportunity for uninterrupted services.
- The PFA/PFAE program helps parents follow the procedures necessary to establish residency in their home school district (if required).
- The PFA/PFAE program informs parents about school district health requirements and support parents in getting updated physical examinations and immunizations for their children.
- The PFA/PFAE program, in collaboration with the birth-to-3 program, assures that parents have an opportunity to visit the PFA/PFAE program and ask questions.
- The PFA/PFAE program receives developmental monitoring information with parental consent and help parents complete required information forms.
- The PFA/PFAE program works together with parents to transfer relevant records to the program. Parents may play an active role by taking responsibility for delivering copies of records to the appropriate personnel in the PFA/PFAE program.
- The PFA/PFAE program assists with transition in ways identified appropriate by the birth-to-3 program or agreed upon by the birth-to-3 program and the PFA/PFAE program.
- The birth-to-3 program follow up with families in the prekindergarten program to see how the child has adjusted.

Transition plan tips for children entering PFA and PFAE programs:

- Encourage positive talk.
- Suggest families visit the program.
- Share pictures of preschool.
- Read stories about preschool.
- Help children feel comfortable in a group setting.
- Encourage parents to be their children's advocate by being actively involved in their education.
- Provide meaningful, two-way communication between program and home through newsletters, calendars, parent guides, parent handbook, texts, phone calls, etc.
- Allow child to attend a shorter day, if necessary.
- Make home visits.

Transitioning into Kindergarten

This section contains information related to PFAE Compliance Checklist item 35.

Transition begins with forming a network of social connections that are built around supporting children and families. These connections go further than just making a connection between the preschool teacher and the kindergarten teacher. The connections also include building a relationship between the child and the teacher, the child and his or her peers, and the parent and the teacher. These relationships are instrumental in the success of the child's transition to kindergarten.

The key to this transition process is giving children continuity in the learning environment and the curriculum strategies that teachers use within their classrooms. This continuity process builds a comfort zone for all participants. Developmental continuity describes how we design early childhood curriculum, how we provide learning experiences that build on the child's prior knowledge, and how these experiences flow in a natural progression across not only the preschool and kindergarten years but also how they build through the primary school years. Smooth transitions for children are ensured as they move from PFA/PFAE to kindergarten when the focus is on transition and continuity together, using a team approach with teachers, families and children.

It is important to understand that all programs are unique and there is no single "right way" to approach transition no matter which activities teachers and administrators choose to implement to assist in the transition process for children and families. Each community must tailor its transition processes and activities to meet the needs of the specific children and families it serves (Rous, Hemmeter, & Schuster, 1994; Logue & Love, 1992).

Individualized Transition Plans

Transitions are too important to be left to chance. Not all children experience the same transitions, so the program may find it needs to develop individualized transition plans for some children and their families. Adjustments to important transitions are accomplished more effectively when individuals have adequate and reliable information about what to expect and are provided with the appropriate emotional and social support. This is true for adults as well as for children. Life has many transitions or changes, such as attending school for the first time, going away to college, beginning a new job, getting married, giving birth, moving, or changing jobs. A great deal of stress can be associated with these changes. Appropriate planning and preparation during any transition can minimize the impact of stress. When the need to create an individualized transition plan is identified, the program staff should work in collaboration with each family to develop a written transition plan that ensures all interested parties have a clear understanding of what will happen to support a smooth, transparent transition.

Transition plans should contain the following:

- Reason for transition.
- Description of how the family feels about the transition.
- Ideal outcome of transition.
- Family strengths that will support transition.
- Child strengths that will support transition.
- Activities that will support a smooth transition.
- Community agencies that will need to participate or be informed.
- Questions regarding parents' rights or responsibilities.
- Projected community service providers being accessed, dates the plan will be reviewed, actual dates the form was reviewed, and signatures of the parents and staff.
- Refer to ISBE Behavior Support Plan and ISBE Program Transition Plan for transitions related to serious, ongoing challenging behavior. (See Social-Emotional Learning section on page 40 for more information.)

Collaboration between Prekindergarten and Kindergarten Teachers

Building the bridge between prekindergarten and kindergarten is essential to our youngest learners and their families. The following ideas provide a starting point for programs seeking to increase collaboration between prekindergarten and kindergarten.

- Invite kindergarten teachers to be involved in the plan for transition from prekindergarten to kindergarten.
- Discuss possible activities for kindergarten and prekindergarten classrooms to share.
- Plan Family Nights together with prekindergarten and kindergarten families.
- Classroom swap! Invite kindergarten teachers to spend one day each month in a prekindergarten classroom, while the prekindergarten teacher visits the kindergarten classroom on that day.
- Prekindergarten teachers meet with kindergarten teachers to discuss expectations for children going into kindergarten. Questions/topics to consider:
    - What do kindergarten teachers expect of incoming kindergarten children?
    - What do prekindergarten teachers think the child needs to know before leaving prekindergarten?
- Compare expectations and create an appropriate list of expectations agreeable to both prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers, ensuring it is aligned with the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards and the Illinois Early Learning Standards for Kindergarten.
    - Prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers should discuss philosophies for teaching and learning in early childhood.

Additional Resources

Illinois Early Learning Project resources to support the transition from PFA/PFAE to kindergarten.
Kindergarten Toolkit
Getting Ready for Kindergarten
Diverse Families and the Transition to Kindergarten
Prekindergarten to Kindergarten Transition Plan ISBE resource
Transitioning to Kindergarten National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) resource for families on the transition to kindergarten
Head Start Transition Resources
Illinois Kindergarten Transition Advisory Committee Report

Parent and Family Engagement

This section contains information related to PFA/PFAE Compliance Checklist item 16.

Preschool for All and Preschool for All Expansion grantees must provide for active and continuous participation of parents or guardians of the children in the program. Programs must provide and document opportunities for parent education and involvement as well as ongoing two-way communication with parents and guardians to comply with the PFA/PFAE grant. No fees will be charged for child supplies, materials, field trips, or registration. Research indicates that a successful parent and family education and engagement program offers multiple and varied approaches for developing a relationship with the family.

Parent and family engagement approaches may include:

- Cooperatively developing a mission statement based on shared beliefs.
- Creating an atmosphere in which teachers, administrators, and families are all valued participants in the child's education.
- Developing and implementing a written parent involvement plan.
- Providing workshops, field trips, and child/parent events.
- Inviting and encouraging family members to volunteer in the classroom.
- Providing parent education opportunities.
- Supporting involvement of parents and guardians in their children's lives.
- Scheduling regular home visits is a useful tool for developing family relationships.
- Providing a lending library for families with books and other resources.
- Providing lending library for children's books and toys.
- Creating a regular program newsletter.
- Using various means to reach families, including phone calls, emails, texts, apps, blogs, etc.

Engaging Parents and Families

Communication

Programs should plan for and facilitate ongoing, two-way communication between the program and home on at least a weekly basis, and daily if needed. There are many ways in which a program can fulfill the home and school communication requirement. Programs are encouraged to develop the system that works best for their families and their program.

Families vary widely and can include parents, guardians, stepparents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, and others living in the household. Families also come from a variety of cultural backgrounds and have a variety of values and traditions. Differences can be misinterpreted as indifference to children's education. There are numerous and varied ways to effectively engage family members in their child's preschool experience, from asking them to help out at the school to allowing them to take an active role in decision-making processes. It is critical that programs develop policies that are sensitive to, and reflective of, the communities, cultures, and languages of the families they serve. (*Adapted from the Maryland State Department of Education.)*

The following section has been adapted from the Michigan Department of Education Office of School Excellence Implementation Manual. These ideas can help you more deeply engage families in the educational process.

Parent/Family Education

- Enhance parenting skills, knowledge, and understanding of the educational and developmental needs and activities of their children by including adult parent group activities and parent-child interaction activities.
- Establish policies that support and respect family responsibilities, recognizing the variety of parenting traditions and practices within the community's cultural and religious diversity.

Child Learning

- Inform family members about child development, age-appropriate expectations, and the behaviors of young children.

- Provide information about how families can foster their child's learning and development through parent-child interaction, at-home activities, and parent education groups.
- Engage families in a dialogue related to their observations of their child's increasing skills and abilities.
- Sponsor workshops and distribute information to assist families in understanding how young children learn. Include information about the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards and performance-based assessments.
- Provide opportunities for staff members to learn and share effective strategies to engage families in their child's education.

Involvement

- Encourage family volunteers in the classroom and other areas of the program and/or from home.
- Survey families regarding their interests, talents, and availability, and then coordinate family resources with those that exist within the program and community.
- Encourage family members to observe children as often as possible and to participate with children in group activities.
- Educate and assist staff members in creating an inviting climate and effectively utilizing volunteer resources.

Decision-Making and Advocacy

This section contains information related to PFAE Compliance Checklist item 33.

- Include family members in the development and implementation of program activities.
- Assist family members in becoming their children's advocates as they transition into preschool from the home or other child care settings and from preschool to elementary school.
- Provide education and training to families so they can understand and exercise their rights and responsibilities concerning the education of their children.
- Assist family members in communicating with teachers and other program personnel so that they can participate in decisions related to their children's education.
- Encourage the formation of parent-teacher organizations, parent advisory committees, or other parent groups to identify and respond to issues of interest to family members.
- Provide parents with current information regarding policies, practices, and children's progress as documented through performance-based assessment data and program evaluation procedures and outcomes.

ISBE Family Engagement Framework:

ISBE believes meaningful family engagement is a cornerstone of effective schools. Meaningful family engagement is based on the belief that parents, educators, and community members all share responsibility for a child's education and well-being. Families should have a stake in all aspects of their child's education system and be encouraged to be key partners in every area of school improvement.

ISBE has compiled research, best practices, and trainings to give tools to districts, schools, child care programs, community stakeholders, and families to help build and expand school-family partnerships. At the center of ISBE's efforts is a set of principles and strategies, called the ISBE Family Engagement Framework. The framework recommends the following four research-based principles to encourage more systemic, sustained, and integrated engagement.

The principles are:

- Develop systems that support family engagement.
- Build welcoming and supportive environments.
- Enhance communication with parents.
- Include parents/guardians in decision-making.

The ISBE Family Engagement Framework is to be used in developing and expanding school-family partnerships to support child learning and healthy development.

Indicators of Parent and Family Engagement

The following indicators serve as a sample list of family involvement indicators. A family/school/community survey, based on these sample indicators, could be developed and then used annually to gather important information about the level of family involvement satisfaction in your program.

- Families are welcome in the school and their support and assistance are sought.
- Multiple opportunities are available for families to be involved with school.
- Families are partners in the decisions that affect children and families.
- Community resources are used to strengthen schools, families, and child learning.
- Communication between home and school is regular and two-way.
- Parenting skills are promoted and supported.
- Families play an integral role in assisting child learning.
- Barriers to family involvement such as transportation and language are reduced.
- Family workers, social workers, and community family involvement specialists work together to assist families in obtaining services within the school district and the community.

Family Engagement Records

PFA/PFAE programs are monitored periodically. As part of the monitoring process, assessors may ask to see documentation of parent/family involvement and engagement. Programs should develop a system for tracking the level of family involvement and engagement in their program. This information should also be used for programmatic improvement.

