Who’s Caring for the Kids?
The status of the early childhood workforce in Illinois—2008
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The McCormick Tribune Center for Early Childhood Leadership at National-Louis University is dedicated to enhancing the management skills, professional orientation, and leadership capacity of early childhood educators. The activities of the Center encompass four areas: training and technical assistance to improve the knowledge base, skills, and competencies of directors who administer early childhood programs; evaluation to improve the quality of early childhood services; research on key professional development issues; and public awareness of the critical role that early childhood directors play in the provision of quality programs for children and families. (http://cecl.nl.edu)

Early Childhood and Parenting Collaborative at the University of Illinois is home to more than a dozen projects focused on the education, care, and parenting of young children. The structure provided by the Early Childhood and Parenting (ECAP) Collaborative enables participating projects to strengthen and enhance the cooperative relationships that exist among them, and to strengthen their national visibility. The staff of two projects within ECAP, the Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map (IECAM) and Illinois Early Learning Project (IEL), have contributed significantly to this report through provision of data and information on key issues. All data on child care are provided to IECAM by the Illinois Network of Child Care and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) and all data on Preschool for All are provided to IECAM by the Illinois State Board of Education. (http://ecap.crc.uic.edu)
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In 2001, the McCormick Foundation supported the development and dissemination of *Who’s Caring for the Kids? The Status of the Early Childhood Workforce in Illinois*.

This report was a joint project of the McCormick Tribune Center for Early Childhood Leadership and the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA). It laid out the status of early care and education in Illinois in terms of the range of program options available; the demographics, qualifications, and compensation of the workforce; and the professional opportunities available to the workforce.

The report concluded with five major findings and recommendations which are presented in Appendix A. The overarching goal of the recommendations was to improve the quality of early care and education for Illinois children. The report provided specific action steps to improve the qualifications, professional development opportunities, and compensation of the workforce. It also offered recommendations for a statewide infrastructure to ensure a coherent system of training and support for all individuals engaged in early care and education.

What has happened in the intervening seven years? What major accomplishments can the leadership in early care and education in the State of Illinois count since the publication of the first report? What notable changes have occurred in the status of the early childhood workforce? This 2008 update was written to provide answers to these important questions.

This chapter provides an update on major accomplishments within the State of Illinois since 2001. Subsequent chapters in this report provide up-to-date information about the status of the workforce and the challenges that continue to confront policymakers and educational leaders who are dedicated to ensuring that all children in Illinois have access to care and educational environments that support optimum growth and development.

**Major Accomplishments in Early Care and Education**

So what has happened in the seven years since the 2001 publication of *Who’s Caring for the Kids*? The short answer to this question is—a lot! The efforts of policymakers, state agencies, advocates, and professionals in the field have resulted in many positive outcomes and impressive accomplishments. Six major achievements should be highlighted:
1) the establishment of the Illinois Early Learning Council; 2) the creation of the Illinois Professional Development Advisory Council; 3) the development of Gateways to Opportunity; 4) the implementation of Preschool for All; 5) the creation of the Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map; and 6) the implementation of Illinois Quality Counts—Quality Rating System.

Together these efforts have established a statewide mechanism for coordinating early care and education in Illinois, for expanding publicly funded prekindergarten programs around the state, for establishing a career lattice for the early childhood workforce, and for increasing the quality of care and education provided to young children.

Current estimates project that nearly 100,000 individuals are engaged in the work of providing early care and education in Illinois. This workforce is central to the quality and expansion of care and education for children from birth to formal school entry at age five. Efforts by state leaders in the past seven years recognize the needs of this large and critical workforce for professional recognition, professional development, and fair compensation.\(^2\) The expansion of state-sponsored programs is also creating a significant demand for professionals with early childhood education credentials and certification.

**Illinois Early Learning Council.** The Illinois Early Learning Council (ELC) was established in 2003 as a result of bipartisan legislation aimed at expanding and enhancing early care and education in Illinois. The ELC is currently composed of 65 gubernatorial and legislative appointees, representing a broad range of constituencies. At its onset, the ELC was directed to review all early care and education programs in Illinois, identify gaps in services, and plan collaboratively with programs, divisions, and agencies to create a more coherent system for serving young children and their families. Specifically, the Council developed the following priorities:

- Define high-quality early learning programs for children birth to five that include ongoing child assessment, quality assurance, and evaluation;
- Develop a plan and cost estimates for expanding access to high-quality early learning programs and link these programs to others serving families with young children; and
- Develop the workforce to ensure an adequate and stable supply of highly qualified and diverse individuals to staff early learning programs.\(^3\)

These priorities directly addressed the need for qualified early childhood teachers and program directors and indirectly addressed the need for professional development and a career lattice. The Council also addressed the need to ensure high-quality programs and the evaluation of these programs. In the call for expanding access to early care and education, the Council endorsed efforts to link with and build on existing programs which could lead to universal, voluntary access to preschool for all 3- and 4-year-olds and for children from birth to 3 at risk for poor developmental outcomes. Finally, it identified the need to understand what services and programs are currently provided throughout the state.
Pivotal to the issue of who is caring for children in Illinois are the four objectives established by the Early Learning Council to meet the workforce development goal of ensuring an adequate and stable supply of professionals:

➤ Build the capacity of the higher education system to ensure that more early childhood professionals have opportunities to receive early childhood degrees;

➤ Ensure that high-quality, ongoing professional development opportunities are available for all early childhood professionals;

➤ Establish a professional structure for standardized roles across the early learning system and for awarding credentials to early childhood professionals who have reached specific levels of achievement; and

➤ Address the early childhood labor market and working conditions to ensure that children and families have access to a qualified, diverse, and stable early childhood workforce.

In 2007 the Council established seven new committees to guide their work over the next several years. They include five committees that focus on specific issues—space capacity, workforce development, public awareness, infants and toddlers, and oversight and coordination—and two committees looking at broader issues of concern—special populations and linguistic and cultural diversity.

Professional Development Advisory Council (PDAC). In 2002, a state task force on universal preschool recommended that a career lattice be developed to address the training and varied qualifications of the early childhood workforce. This recommendation was supported by the Governor's Forum on Early Childhood Professional Development and Higher Education. As a result, in 2002 the Statewide Professional Development Advisory Council (PDAC) was created and charged with the creation of a career lattice. It defined a career lattice as a framework that links degree programs, credentials, trainings, and professional achievement to ensure all early childhood practitioners are well prepared to educate, nurture, and meet the needs of young children and their families.

PDAC is made up of highly qualified practitioners, educators, and advocates from around the state. The committee oversees five subcommittees—core knowledge, funding and financial supports, access and outreach, quality assurance, and qualifications and credentials. The formation of PDAC led to the creation of Gateways to Opportunity, a statewide professional development system “designed to provide guidance, encouragement, and recognition to individuals and programs who serve young children and their families.”

