



EARLY CHILDHOOD TODAY

State & Federal Landscape
Local Roles & Opportunities

Theresa Hawley, Ph.D.
January 16, 2016

What works?

We've known for 30 years:

- Start Early and Stay With It
- Be Intense
- Work Directly With Children
- Be Comprehensive and Flexible
- Focus on the Children Who are Most Able to Benefit From What You Have to Offer
- Pay Attention to the Child's Long Term Environment



New Insights

- Preschool is not “early”
 - Starting prenatally is ideal
 - Birth to three years are especially critical
- Adults matter
 - Both parents and other caregivers in child’s life
 - Adults need to be supported in their roles
- Preschool teaching needs to be intentional
 - Rich content matters a lot
 - Teacher-child interactions are key



Illinois' "30 Year" Vision

- Every child has access to high quality preschool program at ages 3 & 4
 - Where needed, full-work-day, full-year
 - Comprehensive program
- Every "at-risk" infant/toddler and their family has access to
 - High quality, affordable child care
 - Parent support/home visiting services
- All children have basic needs for safety, health and nutrition met
- Children with special needs are identified early and receive all needed services

Illinois' Historic Strategy

- Preschool for All funds half-day of high-quality instruction for all 3 & 4 year olds
 - Prevention Initiative grows along with PFA to provide services for 0-3
- Child Care Assistance operates essentially as an entitlement for families with incomes below 185% FPL
- Programs encouraged to blend and braid multiple funding streams to provide services that meet families' needs
 - Head Start/Early Head Start
 - Child Care Assistance
 - PFA/PI

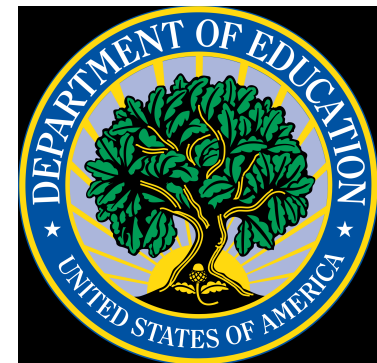
Recent Policy Directions in IL

- Focus on children with highest needs
- Develop new program models that can meet these children and families' needs
 - Preschool Expansion Grant
- Build community systems that identify these children and connect them with the services that best meet their needs
- Child care policy very much in flux

Federal Strategy Under Obama

- Universal Preschool for 4-year-olds
- Head Start focus on birth through 3
- Child Care Development Block Grant focus on quality and continuity
 - QRIS as major driver of higher quality
- Expand Home Visiting

*Integrated strategy
across federal
departments*



Future Federal Strategy?

- Affordable, quality child care for middle class
- Paid parental leave
- Major attention to and investment in early childhood workforce



Illinois State Agencies and Programs

Children and Family Services – DCFS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protective Services • Child Care Licensing 	
Human Services – IDHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better Birth Outcomes • Child Care Assistance Program • Early Intervention (Part C) • Family Case Management • Healthy Families • Healthy Start • High Risk Infant Follow-up • Newborn Hearing Screening Program (with IDPH) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents Too Soon • Perinatal Depression • Refugee and Immigrant Services • SNAP, WIC • TANF • Systems Development Initiatives • AOK Early Childhood Networks • Child Care Resource and Referral • Local Interagency Councils
Healthcare and Family Services - HFS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Kids • Moms and Babies 	
Public Health - DPH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention • Children with Special Healthcare Needs • Genetics/Newborn Screening Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illinois Immunization Program • Newborn Hearing Screening Program (with IDHS) • Subsequent Pregnancy Program
State Board of Education - ISBE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention Initiative (ECBG) • Preschool for All (ECBG) • Special Education (Part B) 	

Early Intervention (EI)

- Services for children ages 0-3 who have a disability
 - Diagnosed condition or delay of 30% or more
- Eligibility administered by CFC's (Child and Family Connections)
 - In Oak Park, this is Suburban Access
- Fee-for-service reimbursement for approved therapies
 - Each child has Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)

Early Childhood Special Education

- Special education services for children ages 3 to Kindergarten entry
- Administered by local school districts
 - Often assisted by local cooperatives
- Each child has Individualized Education Plan (IEP)
- Funded by blend of federal, state & local funds
- School districts have considerable autonomy

Local role in EI & EC Special Ed

- Child Find must be done collaboratively across the whole community
 - Developmental screening can be done by health care providers, child care, preschool, home visiting, or in screening “fairs”
- Advocating for adequate resources and robust program models at school district level
- Ensuring early learning providers have access to the support they need to serve children with special needs in inclusive environments

Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)

- Eligibility criteria in statute:
 - Income below 185% of FPL
 - Working or in school/training (or TANF approved)
 - 60% of those served are 0-5; 40% school-age
- Parents pay co-pay based on income
- Funding comes from multiple sources:
 - Federal Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG/CCDF)
 - Federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Grant (TANF)
 - Required state match for these grants
 - Additional state General Revenue Funds (GRF)
- Vast majority of providers paid through certificates
 - Parent selects provider
 - Reimbursement for services delivered
- Very few requirements for providers beyond meeting all applicable licensing regulations (DCFS monitors licensing)
- Certificates administered in Cook County by Illinois Action for Children



Local Role in Child Care Assistance

- Identify where there are gaps in availability of child care, especially for infants & toddlers
 - Encourage development of more capacity as needed
- Ensure enough providers in community accept CCAP to meet the need
- Bring providers together in professional learning communities

Prevention Initiative (PI)

- Grant-funded program for at-risk families with children age prenatal to 3
- Most programs use a home visiting model:
 - Parents as Teachers
 - Healthy Families Illinois
 - Baby Talk
- Can also be center-based, enhancing quality of a child care program
 - This is most common in Chicago



Preschool for All (PFA)

- Grant-funded program to provide part-day preschool education for 3 and 4 year olds
 - Includes a parent education component (not very intensive)
- Requires teacher to have EC certificate (“04”)
- Often combined with other funding sources, especially in Chicago
- Programs must prioritize children for enrollment by risk status
- Preschool Expansion model for most at risk
 - Full day, with comprehensive services
 - Only 3,200 slots statewide currently

Early Head Start

- Federally funded program for pregnant women and children ages 0-3 in poverty
- Can be home-based or center-based
- Comprehensive services
- Very high quality standards
- Serves less than 5% of eligible children statewide
- Federal monitoring system

Head Start

- Preschool program for children ages 3 & 4 in poverty
- Comprehensive services—more intensive parent education & support than in PFA
- Big emphasis on health and mental health
- Serves about 40,000 children in Illinois
- Federal monitoring system



Local Role in PFA/PI/EHS/HS

- Fund programs directly
- Apply for funding from state/fed
- Comprehensive community planning to ensure capacity
- Collaborative recruitment and enrollment to ensure most-at-risk are served
- Professional learning communities and other staff support
- Coordinate comprehensive services for families

EXCELERATE ILLINOIS

QUALITY RATING AND IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM (QRIS)



ExceleRate Illinois

- Structure:
 - Licensing (compliance with school safety code)
 - Bronze Circle of Quality: complete training over a wide range of topics
 - Silver Circle of Quality: rigorous self-assessment, ERS completed by a trained person
 - Gold Circle of Quality: Demonstrated quality, validated by outside assessor
- Single set of standards, multiple forms of excellence
 - Use preexisting forms of monitoring for evidence
 - Examples: PFA monitoring, Head Start federal reviews, On-site monitoring, Accreditation



Local Role in ExceleRate

- Build awareness among parents and providers
- Promote quality providers
- Support quality improvement efforts



Questions & Comments