Additional Resources

Office of Head Start: National Center on Parent, Family and Community Engagement
School Community Network
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
The Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework
Illinois Early Learning Project: Resources for families, including tip sheets in multiple languages, that are aligned with the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards (IELDS).
National Association for the Education of Young Children: Resources for Family Engagement
Working with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Families

Community Collaboration

Preschool for All and Preschool for All Expansion programs need to meet the comprehensive and sometimes complex needs of all families. The process of raising and educating healthy and successful children requires a vision for communitywide commitment for programs, schools, and service agencies to address the needs of the whole child. PFA/PFAE programs should work toward building relationships with other community service providers and develop partnerships plans and formal agreements.

Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) are formal agreements that clarify and strengthen the mutual understanding of each entity's roles and responsibilities in services that meet the need of the whole child and family. PFA/PFAE grantees must have an MOU with the local Head Start agency.

Memorandum of Understanding

An MOU is a document that describes a formal agreement between two or more parties. It is not a legal agreement, but it does indicate the establishment of a relationship. An MOU is generally recognized as binding, even if no legal claim could be based on the rights and obligations laid down in it. It is also sometimes called a letter of intent. For the protection of all parties, programs should develop the written agreement before beginning services to children and families. The agreement can be supplemented with an annual partnership work plan. All agreements should be reviewed with legal counsel before signing.

MOUs with other programs can be the first step in the development of a comprehensive service delivery system. The service delivery involves cross-agency efforts that focus on meeting the needs of individual children and families. Today many families across all income levels are experiencing greater stress and child poverty is at record levels. An individual program or service provider cannot view itself as an isolated institution within the community, separate from other community entities that serve families. A PFA/PFAE program should make it a priority to work in collaboration with other service providers to develop a seamless referral and follow-up system.

Programs must take affirmative steps to establish ongoing collaborative partnerships that go beyond the development of referral networks. Therefore, programs are encouraged to secure a broad range of services by working together with community agencies. The following is a list of agencies to consider for partnerships:

Agencies offering English language learning:

- ✓ All Our Kids Networks
- ✓ American Heart Association
- ✓ Boys and Girls Clubs
- ✓ Child and Family Connections
- ✓ Childcare Connection
- ✓ Childcare Providers
- ✓ Community Businesses
- ✓ Community Colleges
- ✓ Crisis Nursery
- ✓ Domestic Violence Prevention Shelters
- ✓ Drug and Alcohol Treatment Programs
- ✓ Early Intervention
- ✓ Easter Seals
- ✓ Faith-Based Organizations
- ✓ Fire Department
- ✓ Food Banks
- ✓ GED Providers
- ✓ Head Start/Early Head Start
- ✓ Health Clinic
- ✓ Homeless Shelters
- ✓ Hospitals
- ✓ Illinois State Police and Car Seat Checks
- ✓ Law Enforcement
- ✓ Libraries
- ✓ Local Public Aid
- ✓ Local Public Health Department
- ✓ Mental Health Agencies
- ✓ Mutual Aid Societies
- ✓ Other Prevention Initiative Programs
- ✓ Places offering Professional Development for Staff
- ✓ Red Cross
- ✓ Refugee/Immigrant Serving Agencies
- ✓ Resource and Referral Educational Centers
- ✓ School Districts
- ✓ Special Education Services
- ✓ U of I Cooperative Extension
- ✓ Universities
- ✓ Women Infants Children
- ✓ YMCA/YWCA

Collaboration

"When multiple agencies, organizations, and families work together, the available resources become more substantial and provide greater benefits that the community as a whole can utilize and further build collective power to influence systems and create social change."

- Partner Plan Act

Comprehensive Plan for Collaboration

This section contains information related to PFA/PFAE Compliance Checklist item 14 and PFAE Compliance Checklist item 27.

Programs must provide a comprehensive plan that articulates how the collaborations with partners will benefit the children and families being serviced by the PFA/PFAE program. Plans should provide specific and targeted supports for children and family's needs as identified through the weighted eligibility form, screening, and intake processes and procedures.

Additional Resources

ABLe Change Process: Tools and resources for community systems change
Build Initiative
Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development
Partner Plan Act Illinois Action for Children
Checklist for Developing a Partnership Agreement/Contract
ISBE Agency/Community Partnership Agreement
ISBE Prevention Initiative Implementation Manual

Personnel

All Preschool for All and Preschool for All Expansion program administrators, child care directors, and staff paid by the block grant must hold appropriate licensure and/or qualifications for the position for which they are employed. Complete licensure requirements and answers to frequently asked questions may be found at the Illinois State Board of Education Educator Licensure webpage and Part 25 of IL Administrative Code-Administrative Rules for Educator Licensure. For information on alternative pathways, please see the Pathways to a Professional Educator License document.

Professional Staff

This section contains information related to PFA/PFAE Compliance Checklist item 15.

All teachers of children ages 3 to 5 years must hold a current, registered Professional Educator License endorsed in Early Childhood Education or a PEL with ECE endorsement and one of the following endorsements: provisional educator, alternative provisional educator, resident teacher, or visiting international educator.

Special Education

A PFA or PFAE/ECSE blended classroom teacher must hold a current, registered PEL with ECE endorsement AND ECSE approval.

English Learner Licensure

PFA and PFAE teachers must hold the proper license to teach preschool children. Preschool teachers must hold a PEL with an early childhood endorsement. As of July 1, 2016, preschool teachers who provide native language/English as Second Language instruction to English Learners must also hold the ESL or bilingual endorsement that corresponds with the teaching assignment. A teacher who provides bilingual instruction, which includes instruction in the home language and ESL, must hold the bilingual endorsement. A teacher with an ESL endorsement may provide ESL instruction to help EL children learn English. The teacher who provides the native language/ESL instruction may be the classroom teacher or another teacher who pushes into the classroom for part of the day. A pull-out model is not generally recommended but may be used in some circumstances. Teachers not providing these services are not required to hold the endorsements.

A teacher must hold (1) a PEL with endorsements in early childhood and bilingual education or (2) both a PEL with an ECE and an Educator License with Stipulations with a bilingual education endorsement to qualify as an instructor in order to provide bilingual instruction to preschool children.

A teacher must hold (1) a PEL with endorsements in ECE and either bilingual education or ESL or (2) both a PEL with an ECE endorsement and an Educator License with Stipulations with a bilingual education endorsement to qualify as an instructor in order to provide ESL instruction to preschool children.
In a classroom, the licensure requirements for either bilingual or ESL instruction may be met through a co-teaching or push-in model. A licensed early childhood teacher serves as the classroom teacher and a teacher with the bilingual and/or ESL endorsement co-teaches or pushes into the classroom, and both teachers work together to plan and deliver instruction for ELs.

TBE/TPI Program Director

The Transitional Bilingual Education/Transitional Program of Instruction program director who oversees the program in the district should meet the requirements for administrator qualifications included under Part 228.35(d). This individual may be someone other than the early childhood director in the district. As such, implementation of a successful preschool EL program will require ongoing communication and coordination between the TBE /TPI program director and the staff who oversee the early childhood program.

Noncertified Staff

Noncertified staff (paraprofessionals) employed to assist in the instruction of children ages 3 to 5 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).

Paraprofessionals must obtain the appropriate Educator Licensure with Stipulations. A Paraprofessional Educator Endorsement or an Educator License with Stipulations may be issued to an individual who:

- Is at least 19 years of age.
- Holds one of the following:
    - Associate degree or higher
    - 60 semester hours of coursework
    - High school diploma or General Education Diploma (GED) and a score of 460 or higher on the Educational Testing Service Parapro assessment
    - High school diploma or GED and the following scores on the ACT Workkeys:
        - Applied Mathematics/Applied Math (with a score of 4)
        - Reading for information/Workplace Documents (with a score of 4)

NOTE:

- Paraprofessional licenses are valid for five years and may be renewed with the payment of registration fees.
- If you hold a paraprofessional license and have a bachelor's degree on file, you are qualified to be a substitute teacher.
- Coursework must be at the 100-level or higher from a regionally accredited college or university.
- View Substitute and Paraprofessional License Checklist.

Noncertified Personnel

The family coordinator or family educator position in PFA/PFAE programs does not require a degree or licensure. The family coordinator/educator position may be filled for purposes of coordinating activities that enhance parent participation and two-way, meaningful communication with the school regarding the child's learning and other school activities. The family coordinator or family educator should support parents in playing an integral part in assisting their child's learning by getting actively involved in their child's education at school and helping them understand their role as a full partner in their child's education.

Administrators

Directors of Child Care Centers offering Preschool Programs

As of 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:

- 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 ECSE, 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]. (Wee https://www.ilgateways.com/credentials.)
- Or meet the requirements of subsection (c)(9)(E).

School Administrators

Directors of preschool programs funded under Section 2-3.71 of the School Code and this Part and administered by school districts have been required to hold a PEL 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, since July 1, 2017.

Sample Job Descriptions

Teacher

Purpose: To create a flexible PFA or PFAE program and developmentally appropriate class environment favorable to learning and personal growth of children; to facilitate children's development of communication abilities, attitudes, skills, and knowledge needed to provide a good foundation for future success in school, in accordance with each child's ability and based on the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards (IELDS); to build strong ties between home and school; and to establish good relationships with parents and with other staff members.

- Provide learning experiences in language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, physical education, fine arts, foreign language, social-emotional development, and other subject matter suited to the needs of children.
- Develop and use instructional materials suitable for verbal or visual instruction of children with a wide range of mental, physical, and emotional maturities.
- Develop in each child an awareness of his/her worth as an individual and his/her role in the family and community.
- Provide ongoing observation and authentic assessment of children and maintain documentation of each child's progress and growth.
- Provide individual and small-group instruction designed to meet individual needs of children in communication skills, health habits, physical skills, and development of satisfactory self-concepts. Work with other support personnel/agencies to promote this goal.
- Enrich educational program through study trips to community resources such as museums, parks, and through classroom visits by resource persons from the school and community. Share and interpret these experiences with children and parents.
- Plan and coordinate the work of aides, assistants, parents, and volunteers in the classroom and on field trips in order to obtain the maximum benefit from their efforts.
- Develop activities for parents that promote parent participation and involvement in education activities provided for their children.
- Communicate regularly with parents by means of parent meetings, newsletters, home visits, and individual parent conferences.
- Interpret school program to parents in order to strengthen parental understanding of the individual children's needs and the school's role in the child's life.
- Provide appropriate climate to establish and reinforce acceptable child behavior, attitudes, and social skills.
- Cooperate with other professional staff members in assessing and helping children solve health, attitude, and learning problems.
- Create an effective environment for learning through functional and attractive displays, interest centers, and exhibits of children's work.
- Maintain professional competence through in-service education activities provided by the district and through self-selected professional growth activities.
- Select and requisition books, instructional aids, instructional supplies, and food.
- Participate in curriculum and other developmental programs as appropriate.
- Perform other incidental tasks consistent with the goals and objectives of this position.