Gateways to Opportunity. This statewide professional development system is administered by the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) and is funded by the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), the McCormick Foundation, the Joyce Foundation, W. Clement and the Jessie V. Stone Foundation, and the Grand Victoria Foundation. It includes a comprehensive Web site,
Critical to the professional development of the workforce has been the development by PDAC of a core body of knowledge.


Table 1 presents the seven content areas for Illinois credentials. Three strands are woven throughout these content areas. They include individual and group guidance, culture and diversity, and children with special needs.

Table 1. Illinois Content Areas for Early Childhood Professionals

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<th>5. Teaching/learning interactions and environments</th>
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<td>2. Health, safety, and nutrition</td>
<td>6. Personal and professional development</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Child observation and assessment</td>
<td>7. Family and community relationships</td>
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<td>4. Curriculum development</td>
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Credentials have been developed based on this core body of knowledge. Currently the credentials being awarded include:

- **The ECE Credential.** Level 1, for entry-level early childhood staff, is based on 48 clock hours of training. Levels 2 to 5, for professional staff, are based on increasing levels of education, specialized training in early childhood, experience, and professional contributions to the field.
➤ **The Infant Toddler Credential.** Levels 2 to 5, for infant-toddler specialists, are based on increasing levels of specialized training or coursework in infant-toddler development and experience. In addition, all requirements for the ECE credential must be met.

➤ **The Illinois Director Credential.** Levels I, II, and III, for administrators of early care and education programs, are based on increasing levels of education, specialized training in early childhood or school age, specialized training in program administration, experience, and professional contributions to the field.

Detailed frameworks highlighting the specific requirements for each of the credentials—ECE Credential, Infant Toddler Credential, and Illinois Director Credential—are presented in Appendix B.

**Preschool for All.** In 2006, Illinois became the first state in the nation to initiate a universal preschool program with the goal of providing voluntary access to families of all 3- and 4-year-olds within five years. At a minimum, the Preschool for All (PFA) program provides 12.5 hours of weekly programming designed to enrich all domains of learning and development to prepare children for school success. Each classroom is staffed by at least one teacher with specialized training and certification in early childhood education. The funding from Preschool for All is intended to create new programs and to build upon existing programs by expanding the number of children served.

This new program builds upon the 20-year history of the state’s prekindergarten program for at-risk children, in which Illinois also served as a national leader. The success of this earlier program provided a clear track record for the state in serving preschool children and laid the foundation for expansion leading to the PFA program. As with the first state program, most PFA funds are awarded through a competitive grant program administered by ISBE. Approximately one-third of these funds (37%) are provided to Chicago Public Schools, which awards and administers its own grants in the city.

Once PFA is fully implemented, 190,000 children are expected to receive early education services. According to the 2006 *Preschool for All Funding Report*, approximately $415 million will be required annually to meet this goal. The first priority is to serve families whose income falls under 200% of the federal poverty level. The PFA program is funded through the Early Childhood Block Grant. In addition to serving the state’s 3- and 4-year-old children, 11% of the PFA funds have been set aside for home-based or center-based services for children under the age of three who are considered at-risk for later school failure.

The Early Learning Council provided the initial blueprint for Preschool for All and stated that a critical linchpin to the success of the program would be the creation of a pipeline of qualified teachers. The 2006 *Preschool for All Funding Report* estimated that more than
2,000 teachers with early childhood certification would be needed when Preschool for All is fully implemented. The report called for “new investments in the professional development of the workforce,” including scholarships, expansion of teacher preparation programs and alternative certification programs, as well as preparation of bilingual educators.

The Council also recognized the critical need for supporting teachers and staff through ongoing professional development plans that would address recruitment, preparation, and retention of the early childhood workforce. It also noted that certified teachers were increasingly likely to deliver services in child care and Head Start programs, because collaborations with existing, high-quality programs were among the most direct ways to expand prekindergarten services. What this means is that Preschool for All can be embedded into community-based child care programs, provided that teachers with Illinois Type 04 early childhood certification are hired to teach children during the PFA-funded program.10

Embedding Preschool for All in community-based programs also requires center directors to engage in careful planning in order to manage the additional ISBE Preschool for All funding stream, along with their existing funding sources. The top priority for successful implementation of Preschool for All identified by the Council was to “ensure the continued high qualifications of staff (particularly lead teachers and administrators), improve staff preparation, and provide excellent ongoing professional development.”11

**Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map.** The Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map (IECAM) project was created at the request of the Illinois State Board of Education and the Early Learning Council in 2005. The overall purpose of the IECAM project is to facilitate responsible allocation of early childhood resources in Illinois by providing a clear picture of where young children in families of different socioeconomic groups live and what early care and education services are available to them.

The IECAM Web site provides a comprehensive picture of early care and education services in Illinois by combining demographic information with early childhood program information from state agencies, Head Start, and the private sector (http://iecam.crc.uiuc.edu/). It also provides essential information about need and capacity of a geographic locale to policymakers and ISBE to inform the competitive funding process of applications for new PFA programs.

As the State of Illinois increases its fiscal investment and public commitment to early learning programs and services for its youngest citizens, the need for transparency and accountability in the investment is greater than ever. By using the data collection in IECAM, decision makers, policymakers, administrators, and the public can assess for themselves where the greatest need is for new or expanded programs. A current challenge for IECAM is coordinating disparate information sources across the state that were developed for different reporting purposes.
Quality Counts–Quality Rating System. The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) initiated a quality rating system (QRS) in 2007 for voluntary use by licensed centers, licensed family and group-home providers, and license-exempt family child care providers who care for children receiving support from the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). IDHS is collaborating with the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) and the McCormick Tribune Center for Early Childhood Leadership at National-Louis University to implement the quality rating system.

Quality Counts–QRS serves multiple functions in the Illinois early childhood system. First, it provides early care and education programs with an assessment of program quality and resources to improve quality. It will provide families with an easy-to-understand symbol of quality (1 to 4 stars) to encourage them to choose high-quality care. Ultimately, Quality Counts–QRS will help to increase the amount of high-quality care offered to children in Illinois and help ensure that children are ready for school.

In Illinois, the QRS outlines specific quality criteria that must be met by early care and education programs in order to achieve progressive levels. Each level achieved results in an increase in the standard daily reimbursement rate provided through the IDHS Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). The 4-star system for licensed programs assesses regulatory compliance, the learning environment, program administration, and staff qualifications and training. Appendix C presents the rating system and requirements for each star level for licensed centers.

