SMART START
WORKFORCE GRANTS

Smart Start Workforce Grants offer child care programs stable, ongoing funds that they need to cover costs and invest in quality staff without burdening families by raising tuition or Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) co-pays. Eligible programs receive consistent funding in advance, and funds will cover the cost of higher wages and operating a classroom. Programs receiving these grants will be required to pay classroom staff a wage floor. These competitive wages will help to attract more staff and meet parents' needs at a rate that they can afford.

CONGRATULATIONS!

The _____
(Write Classroom Name)

classroom at _____
(Write Progrm Name)

is a Smart Start Workforce Grant FY27 Round 2 classroom. Teacher and Teacher Assistants in this classroom should be paid at least the required wage floor for your area set by Smart Start Workforce Grants starting October 1 – December 31, 2026.

	Region		
Role	**Group 1A**	**Group 1B**	**Group 2**
Wage floor for lead teachers	$19.25 per hour	$18.50 per hour	$18.25 per hour
Wage floor for assistant teacher	$18.00 per hour	$17.25 per hour	$17.00 per hour

Group 1A: Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, and McHenry counties.

Group 1B: Boone, Champaign, Kankakee, Madison, McLean, Monroe, Ogle, Peoria, Rock Island, Sangamon, St. Clair, Tazewell, Whiteside, Will, Winnebago, and Woodford counties.

Group 2: All counties not listed in Group 1A or 1B

Visit https://www.ilgateways.com/smart-start/smart-start-workforce-grants to see details about the required wage floor for grant funded classrooms.

If you are a teacher or a teacher assistant in a Smart Start Workforce Grant classroom and you have additional questions please email grants@inccrra.org.

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

inccrra