Sample Duties for Teachers

- Select a curriculum that is aligned with the IELDS.
- Develop and implement daily lesson plans that meet the developmental, social, emotional, physical, and intellectual needs of all children in the class.
- Set up and maintain an environment in the classroom that fosters learning, including switching or rotating materials in interest areas on a regular basis.
- In cooperation with other staff, carry out routine duties such as toileting, hand washing, cleanup, and supervision of children at all times, including outdoor play.
- Collect anecdotal notes and portfolio items to assess children's development using individual records.
- Communicate weekly with parents through a newsletter, app, phone, or other method.
- Host parent meetings throughout the year on various topics. These are in addition to parent conferences.
- Conduct parent teacher conferences twice a year.
- Compile a list of equipment and materials needed for the classroom and, with the approval of the center director, order the materials.
- Meet with the center director to help manage the grant.
- Meet with teaching assistant to go over lesson plans and share teaching strategies.

Teacher Assistant/Paraprofessional

Purpose: To assist the PFA/PFAE teacher in developing and implementing a developmentally appropriate program for young children.

- Assist with classroom learning activities.
- Supervise children inside and outside, including, but not limited to, bus duty, recess, field trips, classroom activities, and lunchroom.
- Maintain accurate records, as assigned by teacher.
- Assist with the assessment and evaluation of learning.
- Assist with the preparation of materials for use in the program.
- Assist and maintain an orderly learning environment.
- Assist with identification of and attention to children's health and hygiene.
- Assist in providing individual and small-group instruction in learning activities.
- Assist in communicating with parents.
- Maintain strict confidentiality of student records and data.
- Participate in professional development.
- Accompany teacher on home visits.
- Perform other incidental tasks consistent with the goals and objectives of this position.

Family Educator/Family Support Specialist

Purpose: To work with the teachers, administrators, and parents to coordinate and advocate for family involvement to facilitate children's learning.

- Assist the teacher in planning and implementing programs and services offered.
- Establish the PFA/PFAE program as a place that invites participation and partnership through the development of a wide variety of "welcome" activities for parent/families.
- Conduct a variety of programs for parents and children at flexible times of the day to accommodate parent needs.
- Facilitate parent education, playgroups, and family development programs.
- Maintain records for all meeting agendas, facilitators, presenters, and meeting attendance (e.g., parent sign- in sheets).
- Conduct home visits and provide support to parents and their children.
- Coordinate resources (e.g., transportation, child care, etc.) for the purpose of providing the parent an opportunity to become an active participant in school activities/organizations.
- Evaluate effectiveness of program activities periodically and keep current with trends and developments in the field.
- Recommend and arrange for new programs, as needed.
- Collaborate with local and state agencies.
- Maintain needed supplies and equipment for program activities.
- Perform other incidental tasks consistent with the goals and objectives of this position.

Additional Resources

Illinois Licensure Testing System (ILTS) -Teacher, School Service Personnel and Administrator Licensure Testing
Parent/Family Educator Sample Job Description
Instructional Leader (Curriculum Coach/Master Teacher) Sample Job Description

Professional Development

This section contains information related to PFA/ PFAE Compliance Checklist item 20 and PFAE Compliance Checklist item 29.

Professional development (PD) is defined as activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of educators so that they might, in turn, improve the learning of children. Programs are required to have a written PD plan for all staff members, including teachers, paraprofessionals, and parent coordinators, in order to support continuous quality improvement and professional growth. The following points are necessary to complete the plan:

- Determine the professional needs and interests of each staff member within the program. This information may be obtained through an annual staff survey, PFA/PFAE program monitoring reports, individual needs assessments, or a staff member's evaluation.
- Develop an annual written plan that addresses each staff member's professional needs and interests. PD opportunities may include, but are not limited to, trainings and webinars offered by ISBE-funded PD providers, district or agency in-service training, outside consultants, book studies, webinars, coaching, professional learning communities, classroom observations, or graduate courses
- Plans should be created collaboratively with staff member and administrator to reflect both professional interests and professional needs.

Professional Development Resources

The Illinois State Board of Education provides funding to various technical assistance projects throughout the state. These projects are designed to meet the professional development needs of staff working in Preschool for All and Preschool for All Expansion programs.

Early Childhood Professional Learning

Early Childhood Professional Learning (ECPL) webpage at The Center: Resources for Teaching and Learning works in collaboration with ISBE's Early Childhood Department to provide professional development opportunities and resources for administrators, teachers, instructional leaders, paraprofessionals, parent educators, and others working in PFA and PFAE programs. The professional development and resources support the implementation of the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards (IELDS) and a Multi-Tiered System of Supports. In addition to a calendar of workshops, webinars, and a professional lending library, the ECPL website offers resources and information on these topics: Administration and Leadership; Assessment; Curriculum; Diverse Learners; Family and Community Engagement; Language Arts/Literacy; Knowledge; Social-Emotional Development; and Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM). ECPL is an approved ISBE professional development provider and an authorized Gateways Registry provider.

ECPL collaborates with other agencies and organizations to provide additional professional learning opportunities. A statewide calendar of professional development offered by ECPL, Early Choices, and STAR NET is published on the ECPL website. ECPL has partnered with WIDA Early Years to offer online learning modules that focus on supporting young multilingual children. Through the Illinois Principal's Association, ECPL offers free online Administrator Academies on early childhood topics.

ECPL also supports The Center Library, which has more than 2,500 books and periodicals related to early childhood education.

Early Choices: An Inclusion Initiative of ISBE

The Early CHOICES inclusion initiative promotes increasing high-quality inclusive early care and education for every child, birth to age 5. The goal is to increase the number of children with disabilities receiving specialized services in regular early care and education settings.

Early CHOICES accomplishes this by:

- Providing technical assistance and facilitating professional learning for teams that support children and families.

- Engaging and empowering families to access resources and information.
- Collaborating with other Illinois early care and education entities.

Early CHOICES is operated through a grant awarded by ISBE in partnership with the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development to the School Association for Special Education in DuPage County, with 100 percent of annual funding for the project provided by federal sources. Early CHOICES is an initiative focusing on inclusive early care and education for birth to age 5, providing technical assistance and facilitating professional learning for the early childhood community in Illinois.

Illinois Early Learning Project

The Illinois Early Learning (IEL) Project is funded by ISBE and managed by staff in the Department of Special Education at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. IEL is one of several projects in the Early Childhood Collective, a group of projects aimed at empowering families; supporting inclusive communities; and promoting innovating research, policy, and practice.

The Illinois Early Learning Project website is a source of evidence-based, reliable information on early care and education for families, caregivers, and teachers of young children in Illinois. The website houses a variety of valuable resources, including the Illinois Early Learning Guidelines, the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards, tip sheets, videos, blogs, resource lists, Q&As, tool kits, and information about Project Approach. Most resources on the IEL website are available in English and Spanish, and many of the popular tip sheets are also available in Polish, Korean, Chinese, Arabic, and French. The IEL website is updated regularly; news about the project and new content is shared through monthly newsletters and on several social media platforms.

Illinois STAR NET

Illinois STAR NET provides a variety of opportunities for personal and professional growth for those working in early care and education settings with young children ages birth to 8, with an emphasis on children with special needs. STAR NET, operated through a federal grant awarded by ISBE, provides regional trainings and workshops, conferences, webinars and web-based trainings, technical assistance and consultation, linkages and networking, and funding opportunities and resources to the early childhood community in Illinois. Six different STAR NET regions make up the state. The Regions Map identifies the appropriate region for your program.

Additional Resources

Gateways to Opportunity: Illinois Professional Development System
Illinois Head Start Association
Illinois Network of Childcare Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA)
Illinois Principals Association
Start Early (formerly known as the Ounce of Prevention Fund)
Start Early Professional Resources
McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership
The Early Intervention Training Program

Budget and Reporting

This section provides guidance and information to assist administrators in developing and submitting an appropriate, cost-effective budget and in successfully administering the fiscal requirements of the grant. An overview of general fiscal and grant administration requirements is included, as well as sample budget worksheets and help/tip sheets for the electronic submission of applications, budget amendments, and expenditure reports.

ISBE Web Application Security System

Preschool for All and Preschool for All Expansion grant applications are created each fiscal year in the (ISBE) Web Application Security System (IWAS). The ISBE Help Desk may be contacted by calling (217) 558-3600. The ISBE document, State and Federal Grant Administration Policy, Fiscal Requirements and Procedures, outlines the information needed to oversee a PFA/PFAE grant

Project Timeline

Project Begin Date – The calendar date at which a grant recipient may begin to conduct grant activities and encumber obligations that will be charged to a state or federal grant. Obligation of funds cannot begin prior to the project begin date. If the continuing application has not been submitted by July 1, funds cannot be obligated until the application is submitted. The start date of the project cannot precede the beginning of the fiscal year for which the funds are appropriated. The project begin date is the date submitted to ISBE in a substantially approvable form or July 1, whichever is later.

Project End Date - The calendar date by which a grant recipient must end all activities and encumber obligations that are charged to the state or federal grant. A project end date change is necessary if a grant recipient is unable to obligate and/or complete all of the activities included in the approved budget on or before the original project end date (normally June 30). For more information, see section on Budget Considerations below. An end date extension is not necessary if all activities are completed and obligations are encumbered, with only liquidating outstanding obligations.

Joint Agreement/Cooperatives

Joint agreements are defined as a collection or consortium of at least two or more Local Education Agencies that performs a mandated service or function more equitably or efficiently.

Licensed Sites or Exempt Sites

This section contains information related to PFA/PFAE Compliance Checklist item 8.

PFA/PFAE classrooms that are located at sites that are exempt from DCFS licensure must complete the Exempt Sites page. Exempt sites include school districts, Regional Offices of Education (ROEs), and other exempt public entities. PFA/PFAE classrooms that are located at sites that are required to have DCFS licensure must complete the Licensed Sites page. On either page, the number of classrooms refers to physical classrooms, not sessions. All classrooms that have at least one PFA/PFAE child enrolled should be counted, regardless of funding stream (PFA/PFAE, tuition-based, Early Childhood Special Education, Head Start, etc.). Programs in child care centers must have a current and valid license from DCFS.

Budget Considerations

Budgeting is a project plan in which ideas, goals, and objectives are translated into expenses that are segregated by Function and Object per ISBE's Part 100 Requirements for Accounting, Budgeting, Financial Reporting and Auditing. The budget is of equal importance to the narrative and can be approached as an important final check in clarifying the practical application of the program. Careful deliberation should go into completing the budget section. No budget, when submitted, can be more than an "informed estimate" of the costs to be incurred, but careful budget planning will ensure that the financial support requested will be adequate to carry out the goals of the project. The approved budget connects the proposed expenditures to program activities and objectives.

Before developing a project budget, the writer must fully understand all the state and federal rules and regulations that govern the grant program. This includes allowable direct costs, indirect costs, assurances, project forms, and

instructions on what changes are permitted in a budget once the project is approved. The project writer should contact staff at the local level or at ISBE who understand the rules and regulations and can provide assistance on the appropriate information to include in the final document.

A complete copy of the approved application, a budget, and all approved amendments must be maintained by the grant recipient. These documents and other supporting information must be maintained for a minimum of three years and will be used by ISBE staff to determine fiscal and program compliance. (See Record Retention on page 72) Any changes and/or corrections must be properly documented (via electronic review checklist, email, notes on the budget breakdown, or budget summary) and changes noted at the grant recipient level.

NOTE: All activities and obligations that will be charged to the approved grant must occur within the project begin and end date.