Next Steps

It is clear that the State of Illinois has made dramatic progress since the publication of the 2001 report of Who’s Caring for the Kids? Notable accomplishments have been made in the development of an integrated and coordinated system of care and education for young children through the establishment of the Illinois Early Learning Council, implementation of Preschool for All, and the roll-out of Quality Counts–QRS. State policymakers have also addressed the professional needs and status of the early childhood workforce through the creation of the Professional Development Advisory Council, the establishment of Gateways to Opportunity, and the development of a credentialing system for the early childhood workforce. The creation of the Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map also contributed a key element for planning and coordination of early care and education services.
These advancements raise new questions:

➤ Have the characteristics of the early childhood workforce changed since 2001?
➤ What impact has the implementation of Preschool for All had on the early childhood workforce?
➤ To what extent do issues of compensation continue to impact retention and attrition?
➤ What professional development supports do practitioners report as being most beneficial?

Sources of Data for the 2008 Report

This 2008 edition of *Who’s Caring for the Kids?* combines data from the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRA), the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), the McCormick Tribune Center for Early Childhood Leadership at National-Louis University, and the Early Childhood and Parenting Collaborative at the University of Illinois. Information and data from the *IDHS Illinois Salary and Staffing Survey of Licensed Child Care Facilities: FY 2007* and other state and national reports written between 2002 and 2008 also contribute to the report.

In addition to these established data sources, three new statewide surveys were distributed in spring 2008. The first survey collected information from over 400 administrators of child care centers across the state regarding their staffing, compensation, turnover, and professional development opportunities. The second survey was sent to lead teachers in community-based child care and Head Start centers throughout Illinois. This survey elicited information on compensation, job retention, professional development opportunities, and the career aspirations of lead teachers. Over 800 responses were obtained. A third survey eliciting similar information was sent to teachers in public school prekindergarten programs; 150 teachers returned completed surveys. These surveys are presented in Appendices D, E, and F.

In addition to data generated from surveys and questionnaires, interviews were conducted with 20 key state and national leaders in early care and education. These interviews elicited information on state and national trends and professional development opportunities related to increasing teacher qualifications and alignment between federal-, state-, and community-funded programs.
CHAPTER 1

Chapter Notes


More children in our nation require early care and education than ever before. This need for care is based on the increasing number of parents who work and whose schedules and circumstances require care outside of the home. The focus on education is fueled by concerns that all children should have the early experiences that will prepare them to be capable and curious learners when they enter formal schooling. The children most at risk of not becoming successful learners in public school are children who live in poverty and who are English-language learners. The number of these children is increasing.

Families face a range of early care and education options during the first five years of their children’s lives. Their choices are influenced by many factors, including family income, geographic location, age and number of their children, values and tradition, family structure, and hours of child care needed. Families may choose relatives and neighbors to provide care, or they may turn to more organized forms of care available in public or private centers, schools, Head Start programs, or licensed family child care homes. They may pay for care, barter for care, receive subsidies for care, or they may be entitled to free care, based on various risk factors and income guidelines.

While the diversity of care and payment options may meet the unique needs of many families, it also creates tremendous confusion on the part of the public and practitioners who work in the field regarding the precise definition and parameters of the field and the nomenclature used to define different teaching, administrative, and support roles. Adding to this confusion are the different expectations that families have for their children’s care and education, and whether or not they consider such factors as teacher-child ratios, interactions, staff qualifications, or curricula in making child care decisions.

This chapter examines the composition of the early childhood workforce and efforts to promote high quality in the care and education of our youngest children through the development of standards, emergence of quality rating systems, and the expansion of state-funded prekindergarten programs. The critical role of professional development in relation to improving quality is also examined. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the opportunities and challenges these quality improvement efforts pose to early care and education.
The Cross-Sector Nature of Early Care and Education

Unquestionably, early care and education is a critical component of today’s national landscape. Over 11 million children receive early childhood services each year, and an estimated 1.7 to 2.3 million individuals are paid annually to provide that care and education.

Of the estimated 2.3 million people paid to care for children, 24% work in center- or school-based settings (e.g., private and public child care centers, Head Start programs, and prekindergarten programs) and 28% provide licensed or regulated family child care. The remainder are comprised of relatives (35%) or nonrelatives (13%), collectively referred to as family, friend, and neighbor care (FFN).

Figure 1 presents the estimated numbers of providers by type of care. According to the National Bureau of Labor and Statistics, the overarching category of “child care workers” represents one of the fastest growing occupations of the past decade rivaling computer programmers, elementary school teachers, and registered nurses.

![Figure 1. Estimated Number of Practitioners by Type of Care](image)

*Early care and education* is a unifying term that describes the cross-sector nature of the many forms or types of child care and education. Programs can be center-based, school-based, or home-based. Centers can be publicly sponsored or privately owned and operated; they can be for-profit or nonprofit. Home-based care may be regulated or informal. Requirements for personnel vary widely in each of these different settings. Nevertheless,
when considering the many different places or sectors in which young children are cared for, it is evident that the number of children receiving non-parental care is growing. As a result, occupations in early care and education are among the fastest growing in this decade.

The workforce varies tremendously in terms of educational background, experience, and compensation. What we do know is that early childhood teachers are most likely to be white, female, and in their late 30s and early 40s. A more diverse teaching pool can be found in programs in which a minimum of three-quarters of the children are from an under-represented group. Even so, the gap between teacher race/ethnicity and child race/ethnicity continues to widen as the population of children in our nation becomes more diverse and geographically dispersed.

Research shows that most early childhood teachers have at least an associate of arts degree, although educational degrees held by staff are likely to vary by program type and job title. Lead teachers have more education than assistant teachers, and teachers in state-funded prekindergarten programs are the most educated, with a higher percentage holding baccalaureate or graduate degrees. States with a higher proportion of prekindergarten programs sponsored by public schools tend to have the highest rates of teachers with state-issued teaching certificates.

Educational attainment tends to be lowest among family child care providers. One national study found that only 11% of home-based providers hold a bachelor’s or graduate degree and 56% of the providers had only a high school degree or less.

Teacher turnover in community-based programs has been a frequent concern addressed in policy papers and research studies. A pivotal principle derived from research in child development is that children develop best when they have “secure, consistent relationships with responsive adults.” This relationship is jeopardized in programs and classrooms where teachers change frequently.

Current estimates of teacher turnover in community-based programs can be as high as 30% a year, twice what has been found for teachers in public school K-12 settings. Researchers studying teacher turnover in New Jersey’s Abbott Prekindergarten Program found that turnover was comparable in community-based programs and public school programs once the lead teacher salaries and benefits were equalized. For example, in 2004, 23% turnover in community-based programs was reported but only 15% left the field while 8% remained in the field but moved to another Abbott-funded classroom. In the same year, 17% turnover in public school programs was reported with only 12% leaving the field and 5% moving to another Abbott classroom.
In the Abbott program, teachers are all paid on the same scale regardless of auspices. If community-based teachers work in the summer or provide wrap-around care, their pay is increased. These teachers also receive the equivalent dollar amount of benefits as their public school counterparts.

It is not surprising that the rate of turnover is influenced by wages; centers that pay teachers higher wages experience less turnover. The availability of benefits, quality of working conditions, stability of the program leadership, and membership in professional associations have also been cited as factors that support retention. These factors vary across program types.

Compensation (wages and benefits) for most early childhood teachers continues to be among the lowest in the national workforce. According to the National Bureau of Labor Statistics the salary of preschool teachers is lower than any other teacher in the educational field and early childhood practitioners are among the lowest paid workers in service care industries. Figure 2 presents salary comparisons for directors of early childhood programs, child care workers, and certified preschool teachers.

The issue of work environment also merits consideration. The quality of administrative practices, including a center’s policies and procedures, have been found to predict certain behaviors of teachers (e.g., display of affection vs. anger) in their relationships with children. The quality of work life in programs (its organizational climate) has also been found to affect the type and quality of interactions between teachers and children.

Perhaps the clearest conclusion that can be drawn today about the nature of the early childhood workforce is that all these characteristics—qualifications, compensation, and working conditions—vary across programs, and that the most notable differences are found between state-funded prekindergarten programs and home-based family child care, funded by parent fees.

Increased Standards and Accountability

Over the past decade we have seen a concerted push by policymakers for higher standards and more accountability within the education system. Perhaps the most notable example of this push was the passage of the “No Child Left Behind” Act of 2001. Today, learning standards, program standards, quality rating systems, and professional standards are part of a national movement for accountability in early care and education.
Figure 2. Salary Comparisons for Directors, Child Care Workers, and Certified Preschool Teachers

Administrators in Education

Annual Salary

Service Care Industry

Annual Salary

Certified or Licensed Practitioners

Annual Salary

NBLS, 2007
Early Learning Standards. Nearly all states have developed early learning standards or guidelines for prekindergarten children, and many are developing these for infants and toddlers. Such standards typically delineate what children should know and be able to do in order to be ready for formal schooling. Whether voluntary or required, learning standards have become a force behind the evaluation of program quality.

Current discussions focus on how early learning standards align with classroom curriculum and child assessment, with K–3 learning standards, as well as with the preparation and responsibilities of teachers. The most exciting and sometimes controversial changes are found in states engaged in building a coordinated and comprehensive system of early care and education based on early learning standards. One example of cross-sector systems building is Pennsylvania’s voluntary quality rating system that measures program compliance with the state’s early learning standards as one component of quality.

Although standards represent an effort to improve child outcomes by providing learning guidelines, they also represent the expectation that teachers will be more intentional in their teaching. This expectation is reflected in a recent survey of state specialists in early childhood education that identified the following reasons for the development of standards: 1) to improve teaching practices; 2) to serve as a resource to improve instruction or curriculum used in the classroom; 3) to improve professional development; and 4) to educate parents about children’s development and learning.

The increasingly academic nature of some early learning standards is a response to the sweeping focus on accountability initiated in the K-12 education system through the passage and implementation of “No Child Left Behind.” Public schools are being held accountable for the performance of children on assessments administered at specific grade levels, beginning with third grade.

The requirements for children in third grade to meet specific learning standards in math and reading have resulted in higher academic expectations for children in the early grades, including kindergarten. The consequences for schools, districts, and states that fail to show “adequate yearly progress” on assessments are significant. This has led to increased concerns about young children’s readiness to enter kindergarten “prepared to learn” and highlights the need for a greater shared understanding of expectations for young children between the early care and education system and K-12 school system.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS/SDE) issued a joint statement in 2004 regarding early learning standards. While acknowledging that standards contribute to the quality of services for young children, the statement also cautioned that standards should be used in the context of supporting positive development and learning. Table 2 summarizes the four guiding principles for the use of standards in the joint statement.
Alignment between early childhood learning standards and K-12 standards is a pivotal issue if states are to ensure a coherent transition from early care and education to formal schooling. The controversy around alignment is most likely to ignite when early learning standards appear to be a “watered down” version of kindergarten standards and fail to address issues such as the social-emotional development of young children or the broad range of development typically found in young children. In 2008, 39 states require the use of standards only in prekindergarten programs that are funded by the state and the use of standards continues to be voluntary in other settings.

Federal initiatives such as Good Start, Grow Smart have provided guidance for the development of state plans to address standards related to children’s emerging literacy and language skills. The reauthorization of Head Start has also provided increased emphasis on meeting standards, particularly around literacy and numeracy.

Increasingly, Head Start is a part of statewide efforts not only to develop state standards, but also to actively collaborate in these efforts. Head Start involvement may range from membership on statewide interagency councils to participating in blended funding endeavors for the purpose of building capacity in meeting the standards and improving child outcomes.

**Program Standards.** Standards governing programs vary from state to state. At the most basic level are licensing standards for the regulation of child care. Licensing standards typically are administered by state departments of health or social services and tend to represent minimal requirements that often focus only on health and safety.

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**Table 2. Guiding Principles for the Use of Standards**

- emphasize significant, developmentally appropriate content and outcomes
- are developed and reviewed through informed, inclusive processes
- are implemented and assessed in ways that support all young children’s development
- require a foundation of support for early childhood programs, professionals, and families

NAEYC/NAECS/SDE, 2004

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The reauthorization of Head Start has also provided increased emphasis on meeting standards, particularly around literacy and numeracy.
Voluntary accreditation by national associations such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) provide a higher standard for evaluating the quality of programs. Accreditation by these national associations has been found to be associated with high-quality programming. 

In 2008, more than 8,000 early childhood programs have met NAEYC accreditation standards, which Parents Magazine labels as the “gold standard of approval.” Table 3 describes the elements related to quality that are assessed by NAEYC accreditation.

Table 3. Program Components Related to High Quality

| 1. | Promotion of positive and responsive relationships among all children and adults |
| 2. | A well-planned and integrated curriculum that is consistent with goals for children, promoting development in social, emotional, physical, language, and cognitive domains |
| 3. | Teaching that is developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate, using effective strategies that enhance each child’s learning |
| 4. | Use of ongoing and systematic assessment of child progress, through formal and informal approaches so that results benefit children through program improvement and teaching |
| 5. | A safe and healthy environment which promotes nutrition and protects children and staff from illness and injury |
| 6. | Consistent, well-trained, and well-compensated staff who have the knowledge, commitment, and educational qualifications to support children and their families |
| 7. | Collaborative relationships with families that are sensitive to family composition, language, and culture |
| 8. | Evidence of relationships with agencies and institutions in the children’s communities that support the program’s goals |
| 9. | A safe and healthy environment that is organized, properly equipped, and well maintained |
| 10. | Leadership and management that ensures that policies, procedures, and systems are in place to support staff and their retention, and build a quality program. |

NAEYC Program Standards
Given the many changes occurring in early care and education, NAEYC implemented new program standards and accreditation criteria in 2006, revising those originally established in 1985 and modified in 1998. The ten program standard areas are: Relationships, Curriculum, Teaching, Assessment of Child Progress, Health, Teachers, Families, Community Relationships, Physical Environment, and Leadership and Management.