Supplement vs. Supplant

Most federal- and state-funded programs specify that only supplemental costs may be charged. Those funds are intended to supplement (i.e., in addition to) and not supplant (i.e., replace) local funds. Local districts are required to maintain, in each eligible attendance area, a level of expenditure that is at least equal to the level of expenditure that would be maintained if federal/state funds were not being expended in that area.

No project or activity can be approved if it proposes to provide a service required by state law. For example, any project to singly provide special education for children with disabilities cannot be approved in the PFA/PFAE budget because special education is required by state law with special funds appropriated to pay for it. In like manner, basic kindergarten programs cannot be approved for the same reason.

In most cases, compensation for supervisory personnel (including superintendents of schools, directors of education, supervisors of instruction in regular curriculum areas, and principals) falls within the category of expenses that would be incurred if a school were not participating in a federal-/state-funded program. These expenses are not eligible for reimbursement unless additional administrative personnel are necessary and hired specifically for that purpose. Extreme care should be taken in determining the applicability of the charges to the federal/state program.

Payrolls must be supported by time and attendance or equivalent records for individual employees. Salaries and wages of employees chargeable to more than one grant program or other cost objective will be supported by appropriate time distribution records.

Supplement, Not Supplant Tests

To determine whether an expenditure supplements and not supplants, grant recipients must run these three tests. **Expenditures must pass all three tests to truly be supplemental.**

- **Test I: Required** – Is the program or activity that the district wants to fund required under state, local, or another federal law? If it is, then it is supplanting.
- **Test II: Equivalency** – Were state or local funds used in the past to pay for this program or activity? If they were, it is supplanting.
- **Test III: Non-Title I Programs** – Are the same programs or activities being implemented in other schools that do not receive federal funds (e.g., Title I) AND are these programs and activities being paid for with state or local funds? If yes, then this is supplanting.

Budget Detail Page

The Budget Detail page is to be used to indicate itemization and descriptions of budget expenses, listed and identified within the proper Function Code/Object Codes. This page indicates the allotment of funds for the PFA/PFAE program for the current fiscal year. Programs should plan a budget that uses the full allotment, leaving a $0 allotment remaining indicated.

NOTE: If a SAVE button is not visible at the bottom of this page, select "Page Lock Control" at the top of the screen to be sure all sections are unlocked, which allows changes to be made on the other tabs. Failure to save each page as it is completed will result in data loss.

- Function Codes/Object Codes
    - PFA/PFAE programs have limited Function and Object Codes when compared to other ISBE state and federal programs. When entering budget line items, Function and Object Codes are the first two columns to be completed. The Instruction box in the top right corner of the page will identify additional specific instructions for the entire page.
- Expenditure Description and Itemization
- This textbox is intended to indicate itemization and descriptions of budget expenses. An appropriate level of detailed information should be entered for each Function/Object Code selected. Examples of appropriate levels of detail are located in Instructions and Examples for Completing the Budget Detail Page. Providing an adequate description will facilitate the approval process. Inadequate detail will result in the application being returned for additional information.
- Early Childhood Block Grant Funds
    - Indicate the total amount requested for each Function/Object Code. The total amount in this cell must match the itemization included in the Expenditure Description cell. Expenditure amounts should be in whole dollar amounts only.
- Delete Row
- If a line of detail needs to be removed, select this checkbox, then click the "Save Page" button.
- Create Additional Entries
- If additional lines of budget detail are needed, click the "Create Additional Entries" button located at the bottom of the page. Each time this button is clicked it will add five additional rows of budget detail cells.
- Calculate Totals
- When the Budget Detail page is complete, click the "Calculate Totals" button at the bottom of the page. (Important: Clicking on "Calculate Totals" does not save the information.)
- Save data
- Please verify all data entered is correct and all allocated funds are appropriately budgeted. Save must be clicked before leaving the Budget Detail page.

NOTE: It is allowable to have multiple Function/Object rows. Example: Function 1000/Object 100: Staff for Lincoln School; Function 1000/Object 100: Staff for Washington School, etc.

Detailed Function Descriptors and Subcategories

From Title 23 Illinois Administrative Code-Part 100:

Function: The action or purpose for which a person or thing is used or exists. This includes activities or actions that are performed to accomplish the objectives of the project.

Instruction (Function 1000): The teaching of pupils or the interaction between teacher and pupils. Included are activities of aides or assistants who assist in the instructional process. Teaching may occur in classrooms or other learning situations, such as those involving co-curricular activities, and may be conducted through a medium such as television, radio, telephone, or correspondence.

Improvement of Instruction Services (Function 2210): Activities for assisting instructional staff in planning, developing, and evaluating the instructional process.

Health Services (Function 2130 - for use in PFAE only): Physical and mental health services that do not constitute direct instruction. Included are activities that provide pupils with appropriate medical, dental, and nursing services.

General Administrative Expenses (Function 2300): Activities concerned with establishing and administering policy in connection with operating the LEA.

Operation and Maintenance of Plant Services (Function 2540): Activities concerned with keeping the physical plant (e.g., grounds, buildings, and equipment) in an effective and safe working condition. This includes activities of maintaining safety in the building, on the grounds, and in the vicinity of the schools.

Pupil Transportation Services (Function 2550): Activities concerned with conveying pupils to and from school as provided by Article 29 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/Art. 29]. It includes trips between home and school and trips to school activities.

Food Service (Function 2560): Activities concerned with providing food to pupils and staff in a school or LEA. This service area includes the preparation and serving of regular and incidental meals, lunches, or snacks in connection with school activities and the delivery of food.

Daily Snack/Meal Reimbursement

PFA part-day programs are required to provide a snack. PFA full-day programs are required to provide, minimally, a meal, with the addition of a snack as best practice. PFAE programs are required to provide breakfast, lunch, and a snack. PFA/PFAE funds may be used for these meals, but programs are encouraged to apply for reimbursement under the School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program (NSLP), Special Milk Program (SMP), and/or the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). School districts are eligible to participate in the NSLP, SMP and the CACFP. Child care centers are eligible to participate in CACFP and SMP. For more information about these programs, visit the School Nutrition Programs website.

NOTE: An LEA that is approved for any of the child nutrition programs cannot also be claimed on the grant. That would be double-dipping and is not allowable.

Community Services (Function 3000): Services provided by the LEA for the community as a whole or some segment of the community, such as community recreation programs, civic organization activities, public libraries, programs of custody and child care, welfare services, services to nonpublic schools, and home/school services.

Payments to Other Districts and Governmental Units (Function 4000): Payments to other public LEAs, in-state and out-of-state public entities (e.g., payments to public universities/colleges, public community colleges, Regional Offices of Education, Intermediate Service Centers, and special education cooperatives/Education for Employment Centers).

Detailed Function Descriptors and Subcategories:

From Title 23 Illinois Administrative Code-Part 100:

Object: Service or commodity obtained as a result of a specific purpose.

Salaries (Object 100): Amounts paid to permanent, temporary, or substitute employees on the LEA's payroll. This includes gross salary for personal services rendered while on the payroll of the LEA. When budgeting for salaries, plan to budget for the proportionate amount of benefits. If a staff member is shared with another program/grant, the proportionate share of salaries and benefits should be charged to each grant/fund source. The program should also maintain Time & Effort Logs to support the allocation charged to each grant. Specific documentation must be maintained at the program level for auditing purposes.

Benefits (Object 200): Amounts paid by the LEA on behalf of employees; these amounts are not included in the gross salary, but are over and above it. Payments such as fringe benefits, while not paid directly to the employees, nevertheless are a part of the cost (to the applicable functional areas). These types of costs are not considered a cost to the board of education function and should not all be charged to one area. These costs apply to the same function number as the cost of the applicable salary. Professional teaching staff who hold a registered Professional Educator License and who work in a PFA/PFAE program whose fiscal agent is a school district or ROE program may participate in the Teacher Retirement System (TRS). For state grants, TRS is paid by a special appropriation and only the "over-and-above" costs for TRS can be included on a state grant budget. TRS may exclude positions such as parent coordinators, parent educators, teacher assistant(s), or paraprofessional(s), including any who may hold teaching degrees and educator licensure. TRS program rules and regulations guide the use of TRS on PFA/PFAE budgets. For more specific information, please contact TRS. The Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund may be available to those not covered by TRS.

Purchased Services (Object 300): Amounts paid for personal services rendered by personnel who are not on the LEA's payroll and other services the LEA may purchase. A product may or may not result from the transaction; the primary reason for the purchase is the service provided to obtain the desired results.

- Professional and technical services
- Audit/financial services
- Legal services
- Professional services --administrative
- Professional services -- instructional
- Professional employee training and development services
- Transportation service
- Travel (e.g., transportation, meals, hotel, and other expenses associated with traveling or business for the LEA)
- Employer insurance (e.g., workers' compensation; unemployment compensation; liability insurance) to protect the employer
- Communication
- Water/sewer services
- Printing/binding services
- Software (e.g., license fee) -- online services
- Property services (e.g., services to operate, repair, maintain, and rent property owned or used by the LEA)

Supplies and Materials (Object 400): Amounts paid for material items of an expendable nature that are consumed, worn out, or deteriorated in use or items that lose their identity through fabrication or incorporation into different or more complex units or substances.

- Consumable supplies
- Textbooks
- Library books
- Periodicals (printed or electronic)
- Software package
- Equipment costing less than $500 per unit or capitalization threshold
- Energy (e.g., bottled gas, oil, coal, gasoline, natural gas, electricity)

Capital Outlay (Object 500): Expenditures for the acquisition of fixed assets or additions to fixed assets. These are expenditures for land or existing buildings; improvements of grounds; construction of buildings; additions to buildings; remodeling of buildings; initial equipment; additional equipment; and replacement of equipment (e.g., any instrument, machine, apparatus, or set of articles that equals or exceeds the LEA's capitalization threshold).

Equipment is one of the items identified as a "capital asset" under ISBE's Part 100 Requirements for Accounting, Budgeting, Financial Reporting and Auditing to describe an instrument, machine, apparatus, or set of articles that meets all of the following criteria:

- Under normal conditions of use, including reasonable care and maintenance, it can be expected to serve its principal purpose for longer than 12 months.
- Does not lose its identity through fabrication or incorporation into a different or more complex unit or substance.
- Is nonexpendable; that is, if the item is damaged or some of its parts are lost or worn out, it is more feasible to repair the item than to replace it with an entirely new unit.
- Retains its appearance and character through use.
- Has a cost equal to or more than the capitalization threshold adopted by the school board. Capitalization threshold means a dollar figure above which the cost of an item will be depreciated.

All equipment must be inventoried and clearly labeled "Purchased with PFA/PFAE Funds, Year." In an audit review, an external auditor may ask to see the PFA/PFAE inventory, accompanying receipts, and the items on the inventory to ensure proper labeling has occurred.

The Inventory Register of items purchased with PFA/PFAE funds must include:

- Description
- Serial number or other identification number
- Funding source for purchased property
- Who holds title
- Acquisition date and cost
- Location, use, and condition of property
- Disposition date

In addition to the information above, more definitions, including Acquisition Cost, Current Fair Market Value, Purchase, Inventory, Management and Disposition of Equipment, and the right of ISBE to transfer equipment if grant activities cease to exist, may be found in Section B - Equipment of the State and Federal Grant Administration Policy, Fiscal Requirements, and Procedures. **Other Objects (Object 600):** Amounts paid for goods and services not otherwise classified in the 300, 400, or 500 series of accounts. Describe and itemize.