Quality Rating Systems. One way accountability is being addressed in early care and education is through the implementation of quality rating systems (QRS) by states. These systems assess the quality of programs on a number of dimensions, including learning environments, program administration, staff qualifications, and training.

Quality rating systems include five components: program standards, accountability measures, program and practitioner support, financial incentives, and parent and consumer education. A quality rating system provides a systematic process for evaluating, describing, and improving the quality of care in programs. QRS data is also being used to show progress over time as programs are reevaluated.

Quality rating systems are the means to help programs increase program quality from the “floor” set by licensing standards to the “ceiling” represented by accreditation standards and beyond. As such, the QRS standards are based on state and national guidelines and can recognize different levels of quality (e.g., 3-star ratings versus 5-star ratings). The QRS consists of objective measures that are used by external reviewers or monitors to assign ratings.

States encourage program participation in a QRS through provision of staff training and technical assistance. They also may provide financial incentives for programs that meet higher standards. Appendix C presents the quality rating system in place in Illinois for licensed centers.

Currently there are 17 statewide quality rating systems (QRS) for early care and education, and many more states are developing and field testing such systems. Nearly all of the statewide quality rating systems include national accreditation as a level or benchmark of program quality.
**Professional Standards.** An increasing number of states are requiring that certain segments of their early childhood workforce become more qualified by earning a bachelor's degree and/or teacher certification. Many leaders assert that state-funded prekindergarten programs, for example, should become part of the larger public education system in order to leverage higher compensation. The rationale is that the bachelor's degree with certification represents the same requirements for teachers in K-12 education and establishes an expectation for salaries comparable to those of public school teachers.

The call for higher professional standards isn’t only being felt at the state level. The Head Start Bureau recently increased the qualifications required of lead teachers in preschool classrooms. By 2013 one-half of all teachers in Head Start programs must have a bachelor's degree with a focus on early care and education.

Analyses of current research show a mixed picture about the impact of the bachelor's degree. Most studies generally support the premise that classroom quality can be affected by formal training (college coursework). Teachers with more formal training provide a higher quality of care and education than teachers with less formal training. Recent studies have questioned this association by demonstrating that great variability in teaching quality can be found among prekindergarten teachers who have similar degrees, majors, and certification.

Not surprisingly teacher preparation programs can vary greatly in quality and outcomes within and across states. And research has not clarified the extent to which the intensity of training or the content of training matters.

How teachers are prepared, mentored, and supported during their early years of teaching is as critical as initial preparation. Leaders in the field argue that state professional development systems (PDS) with career lattices that are aligned with national and state professional standards are needed to ensure that preparation is appropriate and meaningful.

There appears to be uniform agreement that opportunities for continuing education and support are needed for teachers with degrees as well as teachers pursuing their first degree. Only through the provision of strong initial preparation and ongoing professional development will teachers learn optimal ways to instruct and interact with children. Their teaching interactions are then likely to be associated with positive outcomes for children.
Increased Focus on Program Leadership

A growing body of research underscores the commonsense notion that leadership matters in early care and education programs. The level of formal education and specialized training of the program director impacts the quality of services provided. Directors with higher levels of education demonstrate higher-level administrative practices. Directors clearly play a central and key role in setting the tone and expectations for programs. It is both their vision and goal-setting practices that provide the support teachers need to create high-quality educational environments.

A statewide study in California found that programs were more likely to be rated high in the area of teacher-child interactions and the use of intentional teaching practices under certain conditions. Those conditions included having directors with higher educational qualifications and an administrator credential as well as teachers with a bachelor's degree or California teaching credential.

While research supports the importance of specialized training in program administration, the reality is that most directors are promoted to their positions without the knowledge and skills they need to do their jobs effectively. A 2003 study of directors nationwide found that almost three-quarters of respondents felt they were not prepared or only somewhat prepared for their current administrative position. Over one-half stated that the transition into their administrative role was overwhelming.

Leadership succession is also an issue in the field. The transfer of leadership in early childhood centers can be disruptive because it alters lines of communication, affects decision making, and disturbs the equilibrium of daily routines. The systematic orientation of new directors to their roles and the development of formal leadership succession plans appear to be the exception in the field, however. Only 14% of directors in the 2003 study felt their orientation into their administrative role was thorough and systematic and only 12% of programs reported that they had a formal leadership succession plan in place.

Recognizing the importance of capable and stable leadership in center-based programs, NAEYC in its updated accreditation criteria, strengthened the recommended qualifications of program directors. The new accreditation qualifications for directors have raised the bar to a minimum of a bachelor's degree in early childhood education and 9 semester hours of credit in program administration.
Establishment of Professional Development Systems

The emergence of early learning standards, program standards, quality rating systems, and professional standards has highlighted the critical need for ongoing professional development in the field and comprehensive systems for the delivery of training, awarding of credentials, and tracking workforce development. Meeting the increased need for training will require innovative funding strategies and the delivery of professional development in different formats, and at varying times, locales, and levels of intensity. 42

The 2008 reauthorization of the Higher Education Act for the first time recognized the need to support professional development in early childhood settings. The act addresses three areas critical to increasing the education of the workforce. The first is the inclusion of grants to states to create task forces to develop integrated professional development systems that link with state early learning councils. The second is the expansion of loan forgiveness for individuals working in child care, Head Start, and Early Head Start programs who are seeking credentials and bachelor’s degrees in early childhood and require loans to fund tuition. And third, the act also includes early childhood education programs within the Title II teacher quality grants. This inclusion will allow initiatives that link completion of an associate or bachelor’s degree in early childhood education to salary compensation. 43

Currently, nearly all states are implementing professional development initiatives. Some have comprehensive statewide professional development systems in place. The support of the 2008 Higher Education Act to create systems in all states should spur further development.

In 1993, NAEYC recommended a unifying framework for professional development to address the cross-sector needs of the early childhood profession. Their recommendations included a career lattice for advancement, which linked compensation to career progress and defined different levels of professional roles. 44 The NAEYC position paper on professional development is currently undergoing revision with an update anticipated in early 2009.

The NAEYC recommendations have been incorporated into many state plans. Recently, the National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center (NCCIC) outlined a framework for a comprehensive professional development system in states. NCCIC recommends that state professional development systems should be accessible and based on a clearly articulated framework, include a continuum of training and ongoing supports, define pathways that are tied to licensure and credentials, and address the needs of adult learners.
NCCIC’s framework draws on existing and successful models in several states, including Illinois, North Carolina, and Wisconsin. States that are successful in their implementation of a professional development system have identified a structure for governing and financing the system. States may contract for implementing their professional development systems with independent entities such as higher education institutions or child care resource and referral agencies (CCR&Rs).

Funding for professional development systems comes from multiple sources, with the most common being the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). However, many states engaged in active cross-sector professional development also identify the use of funds from Head Start, State Prekindergarten, workforce development, foundations, and a variety of grants. Key to the success of a professional development system is the ability to identify, maximize, and leverage all resources available for professional development.

As noted earlier, the educational background of individuals in the early childhood workforce ranges from those who have less than a high school diploma to those who hold an advanced degree. To meet the range of needs and backgrounds, professional development systems are typically based on a career lattice tied to core knowledge and competencies that can lead to a variety of credentials.

A career lattice is designed to support personnel who are just beginning their career as well as those who enter at more advanced levels to move through graduate degrees or acquire additional credentials such as a director credential or infant-toddler credential. These credentials may range from entry level to advanced levels, based on depth of training and prior work experience.

The ability of personnel to benefit from state professional development systems is influenced by the accessibility and affordability of programs, as well as by the outcomes or compensation resulting from participation. Many early childhood practitioners who pursue professional development are nontraditional students, balancing the demands of work and family. Fitting professional development into the already busy hours of their day can be a challenge and may depend on the flexibility with which they can sign up, take, and complete coursework or training.

Important supports that states are identifying include developing online registries of training opportunities, establishing career development advising and mentoring structures, and providing distance learning opportunities. Also crucial is establishing articulation agreements between two-year and four-year institutions of higher education for the transfer of students who complete an associate’s degree.
Financial aid, scholarships, and wage supports are the keys to access. These resources can be provided through the T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship program, which gives scholarships to early childhood practitioners to complete coursework or attain a credential and through various state programs that supplement child care salaries based on staff educational levels that exceed licensing requirements.

Expansion of State-Sponsored Prekindergarten Programs

A rapidly emerging presence in the field are state initiatives to fund prekindergarten programs, many of which are associated with public school programs and have access to funding sources from the state and federal government. These programs often represent a focused interest and emphasis on development and education. They are more likely to require teachers to be certified and hold a bachelor’s degree, and they are more likely to focus on children identified as at-risk for school failure based on a variety of child and family circumstances.

During the past year, state-funded preschool or prekindergarten programs have passed the one million mark in the number of 3- and 4-year-old children served nationwide. In fact, 22% of all 4-year-olds in the United States were enrolled in a state-funded prekindergarten program. Some state-funded prekindergarten initiatives also reflect a significant expansion of Head Start programs, with the state providing some oversight. States may fund their programs through a variety of ways, using state, local, and federal funds. The mix of funds can vary within and across states.

The state in which a child lives is the greatest determinant of whether the child accesses publicly funded prekindergarten. According to the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), the top 10 states delivering prekindergarten programs provide access to more than a third of their 4-year-olds (states range from 34% to 68%). In contrast, 12 states continue to provide no programs, beyond mandated special education services.

Illinois is the top state serving 3-year-olds (19% of the population) and is twelfth in serving 4-year-olds (27% of the population). Table 4 presents the top states by number of 4-year-olds served. States providing no services beyond special education include Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Indiana, Mississippi, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming.
Other important disparities among states identified by NIEER in their publication *The State of Preschool 2007* include:

- State spending ranges from nothing in 12 states to more than $10,000 per child in New Jersey.
- Educational requirements for teachers range from little more than a high school diploma in some states to a bachelor’s degree with teacher certification in early childhood in other states.
- Maximum class size and staff-child ratios range from no limit in Texas and Kansas to 15 children with a teacher and full-time assistant in New Jersey’s Abbott Program.

Early learning and program standards for prekindergarten classrooms are becoming commonplace among the states that fund prekindergarten programs. NIEER provides 10 benchmarks that relate to different program components (e.g., learning standards, teacher and assistant teacher qualifications, class size, staff-child ratios) for rating how well states report that they are serving children in their prekindergarten programs. In the 2007 report, ratings for the 38 states funding prekindergarten ranged from meeting three benchmarks (Kansas) to ten (North Carolina). Illinois met nine benchmarks, missing the one related to meals and snacks.
State-funded prekindergarten programs are located and administered in different ways, depending on state regulations. They may be part of a public school system, part of a Head Start program, or, in a mixed-delivery system, associated with community-based child care organizations and family child care homes.

**Summary**

Early care and education is both a service industry and a professional field that is expanding rapidly as more families seek both care and education for their young children. Practitioners in the field vary greatly in terms of education, job roles, and places of employment. Quality of care and education has emerged as a crucial issue due to several factors, including the impact of “No Child Left Behind” on preparing children to be ready for school and research showing that the first five years of life are critical in a child’s intellectual and emotional development.

To ensure quality of care and education, states have developed standards and accountability for programs. Standards for what personnel must know and be able to do are also emerging. To encourage professional development, states are establishing professional development systems (PDS), often based on a career lattice, to guide practitioners from entry to advanced credentials and degrees. The emergence of state-funded prekindergarten programs has set new benchmarks for teacher qualifications and compensation, which ultimately may influence expectations for other sectors of the field.
VOICES FROM THE FIELD

I do not think degrees and certifications are sufficient to assure effective teaching practice. It is a misunderstanding of the teacher certification programs if you think brand new teachers are ready to be good teachers; they need mentoring and ongoing support. Teacher preparation programs provide the knowledge base but like all professionals, teachers need to learn how to apply their knowledge to various subject matter and particular children.

Barbara Bowman, Chief Officer
Office of Early Childhood Programs, Chicago Public Schools

How can you provide quality care for a child who has several teachers in one year? It's clear that high staff turnover creates an unstable environment for our children. There are committed professionals who really want to do this work, but we won't be able to retain them if we can't pay them a living wage.

Maria Whelan, President and CEO
Illinois Action for Children

The trend is toward a unified system of early care and education; our job is to maintain momentum for cross-sector unification—keep pushing it! We need to increase compensation as we increase qualifications or professional development systems will fail.

Anne Mitchell, President
Early Childhood Policy Research

More children with special needs are attending early care and education programs. We see an increased demand for teachers to know how to work well with these children and how to collaborate with behavioral specialists and speech therapists. In fact, these specialists are becoming part of the early childhood workforce.

Walter Gilliam, Professor
Yale University Child Study Center

The early childhood field is at a crossroads...with new attention to young children, we need a dynamic and creative workforce who can provide the support that children and families need. Working in this field is a 21st century job...it takes skill and commitment. We need to build the capacity at all levels as we respond to the diversity of families we serve and the variety of roles that now define the early childhood field.