- Dues and fees (e.g., membership in professional or other organizations or associations)
- Transfers (e.g., disbursements of flow-through funds)

Non-Capitalized Equipment (Object 700): Items that would be classified as capital assets except that they cost less than the capitalization threshold adopted by the school board, but more than the $500 minimum value established for purposes of calculating per capita costs pursuant to Section 18-3 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/18-3]. If this object is used, please include the board-approved threshold date.

Examples of Unallowable Expenditures

- Gift cards
- Promotional items of any kind
- Graduation/promotion-related expenses
- Itinerant services provided by special education staff (should be covered by special education funds)
- Compensation for principal, assistant principal, superintendent, directors of childcare centers, etc. (Exception: PRE-K ONLY Early Childhood Center)
- Vehicle purchase
- Building purchase or any other permanent structure (Rent may be allowable if there is a need for space that is NOT already owned by district/fiscal agent.)
- Tuition reimbursement

Playground equipment may be an allowable expenditure. Consult with your program consultant for more information and guidelines. Programs are cautioned to consult with the Consumer Product Safety Commission Public Playground Safety Handbook and the guidance in the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS-3) document, Playground Information to Use with the Environment Rating Scales, before making purchase decisions.

Payment Schedule

Payments should be requested to meet actual cash needs of the project in accordance with applicable regulations for each program. All payment requests should be based on the projected date of expenditures.

When completing the Payment Schedule on a state application or amendment, indicate the amount needed in each month of the program, beginning with the first full month of the project and ending with the last full month of the project. Payments cannot be requested before the project begins or after the project ends.

NOTE: Salaries and fringe benefits are normally expended in equal intervals and should be projected in this manner.

When teachers are paid on a 12-month salary basis and the project period is for nine months, the three months' salaries and related fringe benefits paid after the project ends (and AFTER the service has been rendered/activity has occurred) should be included in the last project payment. Equipment, supplies, contracted services, and in-service activities should have the payment requested in the month for which the expenditure is anticipated.

When a revision of the original payment schedule is necessary, it may be included on an amendment. (See Amendments on page 71.) Formal notification with any payment revisions to the remaining payments will be acceptable 30 days prior to the project ending date. Any increase must be reflected in another month as a decrease. Payment schedules should be equal to the project budget.

Additional information regarding ISBE vouchering of payments may be found in ISBE's Financial Reimbursement Information System (FRIS). The FRIS Inquiry Quick Help Guide is available to help programs navigate.

NOTE: The ISBE "Voucher Date" is not the same date on which the Illinois Comptroller processes payments. The date disbursements are released from the Comptroller's Office and can be found on FRIS Inquiry. Please see the Illinois Comptroller Vendor Inquiry page for additional payment information specific to your program.

Expenditure Reports

Expenditure reports are utilized by ISBE primarily as a program accountability and cash management tool. Expenditures must always be reported on a cumulative (i.e., year-to-date) basis from the project begin date through a specific period.

Public Act 96-0795, effective July 1, 2010, requires that state grant recipients with awards in excess of $25,000 must submit quarterly expenditure reports to reflect the progress of the grant program. All grant recipients, regardless of the amount awarded, will be required to submit quarterly reports. Expenditure reports can be submitted more often than quarterly.

Grant recipients with approved access to IWAS must submit expenditure reports electronically via the Electronic Expenditure Reporting System. Notification of required expenditure reports is sent via a courtesy reminder email from the ISBE Department of Funding and Disbursements.

All state or federal grants are required to submit additional expenditure information if ALL of the following conditions are met:

- The project end date is AFTER June 30.
- The expenditure thru date is AFTER June 30.
- The expenditures are greater than the June 30 reported expenditures.

Grant recipients must report the split of expenses for obligations/activities June 30 and prior compared to July 1 and after.

Any amount reported in an expenditure account (cell) not budgeted or not within the acceptable expenditure variance will not be accepted. Failure to submit an acceptable report will result in the delay of current payments. Expenditures and obligations in excess of the total project budget will not be allowed.

Expenditure reports are due 20 calendar days after the expenditure through date. Reports not received by the due date will result in project funds being frozen until an acceptable report is submitted.

More information about expenditure reports can be found at:

- Electronic Expenditure Report Quick Help guide
- Electronic Expenditure Reports Help Screen
- Electronic Expenditure Reporting Power Point

Excess Cash on Hand

Excess cash on hand is determined by comparing the amount disbursed by ISBE to date, not necessarily received, indicated on the grant recipient's expenditure report minus the total amount expended and obligated on a cumulative basis for the reporting period. A positive balance indicates excess cash on hand. This amount will be withheld from the next scheduled payment(s). The amount of excess cash is placed in reserve and will be released when a subsequent cumulative expenditure report is submitted with a zero or negative cash fund balance.

The payment schedule should be submitted based on the actual cash needs of the district. Lump sum, semiannual, or quarterly payments are not appropriate unless a unique expenditure obligation warrants such disbursement. Excess cash on hand should not occur if the payment schedule has been prepared in a reasonable manner.

Final Expenditure Reports

A final expenditure report is defined as:

- The project end date equals the cumulative expenditure through date.
- There are no outstanding obligations reported.

If a completion report is submitted with outstanding obligations, then a final expenditure report that reflects total project expenditures (with all prior obligations liquidated) must be submitted no later than 90 calendar days after the project end date. Failure to submit this final expenditure report in a timely manner will result in project funding being withheld for the current and subsequent year until the report is received.

A revision of a final expenditure report will not be accepted unless extenuating circumstances warrant a revision. A request to revise a final expenditure report must be submitted in writing or via email to the ISBE Department of Funding and Disbursements staff for approval.

Carryover/Return of Funds

Carryover of funds is not allowed for state-funded programs. If a PFA/PFAE program cannot expend all program funds, contact the ISBE Early Childhood Department as soon as possible. The department will assist the program in filing a "downward" amendment for the amount of funds that will not be expended.

PFA/PFAE funds that have not been expended for the project year must be returned to ISBE. Unexpended funds "lapse" and will be returned/credited to the state General Revenue Fund. The Department of Funding and Disbursements will request funds to be returned when the amount to be returned on a grant is more than $50, unless specific grant provisions require otherwise. The Department of Funding and Disbursements will follow procedures as prescribed in the Illinois Grant Funds Recovery Act [30 ILCS 705].

Amendments

All amendments must be submitted in IWAS and are due to ISBE 30 days prior to the project end date. Specifically, if the project end date is June 30, the amendment is due by May 31. A project with an end date of August 31 has an amendment due of no later than August 1. Amendments must be received prior to the obligation of funds based on the amendment.

Amendments are required when:

- The scope of the project is expected to change (e.g., the program changes from a traditional program to a blended program or a half-day program is extended to become a full-day program).
- The expected expenditures exceed the budget cell by 10 percent or $1,000, whichever is greater.
- A new expenditure needs to occur and it has not already been budgeted (opening a previously unbudgeted cell).
- Closing a previously budgeted cell.
- Additional funds have been allotted or returned on either a one-time or continuing basis.

There are some situations in which an amendment is not required.:

- An end date extension past June 30 is NOT needed for regular term staff salaries paid on a 12-month salary schedule.
- An end date extension past June 30 is NOT needed to pay obligations (e.g., purchase order for supplies) incurred June 30 or prior.
- An end date extension past June 30 IS NEEDED for new activities and obligations incurred July 1 or later (e.g., summer school, professional development)

Each budget amendment/payment schedule replaces the one prior and must include all budget cells (even the ones that are not changing) and a new payment schedule (even if it is not changing) on the Budget Summary and Payment Schedule.

Outstanding Obligations

An outstanding obligation is any liability for which funds are committed prior to the end of the reporting period and is expected to be paid within 90 days. See State and Federal Grant Administration Policy, Fiscal Requirements, and Procedures for further guidance.

Grant Accountability and Transparency Act

The purpose of the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) is to increase accountability and transparency in the use of grant funds while reducing the administrative burden on both state agencies and grantees. The law provides for the development of a coordinated, non-redundant process to establish effective and efficient oversight of the selection and monitoring of grant recipients, ensuring quality programs; limiting fraud, waste, and abuse; and defining the purpose, scope, applicability, and responsibilities in the life cycle of a grant.

Please visit ISBE's GATA page for more information on GATA registration and reporting requirements for the current fiscal year. All grantees must complete the registration process and be qualified annually to do business with the State of Illinois.

Record Retention

The grant recipient shall retain records for three years from the final date of filing a claim. ISBE can re-compute within three years from the final date of filing a claim for reimbursement to any school district if the claim has been found to be incorrect and can adjust subsequent claims accordingly, as well as to re-compute and adjust any such claims within six years from the final date for filing when there has been an adverse court or administrative agency decision on the merits affecting the tax revenues of the school district. However, no such adjustment shall be made regarding equalized assessed valuation unless the district's equalized assessed valuation is changed by greater than $250,000 or 2 percent [105 ILCS 5/2-3.33].

All purchase orders, time-and-effort sheets, and other supporting documentation must be retained at the local level and must be available for review or audit any time within the three years after termination of the project or until the local entity is notified in writing from ISBE that the records are no longer needed for the review or audit.

Records may be disposed of:

- After their individual retention period is complete.
- If any local, state, and federal audit requirements have been met.
- If they are not needed for any litigation either pending or anticipated.
- If they are correctly listed on a Records Disposal Certificate submitted to and approved by the appropriate Local Records Commission.

The responsibility for retention and destruction of records is shared between the ISBE and the Local Records Commission. Prior to the destruction of any records following the three-year period, a fund recipient must contact the Local Records Commission, Illinois State Archives, Margaret Cross Norton Building, Illinois Secretary of State, Springfield, IL 62756 or at (217) 782-7075.

Financial Monitoring

The ISBE Department of Federal and State Monitoring periodically reviews PFA/PFAE programs. Funds used to provide for salaries, supplies, professional development, and costs associated with the program will be monitored. Inappropriate expenditures could result in monitor findings and may require that funds be returned to ISBE. Additionally, programs with monitoring findings are required to complete a resolution process to ensure findings are addressed. More information can be found in the required audit section of the State and Federal Grant Administration Policy, Fiscal Requirements and Procedures.

Student Information System: Early Childhood Data

All PFA/PFAE programs are required to enroll their children in the ISBE Student Information System (SIS). Child data must be entered at pre-determined periods throughout the school year based upon an ISBE reporting timeline. Early childhood data to be entered includes homeless status, English Language Learning, Early Childhood Outcomes System (ECOS), enrollment data, and other demographic information.

SIS is designed to assign a unique Student Identifier (SID) to each child, collect demographics, collect performance and program participation data for each child, track children from school to school and district to district within Illinois, and report timely and accurate information and data through standardized reporting capabilities. This system serves as the vehicle to collect child-related information electronically from school districts. The result of successful implementation is the ability to provide ISBE, state and federal entities, the education community, and the public with timely and accurate data collection and reporting for children, schools, school districts, and the state.

The SIS application allows authorized users at school, district, and ROE sites to access the system via IWAS. This application facilitates the assignment of an individual SID through secure online web forms or mass assignment of SIDs through batch processing. The statewide SID web application is designed from the user's perspective to include all the function necessary to perform the user's role effectively and efficiently.