Joan Lombardi, President
The Children's Project
Chapter Notes


18. Personal communication with Ellen Frede, National Institute for Early Education Research, August 26, 2008.


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The status of the early childhood workforce in Illinois–2008


Nearly a million (8%) of the 13 million people who live in Illinois are children under the age of 5. Almost a quarter of these children live in the City of Chicago. Unfortunately, the data also reveal that poverty is a reality for many Illinois children. The 2005 estimated U.S. Census found that in Illinois 200,698 children under 5 years of age live at or below the federal poverty level, and another 186,867 live at or below 185% of the federal poverty level. Over one-third of the children in these categories live in Chicago.\(^1\)

Enrollment of children in high-quality early childhood programs is one strategy long advocated to reduce the effects of poverty on young children’s physical, social, and emotional health, as well as to improve their readiness for and success in formal schooling.\(^2\) Some families enroll their children in early childhood programs because they need care during the hours they work outside the home. Other families choose programs to prepare their children socially and academically for kindergarten. Still others choose early childhood programs because their children have special needs that require support and intervention.

This chapter paints a picture of the different types of early childhood programs in Illinois. It begins with a discussion of how the early care and education industry is a vital contributor to the Illinois economy. It then describes the different early childhood settings, sources of regulatory oversight, program types, and funding sources. It shows how certain barriers such as cost, entrance criteria, or geographic location often limit access to early childhood services for some families and how Illinois has emerged as a national leader in the effort to overcome these barriers by providing high-quality programs for young children in a wide range of settings. In many ways, these changes reflect the recommendations from the 2001 edition of *Who’s Caring for the Kids?*

### The Early Care and Education Industry in Illinois

Early care and education programs take many forms, ranging from part-day, full-day, and drop-in care to weekly, school-year, and year-round care. Programs may be associated with human service agencies, hospitals, or religious organizations. Programs located in centers, schools, or homes may be publicly funded (through the Illinois State Board of Education,
Head Start, the Illinois Department of Human Services, or the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services) and/or privately funded (through corporate sponsors or parent tuition and fees).

Regulated early care and education in Illinois is offered at over 14,000 sites that collectively have a capacity to serve over 350,000 children. Children over the age of three account for three-fourths of this group. More than 84,000 children under the age of three are served by Early Head Start, licensed child care centers, and licensed family child care homes. These data do not include the children served in the estimated 40,000 license-exempt family child care homes in the state.

Early care and education is more than a $2 billion industry in Illinois. The business of child care clearly supports the workforce of the state where one in ten Illinois workers is raising a child under the age of six. Many of these working parents pay for child care. In fact, the typical Illinois family that chooses early care and education outside the home often spends as much as 25% of their income for infant and preschool care. The cost of full-time, center-based infant care surpasses the cost of resident undergraduate tuition at the University of Illinois.

Unquestionably, the early care and education industry provides economic benefits to the state and its businesses. In fact, a recent report on the economic impact of various industries in the state ranked early care and education third as an industry in annual gross receipts behind travel accommodations and the soybean farming industries.

As part of the development of this report, a matrix was compiled summarizing information on early childhood programs that receive support from federal or state sources and are subject to federal or state regulations. The matrix includes information on key program elements as well as staffing requirements and program outcomes. This matrix is housed on the Illinois Early Childhood Collaboration Web site (http://www.ilearlychildhoodcollab.org/) and will be updated annually.

Until recently, it was possible to use public versus private or nonprofit versus for-profit classifications as a convenient way to categorize early childhood programs. However, the advent of Preschool for All in the fall of 2006, as well as the increase in Head Start and child care collaborations, has opened the door to blended funding and collaborations among different types of programs. While this trend has been positive, it has also meant that many programs must comply with multiple reporting requirements and regulations governing their programs. The next section will address the variety of early care and education programs in Illinois that operate within the public and private, for-profit and nonprofit domains.
Formal Care and Education

Formal group care in Illinois takes place in child care centers, public schools, and licensed family child care homes. Center- and school-based programs have the capacity to serve from 16 children to several hundred children at any one site. Family child care programs, by contrast, have the capacity to serve up to 16 children in any one home.

All formal early childhood programs in Illinois fall under the jurisdiction of one or more regulatory agencies—the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (IDCFS), the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), or Head Start. IDCFS, ISBE, and Head Start all have established minimum qualifications for staff, adult-to-child ratios, and in-service training requirements. Some programs are subject to multiple regulatory standards.

Licensed Center- and School-Based Programs. In 2008, more than 300,000 children ranging in age from six weeks to 13 years, attended licensed child care centers on either a part-time or full-time basis. In addition, more than 90,000 children were served in state-funded preschool programs. Of those children, the majority were served in half-day classes (typically 10-15 hours per week) located in either community-based programs receiving PFA funds or in public schools.

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<tr>
<th>TYPES OF CENTER- AND SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS</th>
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<td><strong>For-Profit Private Proprietary or Partnership.</strong> A single individual may operate a center as a sole proprietorship. Two or more business owners may operate a center as a partnership. These centers may be small “mom and pop” businesses that operate at a single site as a sole proprietorship or partnership. Others are large multi-site operations employing several hundred employees. Most for-profit centers that are single site or smaller multi-site businesses serve 60-80 children. Generally, these smaller for-profit centers are unable to provide social and mental health services for their families or to hire specialized staff to promote parent education and involvement. They are often faced with providing higher salaries for their certified teaching staff than the owners earn, and many are unable to offer insurance and benefits packages that would make them competitive when hiring personnel.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>For-Profit Corporation or Chain.</strong> Larger for-profit centers (either national or regional chains) operate 4% of the child care programs in Illinois. These centers, like for-profit private proprietary centers, rely almost entirely on parent fees and child care assistance payments from IDHS. With the ability to reduce costs through bulk purchasing, advertising, and centralized management structures, the large for-profit child care centers can offer insurance and benefits packages, including retirement plans and tuition reimbursement for professional development.</td>
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• **For-Profit Corporate-Sponsored Programs.** Corporate-sponsored child care centers with on-site facilities operate 2% of the child care programs in Illinois with funding collected from parent fees and corporate subsidies. As an example of corporate-sponsored early care and education, Bright Horizons Family Solutions operates 18 centers in Illinois. It receives support from its partner companies such as Walgreens, Northern Trust, Sears, and Abbott and provides on-site child care for employees’ children. While open to the community in many instances, Bright Horizons Family Solutions gives parents employed by a sponsoring corporation priority enrollment status. Some corporate-sponsored programs also provide specialized services like back-up care for mildly ill children. Because the sponsoring corporation often finances the design and construction of the physical facility, corporate-sponsored child care programs are located in some of the finest facilities in the state.