For more information about SIS or to view a SIS training calendar, visit the ISBE Student Information System webpage.

Data Elements

Student Demographics
Race and Ethnicity Codes for SY 2011 and After
Lineage Suffix Codes
Student Enrollment
Entry-Grade Level Codes
Enrollment Type Codes
Program Indicators
Notice for Reporting Socioeconomic Status in the Student Information System
Language Codes
Language Codes by Alpha Early Learning
Behavior Support and Transition Plan Instruction Manual
Behavior Support Plan
Program Transition Plan
Early Childhood and Programs
Early Childhood Programs Matrix Rules-Comprehensive Version
Early Childhood Programs Matrix Rules-Short Version
Student Data for ECOS
Special Education ECOS Decision Tree
Special Education ECOS Forms and Instructions

Behavior Support and Transition Plans

Effective January 10, 2020, Subpart D was added to the Administrative Code at 44 Ill. Reg. 1942, which applies to exclusionary discipline in early childhood programs that receive Early Childhood Block Grant funding (Section 2-3.7(a)(7) of the School Code). This exclusionary discipline amendment is composed of a Behavior Support Plan, a Program Transition Plan, and annual reporting requirements based on these plans.

The Behavior Support Plan (Section 235.320) is defined in the amendment as "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 Program Transition Plan" (Section 235.310 Definitions). It is expected that all early childhood programs have written intervention policies that are shared with parents/guardians at the time of entry/enrollment into the program.

The Program Transition Plan (Section 235.330) is defined in the amendment as "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" (Section 235.310 Definitions). It is expected that all early childhood programs have transition policies that are shared with parents/guardians at the time of entry/enrollment into the program.

Section 235.340 specifies that, no later than July 1 annually, early childhood programs must collect and report to the State Board of Education the data from the Behavior Support Plan and Program Transition Plan for children from birth to age 5 who are served by the program.

Student Health Data

Immunization/health examinations are required of all children PreK-12 as per compliance with PA 097-0910 (105 ILCS 5/27-8.1)(from Ch. 122, par. 27-8.1). PFA and PFAE programs must complete the online survey providing immunization and physical examination data as of October 15 or an earlier exclusion date established by your district/school and submit the completed survey to ISBE by November 5 of each calendar year. All student counts for polio, DTP/DTaP/Td, Tdap, measles, rubella, mumps, hepatitis B, Hib, varicella (chickenpox), pneumococcal, and meningococcal are to be reported for the specific grade levels required by law to be immunized. For assistance entering data, please contact the Data Strategies and Analytics Department at datahelp@isbe.net. For technical assistance with IWAS, please contact the ISBE Help Desk at (217) 558-3600. Questions regarding school health issues and Student Health Immunization/Health Examination policy should contact the Wellness Department at (217) 782-5270.

Employment Information System

The Employment Information System (EIS) collects data annually for all licensed staff in the public school system; state-funded charter schools, City of Chicago charter schools, contract and options schools, Regional Offices of Education, special education cooperatives, limited nonpublic school districts, miscellaneous payees, and other state-funded and vocational districts and schools. EIS currently collects 67 different licensed positions and one unlicensed position to accommodate Ed360 users. EIS collects -- at a minimum -- employment, position, grade level assignments, school working location, and salary data for each licensed position. Additional information can be found at the ISBE EIS webpage.

For assistance entering data, contact the ISBE Data Strategies and Analytics Department at datahelp@isbe.net.

For technical assistance with IWAS, contact the ISBE Help Desk at (217) 558-3600.

Program Accountability

Programs are required to implement with fidelity all components of the Preschool for All /Preschool for All Expansion Request for Proposals and the continuation e-grant. They must also follow the Illinois Administrative Code and align programming to Birth to Five Program Standards as agreed to by signing the PFA/PFAE Grant Assurances.

Assessors will make regular monitoring visits to observe and evaluate PFA/PFAE programs to ensure that they are complying with grant requirements and meeting quality standards. Monitoring visits are typically conducted every two to four years. Programs will be contacted in advance of the visit to identify a monitoring window during which the visit will take place and to provide the program with needed information. Both the administrative and classroom components of the program will be monitored. The visit consists of two parts, which include:

- Classroom observations using the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale 3 (ECERS-3). Typically, it takes an entire class period to complete the classroom observation
- Program compliance assessment using the ISBE Early Childhood Block Grant 3-5 Compliance Checklist.

Tips for Compliance Monitoring

Programs are encouraged to review ISBE's Tips for Compliance Monitoring and attend training on the monitoring tool provided by Early Childhood Professional Learning (ECPL) at the Center: Resources for Teaching and Learning or STAR NET prior to the monitoring visit.

Initial Continuous Quality Improvement Plan

This section contains information related to PFA/PFAE Compliance Checklist item 19.

Programs will receive follow-up reports, indicating findings based on ECERS-3 and the Compliance Checklist. Instructions will also be included to assist in developing a two-part Continuous Quality Improvement Plan (CQIP), which should be developed collaboratively by program staff, administrators, and families. The Compliance Checklist CQIP should indicate a plan to address all compliance items by the following school year. The ECERS CQIP will address five focus areas of the ECERS-3 identified as needing improvement for each year following the monitoring visit. Programs will have 30 days from receipt of the reports to complete both the ECERS-3 and Compliance Checklist CQIPs and return them to ISBE. A CQIP Instructional Webinar, CQIP Training and Technical Assistance Resources, and an example of an ECERS-3 CQIP can be found on the ISBE Early Childhood Department website under Accountability: Monitoring and Continuous Quality Improvement.

Both CQIP documents must be electronically signed by the program-authorized official (as indicated in the current year's approved PFA/PFAE grant) and submitted to ecpip@isbe.net. After receipt, ISBE will review and communicate changes that may be necessary in order for the CQIPs to be approved.

Reviewing CQIP Yearly

In years where a program does not receive a monitoring visit, the Compliance Checklist CQIP and ECERS-3 CQIP documents must be updated, signed electronically by the program-authorized official, and submitted to ecpip@isbe.net by May 31. The CQIP update should include follow-up to the Compliance CQIP. The ECERS-3 CQIP should be updated with follow-up comments that indicate the progress made during the program year. Programs should choose five new focus areas for their ECERS-3 CQIP in Years 2 and 3 following the monitoring visit. Please view the CQIP Instructional Webinar for detailed instructions.

Coaching

Based on monitoring results, programs may be offered the opportunity to receive instructional coaching support from the PFA Coaching Project. The project is funded by a grant from ISBE to Early Childhood Professional Learning (ECPL) webpage at the Center: Resources for Teaching and Learning. Coaching services are provided at no cost to the program. Programs will receive on-site visits, resources, and coaching in order to enhance teacher instructional practices that promote continuous quality improvement. PFA coaches are experts in the field of early childhood education and have extensive experience with PFA. Programs that have participated in the PFA Coaching Project show strong improvement in follow-up monitoring scores.

Program Self-Evaluation

In addition to monitoring from ISBE, each program must have a written, annual self-evaluation to determine if progress is being made toward achieving all required components of the grant. Information gathered through this self-evaluation should be the basis for the program's continuous quality improvement. This annual self-evaluation process should inform individualized staff development plans and be used to revise the program's CQIP.

Methods of program self-evaluation may include some or all of the following:

- Parent survey of the program's services.
- Staff survey of the program.
- Review of the children's progress using their developmental assessments and portfolios.
- Self-review of the program and classroom(s) using the Compliance Checklist and/or a program quality tool, such as the ECERS-3 or the Classroom Assessment Scoring System.
- Review of the program's current CQIP.

Information that may be collected includes, but is not limited to:

- Where are we?
- An understanding about the program and its current conditions through an analysis of current program and population served data.
- What has been accomplished within current program goals?
- What resources supported these accomplishments?
- What accomplishment goals have yet to be reached?
- Where do we want to be?

- Establish or update program goals and measurable objectives, specifically identifying children and families to be served, the program's demographics, and desired outcomes for serviced populations.
- What has not yet been accomplished?
- What new goals need set?
- How do we get to where we want to be?
- Identify what is needed to help meet the goals.
- What resources are needed (e.g., staffing, funding, equipment, stakeholders' support, school/district/state support, community support)?
- What services should be delivered?
- What is the quality of instruction and curriculum?
- What is the timeline for completing steps toward goals?
- How do we know if we are getting there?
- An analysis of accomplished activities given timelines, with movement toward accomplishing goals and objectives.
- What is the status of the goals compared to initiation of working towards goals?

After the self-assessment data is gathered, the program should summarize its findings in a written document and set new goals and objectives for the next program year. The new or revised goals and objectives could be added to the current CQIP or a new CQIP could be written. After the new or revised CQIP is in place, programs should determine who will review the goals and objectives to monitor progress.

ExceleRate Information

ExceleRate Illinois is the state's quality recognition and improvement system for early learning and development programs that serve children from birth to 5. ExceleRate unifies the state's early learning programs under a common set of standards across multiple settings to provide families with important information about quality early learning programs in their community. ExceleRate is a comprehensive system that includes licensed child care centers, PFA and PFAE programs, Head Start/Early Head Start Programs, and licensed family/group child care homes.

PFA/PFAE sites located in a school-based setting are awarded an ExceleRate Circle of Quality based on the Compliance and ECERS-3 scores obtained during regular monitoring visits.

Any PFA programs located in a licensed center that also includes classrooms not funded by PFA will be rated with the rest of the center through the ExceleRate Licensed Child Care path. These PFA programs will not receive a rating from ISBE.

The Gold Circle of Quality recognizes programs that have demonstrated quality on all 15 standards, as validated by an independent assessor. Gold Circle programs meet or exceed specific quality benchmarks on learning environment, instructional quality, and all program administrative standards; group size and staff/child ratios; staff qualifications; and professional development.

Additional Resources

ExceleRate For Providers

Preschool for All Expansion

This section contains information related to PFAE Compliance Checklist items 21-37.

The Preschool for All Expansion grant is designed to implement and sustain high-quality preschool programs that reach and serve 3- to 5-year-old children in high-need communities and include a full school day of instruction and comprehensive services in the areas of medical, dental, and mental health supports. This includes targeted supports regarding family engagement; instructional practices; and positive behavioral and social-emotional development by including a family educator, instructional leader, and mental health consultant.

The PFAE grant was originally funded by a federal Preschool Development Grant awarded to Illinois in December 2014. Following the completion of the federal funding cycle, the PFAE grant is now awarded by the Illinois State Board of Education as one of the Early Childhood Block Grant programs.

Requirements

Eligibility and Weighted Priority Enrollment Form

PFAE grantees are required to utilize the approved Eligibility and Weighted Priority Enrollment Form. This ensures meeting the Performance Measure that 80 percent of children who are enrolled have been determined to be in jeopardy of academic failure, as defined in the 23 Illinois Administrative Code Part 235 for the Early Childhood Preschool for All/Preschool for All Expansion electronic grant. The program conducts ongoing and regular screenings to meet eligibility requirements. This form must be kept in each student record for review upon request. Staff members completing the income verification portion of this form must provide their signature assuring the income documentation indicated was reviewed.

Age Eligibility

Programs must prove the child is age eligible using any one of the following forms of evidence:

- Child's birth certificate (copy is acceptable)
- Passport
- Court documents
- Medical records
- Visa
- Other governmental documentation

A child's certified birth certificate is the preferred form of evidence to prove age eligibility. Programs should first ask families to produce the child's birth certificate; if it is not available, the program can assist families with identifying other options for proving the child's age. If the family is unable to produce any evidence, a written statement attesting to the child's date of birth, signed by the parent or guardian, as well as a plan to obtain the documentation is required. In this case, programs should assist families in obtaining a certified birth certificate.

Income Eligibility

Programs must prove income eligibility for all participants enrolling in the program by documenting how family income was calculated using any one of the following forms of evidence:

- Pay stubs (two most recent, consecutive)
- Proof of WIC benefit
- Proof of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefit
- Proof of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) enrollment
- Proof of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefit
- Proof the family receives Childcare Assistance Program
- Tax return (most recent)
- Wages and tax statement (most recent W-2)
- Verification/letter from employer
- Proof that parent is enrolled in Medicaid (A medical card with the child's name does not prove income eligibility.)

- Signed written statement from the family (Provide form for families with no income.)

Families derive income from many different sources and may need several options to prove income eligibility. The preferred ways to verify income eligibility, however, are through proof of enrollment in a public benefits program or pay stubs. Programs should first offer parents the opportunity to use proof of enrollment in a public benefits program or pay stubs to verify their income before offering other options. For parents that are not employed, programs should first work to obtain documentation of receipt of one of the public benefits listed above before utilizing a signed written statement from the parent, as this is the least preferred documentation.

As mentioned above, programs should encourage families to provide verification that they are enrolled in public benefits programs during the eligibility screening process. Evidence of enrollment in a public benefit program includes possession of a public benefits card (such as a Link card) with the family's name printed on it, a signed and dated letter from the administering agency, a referral from the administering agency that indicates the family is receiving a specific benefit. Or programs can contact the administering agency directly after a release of information is signed by the family. Programs should document the evidence used for verification and use their best judgment to determine whether to accept evidence that appears questionable in some way.

NOTE: Verification of income must be completed no earlier than six months prior to the child's first day of attendance in the PFAE program.

Household Size and Income

For the purposes of determining income eligibility of a family for the PFAE program, "family" includes all persons living in the same household who are:

- Supported by the parent(s)' or guardian(s)' income.
- Related to the child's parent(s) or guardian(s) by blood, marriage, or adoption.
- The child's authorized caregiver or legally responsible party.

Programs should count income only from parents or guardians of the child, including unmarried parents residing in the same household. Income of adult siblings of the child who are residing with the family or unmarried partners of the parent who are not related to the child should not be counted. Income of a parent who does not reside in the household with the child should not be counted; however, programs should request information on child support, if applicable, and count that income toward the total household income. Non-resident parents should not be included in the total household size.

Categorical Eligibility

Children who meet the federal definition of homeless and youth in care are considered categorically eligible for the PFAE program. The program cannot ask families within these categories for income documentation. A weighted eligibility form should still be completed; however, the lack of income verification should be noted on the eligibility from and the financial status of that family cannot be counted as an at-risk factor. If a program determines a child is homeless or in foster care, it must allow the child to begin attending the program without immunization and other medical records, birth certificates, or other documents, and give the family reasonable time to present these documents.

Eligibility for blending and braiding

If a program blends and braids funding with another funding stream, such as Head Start, the program must meet the most restrictive requirements of all funding sources. For example, if a PFAE program blends funding with Head Start, all families must meet the Head Start income eligibility criteria and all children must meet the PFAE age criteria.

Active Recruitment

As detailed above, PFAE programs are designed to serve the most at-risk children and families. Identifying and enrolling these families requires an intentional effort to actively seek out and educate families experiencing challenging situations.

Many programs have regular success in attracting families for screening days or walk-in enrollment opportunities through flyers or passive recruitment, but these families often present with fewer risk factors than the targeted population for this program. To fulfill the goal of the PFAE, programs must develop and implement a comprehensive recruitment plan that includes the following components:

- **Assessment of Community Need**: The recruitment plan should be informed by the particular needs, challenges, and opportunities of the community. Data from a variety of sources, including the Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map (IECAM), local community leaders, and others should be used to develop this plan. In addition, this assessment should provide an indication of where in the community priority families live and the location of services and institutions that currently serve them.
- **Identification of Barriers**: Programs should determine the specific barriers faced by parents in their community that prevent or delay enrollment of their children in early learning programs. Issues such as lack of knowledge, challenges obtaining documentation, challenges with transportation, or others should be noted, and programs should identify opportunities to overcome these barriers.
- **Targeted, Multi-Pronged Recruitment**: Based on the assessment of community need, programs are expected to develop a portfolio of recruitment approaches to reach families through multiple methods and efforts. Some approaches to consider include:
    - Participation in or hosting of community events for families.
    - Door-to-door canvassing.
    - Newspaper or radio public service announcements.
    - Close partnerships with potential referral sources.
    - Recruitment efforts in parks, grocery stores, food pantries, laundromats, and other potential locations frequented by families
- **Education**: Many families, particularly those in the target population, may not have been previously exposed to messages about the importance of early education. Some may believe that children are too young to attend school at the age of 3 or 4. Programs need to engage these families to educate them, answer their questions, and allay their fears. Programs should plan to help parents understand the following:
    - The impact of early education on brain development and later school success.
    - The importance of socialization and social-emotional learning.
    - The program's approach to curriculum and play-based learning.
    - Developmentally appropriate practice and how the program is designed to support young learners.
    - Family support and the opportunities available for parent education and engagement.
- **Follow Up**: Programs should secure multiple forms of contact information in order to follow up quickly and frequently with interested families. Programs must provide support, referrals, and assistance to overcome barriers to enrollment that families might encounter. This may include referrals to obtain vaccinations or assistance obtaining a birth certificate.

Priority Factors

The PFAE program is intended to serve the children with the highest needs in each community; therefore, programs are required to prioritize children by need as part of their recruitment, selection, and enrollment process. PFAE grantees will be expected to fill their slots with a minimum of 80 percent of enrolled students with at least two risk factors or one highest-priority selection factor according to the weighted eligibility form.

- The highest-priority selection factors for the program are homelessness, youth in care, child has IEP for more than itinerant speech services or has been referred for special education evaluation, and family income at or below 50 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL). These factors are weighted at 50 points.
- Other priority selection factors include income at or below 100 percent of the FPL, caregiver with no high school diploma or GED, teen parent at the birth of first child, child was born outside of the United States or has one or more parent or caregiver born outside of the United States, parent or caregiver primarily speaks a language other than English at home, active duty military family, child displaying developmental delays for which a referral to special education is not indicated at the time of the screening, and child has not previously participated in a formal early learning program. These factors are weighted at 25 points.

- Programs may select additional significant risk factors to incorporate into their weighted eligibility form. These factors are weighted at 25 points and should be based on identified community needs.

Documentation/Evidence of Priority Selection Factors

All selection factors, except income, will be documented through a parent interview and questionnaire. The responses from the parent interview and questionnaire will be used by program staff to complete the weighted eligibility form.

Programs will also receive additional information through the child's developmental screening, referral sources, and the income verification process that can be used to verify the presence of some of the selection factors without requesting additional documentation. If programs verify presence of selection factors through these other methods, the corresponding questions that assess for these factors on the parent questionnaire/interview should be skipped. For instance, if a local family shelter refers a family it is serving to a PFAE program, that referral provides verification of the family's homelessness and therefore the program does not need to ask the family the questions to assess for homelessness in the parent interview.

Waiting List

Preschool for All Expansion programs are expected to develop a waiting list and undertake a selection process to ensure that the most at-risk children are enrolled. This process is detailed in the Weighted Eligibility Flowchart.

In general, children should be added to a waiting list as they are recruited, and information should be collected to complete the Eligibility and Weighted Priority Enrollment Form. Point values from this form should be assessed and children should be prioritized according to these point values. Program enrollment must be determined based on these priority point values.

Reserving Slots

PFAE programs must develop a local plan for ensuring that preschool services will be available to age-eligible children with especially high needs (e.g., children who are homeless or youth in care) even if those children do not present for screening and eligibility determination until after the school year begins. Each PFAE program must work with its community partners to develop this plan based on past enrollment patterns, child mobility, prevalence of homelessness and foster care placement in the community, and other factors.

It is anticipated that most PFAE programs' plans will include reserving at least 5-10 percent of their program slots to be filled during the first two months of the school year. These slots would be filled immediately by any child who is homeless, youth in care, or otherwise demonstrates especially high needs. If the slots are still not filled by the ISBE fall enrollment date, the program would enroll the highest-need children from the waiting list.

In addition, programs are expected to maintain contact with agencies serving homeless families and youth in care throughout the year; if a homeless or foster child is identified as needing preschool services after all spots are filled, programs must make every effort to keep in contact with the family and place that child in a classroom as soon as an opening becomes available.

Establishing Referral Relationships

Programs are strongly encouraged to develop formal referral relationships with local providers that serve families that experience the priority selection factors, such as homeless service providers and McKinney-Vento liaisons, child welfare agencies, housing authorities, refugee resettlement agencies, and public aid offices. Not only will this ensure that programs are able to target the highest-need children for enrollment, but a formal referral relationship can also support the process of verifying eligibility for the PFAE program. For example, the local TANF agency could refer families they serve directly to the PFAE program using a mutually agreed upon standardized process that incorporates verification of the family's receipt of TANF benefits. Programs are encouraged to develop referral forms collaboratively with partners that incorporate verification of age, income, and selection factors to the largest extent possible.

Comprehensive Family Services

A key component of the Preschool for All Expansion program is the provision of comprehensive services to support children and their families. These services fall into four primary categories:

Mental Health

Mental Health Consultation

Mental health consultation is a vital support that promotes a child's optimum social-emotional health. This is an essential component of a child's early learning experiences that aligns with the Illinois Early Learning Developmental Standards. Consultation is often an indirect service that enhances the work of those directly involved in the education, care, or support of a child/family relationship. The consultant may engage with staff and families in an intervention when a child is experiencing social-emotional disruption and requires more support than is available in the setting.

- Programs should contract or collaborate with a qualified mental health practitioner. (Preferred qualifications include a minimum master's degree in the following related fields: social work, counseling, psychology, family and marriage therapy, child development.) This individual should have at least five years of experience in areas related to infant and early childhood development and mental health.
- The consultant should use a reflective consultation approach to support program leaders and staff in the prevention and response to the significant needs of children and families experiencing challenging circumstances. (See the link to Reflective Practice Guide under "Additional resources" at the end of this section.)
- The consultant should support the program in developing behavior intervention policies that are developmentally and culturally appropriate for the early learner.
- The consultant should support the program in developing and implementing protocols for social-emotional screening as a promotion tool, general classroom observation, and other appropriate methods for identifying children in need of mental health supports.
- The consultant should additionally work closely with program staff to observe children/classrooms to identify children in need in need of individual evaluation and referral. This individual observation is part of any comprehensive assessment to understand the child's learning environment, interactions with the education staff, peer interactions, developmental needs, and support the child in tolerating stress or changes. A referral for a mental health consultant may be triggered by a score from a social-emotional screening or concerns from teachers and parents/guardians. Support and education should be provided to parents to determine if a referral is appropriate for their child and to navigate this process
- The consultant should provide training and ongoing learning opportunities to staff and families/caregivers on relevant topics related to early childhood mental health; social-emotional development; child development; impacts of early exposure to violence and trauma; self-regulation; stress and self-care for caregivers and staff; and support for children with special needs, among others.
- The consultant should additionally support programs to implement a relational approach to vital transitions (such as from PreK-K) that includes teacher-led workshops for parents, with a focus on child development, and social-emotional consideration to ease the transition.
- As appropriate, the mental health consultant may temporarily engage in direct consultation with children/families in collaboration with staff. The consultant should assess the situation; listen to presenting concerns; document observations; and have direct contact with the staff, family, and organizational supports (school social worker, homeless liaison, nurse, etc., as applicable) to develop and implement a comprehensive plan to address the concerns.

Mental Health Supports and Resource Referrals

- The program should have a referral relationship with a community mental health agency. This agency should have experience working with young children (under the age of 6) and their families.
- As appropriate, program mental health staff (social workers/psychologists) and consultants' partner with program leaders and staff to develop behavior intervention plans and support staff in the implementation of the plan.

- The program staff, as applicable, make active and informed referrals for community mental health services in the preferred language of the family and support families to navigate this process, regardless of insurance or ability to pay, and to overcome transportation barriers.

Health and Dental

- The program should have a referral relationship with local dentists and pediatricians. Programs should not pay for medical or dental expenses from Early Childhood Block Grant funds.
- Program staff should assist families in establishing a medical and dental home for regular, ongoing preventative care and any required follow-up treatment.
- The family educator should ensure that children receive regular preventative care and any necessary follow-up treatment.

Family Support and Resource Referral

- Family educators should conduct a family needs assessment with each family to identify strengths, needs, and goals.
- During the year, family educators should check in with families to assess the supports that are needed to meet their needs and attain their goals and to help celebrate progress.
- Family educators should make active and informed referrals to external agencies, including social service organizations, government subsidy programs, educational institutions, and others, to support families in overcoming barriers and achieving their goals.

Family Education

- The program should design a robust menu of family education opportunities designed to support families in meeting the needs of their children and achieving ambitious family goals.
- Family input, collected through surveys, planning meetings, or other sources, should be a guiding factor in determining the subject matter, format, and schedule of family education opportunities.
- Family should have an opportunity to learn from and interact with experts in a variety of relevant fields, including:
    - Child medical and dental health
    - Mental wellness
    - Family strengthening
- In addition to formal meetings, programs should identify other opportunities for family education, such as establishing a resource library, planning family field trips to cultural and educational institutions, or hosting community resource fairs for families.

In designing these comprehensive services, programs should make sure that supports provided to families are both effective and sustainable. Developing a strong and clear MOU with service providers (including mental health/dental/medical providers) and referral partners (such as housing organizations, job training programs, GED programs, etc.) ensures that the process for referral is transparent and seamless for families. These MOUs should also clearly outline the types and intensity of services that families should expect to receive, ensuring that these align to family needs and program expectations.

To ensure sustainability, programs should work to develop a lasting relationship between a family and the resource/service provider that will be continuous and ongoing until a particular need is met or goal is achieved. For example, while a program may choose to work with a "dental van" to provide preventative dental care for children, it is critical that the families of children receiving this treatment are connected to a "dental home" where they can receive ongoing care and any necessary follow-up treatment. If a barrier to long-term support is identified, such as a lack of medical insurance, the program should assist the family in signing up for available free and subsidized insurance options.

Each program should develop a written plan for family support and education that details how the program will support families holistically. This should include a clear strategy for collaborating with community institutions and organizations to assist families in a variety of key areas, including income supports, food pantries, housing, social

services, and other services relating to health/mental health, domestic violence, substance abuse, adult literacy, education and training, and financial asset building.

Family Engagement

In addition to providing family education and family support, PFAE programs should intentionally take steps to engage families as active stakeholders in the design, implementation, and success of the program.

Each PFAE program is expected to cultivate a group of parent leaders to serve on a Parent Advisory Council. This council should be established with a meaningful role in influencing and recommending program design and continuous quality improvement.

Each program should determine the appropriate size of its council based on the size of the program and should use multiple methods to actively recruit parents as members. Program staff should ensure that participation on the council is both accessible and inviting to parents from a diverse range of linguistic and cultural backgrounds, work schedules, and family structures. Program teachers, staff, and administrators also should serve as members of the group.

The council should meet on a regular basis and should receive information from program staff about program performance, challenges, and successes. Appropriate information may include aggregate enrollment and attendance trends, selected program curricula, upcoming events, proposed policy changes, and the program's CQIP. Meetings should be structured to provide for both information sharing and substantive discussion, with recommendations from the group formally shared with the program's administration after each meeting. A copy of the agenda, minutes, and any distributed materials should be retained by the program.

Participation in the council should be an opportunity for parents to develop critical leadership and self-advocacy skills. The program should provide training to prepare and empower parents for this opportunity. Training may include an orientation to the policies and procedures of the PFAE program, an overview of district/organization history and policies, parliamentary procedure, and an introduction to budgets and fiscal management.

When possible, the members of the Parent Advisory Council should be empowered to join staff members in attending community meetings as representatives of the program. Meetings of local community early childhood collaborations or meetings to discuss collaborations with local social service organizations are an excellent way to support parent leadership development and empower parents with community connections that will benefit their families beyond participation in the program.

In addition, the program should consider empowering parents with structured leadership roles, including chair, vice chair, and secretary, to ensure that meetings are driven by and for the interests of parent members. Parent members of the council should elect their peers for these roles. Specific orientation, training, and support for each role should be provided.

Programs should enhance family engagement by actively support families in transitioning their child to kindergarten, including creating plans and documenting the transition process.

Staffing

In addition to Preschool for All staff requirements, PFAE programs are required to hire individuals to serve as family educators and instructional leaders. Family educators should work collaboratively with families, education staff, and community partners to ensure that the program meets the needs of the whole child and supports families in addressing needs and setting and achieving ambitious family goals. They should manage family engagement and education efforts, implement delivery of comprehensive services, and provide supports to ensure consistent child attendance. The maximum caseload for family educators is one per 100 children.

The instructional leader should support classroom education staff (teachers and teacher assistants) to refine their practices, improve instructional quality, and achieve mastery as early childhood professionals. This should include managing implementation of curriculum and supplemental curricular materials; collaborating with teaching staff to develop individual professional development plans; and providing ongoing observations, coaching, and support to teachers. The maximum caseload for instructional leaders is one per 10 classrooms.

PFAE staff members should receive training annually on the program's selected screening tools, curriculum, and assessment tool. The program's professional development plan also should address issues of language and cultural diversity within the program.

Salary Parity

PFAE programs are expected to attain salary parity with educator salaries in the local public school district. School district salary scales are publicly available documents and should be consulted to determine the appropriate starting salary for teachers, based on level of education. This salary scale should be made available as evidence for the compliance monitoring process.

Sample Schedule

PFAE programs are required to offer a school day program that is equivalent to the length of instructional time provided by the first-grade teacher(s) in the local district, but no less than 5 hours. The following model schedule is provided in an effort to ensure alignment with the requirements of the PFAE and the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-3) recommendations and best practice.

10 minutes: Arrival and Quiet Centers
5 minutes: Cleanup Time
15 minutes: Whole Group Time
70 minutes: Choice Time** (includes breakfast as a center)
5 minutes: Cleanup Time
30 minutes: Gross Motor*
20 minutes: Small Group Time
5 minutes: Prepare for lunch
30 minutes: Lunch
60 minutes: Rest Time/ Quiet Centers
5 minutes: Cleanup Time
30 minutes: Gross Motor*
65 minutes: Choice Time** (includes snack as a center)
10 minutes: Cleanup Time/Prepare for Departure/Dismissal

* Gross Motor: One full hour of gross motor programming, at minimum, must be offered to all children daily.
** Choice Time: ECERS-3 recommends one hour of choice time for every three hours of program operation. For a six-hour program day, this is defined as two hours. If breakfast or snack is served as a center/on an open basis, 10 minutes must be added to the total choice time for each, increasing the total time to 130 minutes, as reflected in the schedule above. In addition to snack, a nutritious breakfast and lunch aligned with USDA Food and Nutrition Guidelines must be served.

Additional Resources

Build Initiative
Preschool and School Readiness: Experiences of Children with Non-English-Speaking Parents
Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI)
How we Got Johnny, Jada and Jose in Preschool
Head Start Parent, Family and Community Engagement Framework
Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership (ICMHP)
Infant Early Childhood Mental Consultation Triangle
Reflective Practice Guide
Issue Brief: Early Childhood Mental Health and Homelessness
Illinois Department of Child & Family Services (DCFS)
Teen Parenting
Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS)
Parent Income Calculation Worksheet
Wage Verification Form
Illinois Early Learning Project (IELP)

Supporting Young Children in Military Families
Illinois Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development
ISBE Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)
ISBE Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Considerations
National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY)
National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE)
National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP)
Trauma Faced by Children of Military Families
National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN)
Continuing Education
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
US Department of Education (USDE)
Preschool Development Grants
US Health and Human Services (USHHS)
Birth to 5: Watch Me Thrive!
Child Welfare Information Gateway
Expanding Early Care and Education for Homeless Children
Supporting the Academic Success of Pregnant and Parenting Students
US Federal Poverty Guidelines

Acronym Glossary

AOK	All our Kids
APR	Annual Performance Report
CACFP	Child and Adult Care Food Program
CCAP	Child Care Assistance Program
CCSS	Common Core State Standards
CFC	Child and Family Connections Office
CQIP	Continuous Quality Improvement Plan
CSEFEL	Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning
DCFS	Department of Children and Family Services
DEC	Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children
ECBG	Early Childhood Block Grant
ECPL	Early Childhood Professional Learning
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ECERS-3	Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale-3
ECO	Early Childhood Outcomes
ECOS	Early Childhood Outcomes System
ECSE	Early Childhood Special Education
EE	Educational Environment
EI	Early Intervention
EIS	Employment Information System
EL	English Learner
ELP	English Language Proficiency
ESL	English as a Second Language
FACTS	Funding and Child Tracking System
FERPA	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
FPL	Federal Poverty Level
FRIS	Financial Reimbursement Information System
GED	General Education Diploma
HLS	Home Language Survey
HS	Head Start
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IDPH	Illinois Department of Public Health
IECAM	Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map
IEL	Illinois Early Learning Project
IELDS	Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards
IEP	Individualized Education Plan
ISBE	Illinois State Board of Education
IWAS	ISBE Web Application Security
LEA	Local Education Agency
MIECHV	Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAEYC	National Association of the Education of Young Children
NSLP	National School Lunch Program
OSEP	U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs
PD	Professional Development
PDG	Preschool Development Grant
PFAE	Preschool for All Expansion
PEL	Professional Educator License
PFA	Preschool for All
RFP	Request for Proposals
ROE	Regional Offices of Education

SEL	Social-Emotional Learning
SID	Student Identifier
SIS	Student Information System
SMP	Special Milk Program
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
SPP	State Performance Plan
SSI	Supplemental Security Income
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
TBE	Transitional Bilingual Education
TPI	Transitional Program Instruction
TRS	Teacher Retirement System
WIC	Women, Infants, and Children