• **Independent Private Nonprofit Programs.** These early childhood programs are similar to private for-profit programs in that they are most typically housed at a single site. Fiduciary responsibility, however, rests with a board of directors. These programs provide 35% of center-based care in Illinois. On a national level, these centers have traditionally served 70-80 children, with the majority of funding (89%) coming from parent fees and publicly funded child care subsidies. The additional revenues are supplied by subsidy payments made on behalf of parents by employers, federal Child and Adult Care Food Program funding, private and public grants, and tax-deductible donations.

• **Nonprofit Programs Affiliated with a Social Service Agency or Hospital.** Human service agencies such as the YMCA, Chicago Commons, and Jane Addams Hull House offer child care as one of many community-based services to families. In these instances, the child care program fits into the agency’s overarching mission, and staff members receive compensation according to the agency’s pay and benefits schedule. Blessing Hospital Child Care Center in Quincy is an example of a nonprofit program associated with a hospital.

• **Public Nonprofit Programs Sponsored by Federal, State, or Local Government.** The U.S. government operates a center in the Federal Building in the heart of Chicago for federal employees, and the State of Illinois sponsors child care centers in Springfield and Chicago for state employees. In addition, many park and recreation districts sponsor part- and full-day programs in different communities across the state.
• **College- and University-Affiliated Programs.** Many colleges and universities in Illinois offer child care as a service to students, faculty, and the community. These programs often provide a classroom laboratory experience for undergraduate and graduate students. In addition to parent fees, these programs may receive a subsidy from their sponsoring institution in the form of facility space and utilities.

• **Military-Sponsored Programs.** The federal government provides child care for members of the military. The Rock Island Arsenal and the Naval Station Great Lakes both house child care centers. Construction of a new child care center is planned for Scott Air Force Base. Military families who use child care pay for it on a sliding scale, and their costs are matched dollar for dollar by the government. All military services (Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Army) as well as active-duty personnel (including Reserves, National Guard, ROTC, MEPS, and recruiters) are eligible for child care tuition subsidies through the NACCRRA Military Partnerships program.

• **Public School Sponsored Programs.** Three types of early childhood programs may be found in public schools in Illinois. They include half-day prekindergarten for children served through PFA funds and half-day early childhood special education programs for children identified with developmental delays. Early childhood programs are also provided at some high schools around the state providing child care for teen mothers and employees of the school district, as well as a laboratory for child development classes. For example, Tiny Tigers is a preschool program offered through Urbana High School.

• **Faith-Based Programs.** Early childhood programs associated with religious organizations are part of the landscape of center-based care in Illinois. Most of these programs include a philosophy and instruction that are faith-based. Only those programs that have 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status are eligible to receive public funds and private philanthropic support.

**License-Exempt Center- and School-Based Programs.** While center-based programs technically fall under the umbrella of formal regulated care, some programs are legally license-exempt. License-exempt centers include those associated with a public or private school, those that serve children whose parents are on-site, and those that operate fewer than 10 hours per week. License-exempt centers, however, may not care for children under the age of three. Currently, no system in Illinois monitors legally license-exempt programs.
for compliance with basic health and safety standards or past violations of child abuse and neglect. These programs are, however, required by law to meet state and local fire and health codes.

**Licensed Family Child Care.** Family child care programs provide child care options for families who do not have access to center-based care or who want a smaller, more intimate setting for their children. In 2004, 42% of working parents with children under 14 years of age reported working nontraditional hours.\(^\text{10}\) Parents in some rural areas are separated by great distances from the nearest center-based setting. These parents are more likely to make use of family child care. According to 2008 data obtained from INCCRRRA, 10,958 licensed family child care homes in Illinois had the capacity to serve 94,742 children. Almost 20% of these homes were located in the City of Chicago.

Two categories of family child care are governed by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (IDCFS) licensing regulations. Providers in the small family child care home category are licensed for no more than 8 children (12 with an assistant), with only 3 children younger than 2 years of age. Providers in the large family child care home category are allowed no more than 16 children. The ratio in large homes is also 8:1. Group family child care requires the presence of an assistant when there are more than 8 children present.\(^\text{11}\)

In 2006, Illinois became the first state to complete labor negotiations and sign a statewide contract for the unionization of home-based child care providers, who care for children receiving a child care subsidy. Through collective bargaining the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) represents approximately 11,000 licensed family child care (FCC) providers and 40,000 family, friends, and neighbor (FFN) providers.

As a result of negotiations, providers received a 35% increase in state subsidy reimbursement over the course of the three-year contract, which ends in June 2009. Funds also were allocated to provide partial support for providers’ health insurance beginning in the third year of the contract. Provisions were made for settlement of grievance procedures through binding arbitration. The bargaining process not only led to increases in the reimbursement rates, it also resulted in more efficient payment procedures, greater access to training for providers, and a stronger provider voice in rule making.\(^\text{12}\)

**Informal License-Exempt Family Child Care**

Informal home-based care is legally license-exempt when a provider serves no more than three unrelated children. Many parents choose to place their children in the care of family, friends, or neighbors (FFN). Parents who live in rural areas where formal care is not available and parents who work variable or late-night hours value the flexibility in scheduling offered by this type of care. Some parents who use informal care want to provide
financial support for relatives and neighbors; others choose a provider whose language and culture matches their own. Many parents also value the low child-to-adult ratio that is available in this type of care.\textsuperscript{13}

A recent study of this sector of the early care and education industry found that two-thirds of Illinois license-exempt child care providers have participated in child care classes or workshops, most commonly related to CPR or first aid training, but only one-third have attended a training event related to parenting education or child development. Seven out of ten license-exempt providers have finished high school or obtained a GED, but only 10% have earned any kind of college degree. Fifteen percent report that they have taken at least one college course in child development or early childhood education.\textsuperscript{14}

### Sources of Public Funding

Understanding how early childhood programs are financed in Illinois is crucial because it directly impacts workforce compensation and retention rates. As in other states, early care and education in Illinois is funded in several ways. Head Start programs are funded with federal monies, and Preschool for All programs are funded by state tax dollars through the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE).

Unlike most public school funds which are allocated to school districts on a formula basis, PFA funds are awarded through a competitive bidding process which requires that programs, public or private, submit applications. Together these federal- and state-funded programs serve about 26% of children in formal group care. The remaining 74% of children in formal care (licensed and license-exempt early care and education centers, and licensed family child care homes) are financed by tuition/fees and/or subsidies.

The subsidies for families who are low-income are paid by the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS). Programs may also receive subsidies from corporate sponsors or other entities. In addition, the military subsidizes parent fees at its centers. Many children receive care and education that is paid for by more than one funding source.

**Head Start and Early Head Start.** Head Start is federally funded and regulated by the Administration for Children and Families in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The 47 Head Start grantees in Illinois include public school systems, government agencies, public/private nonprofit organizations, and community action agencies. Many of these groups sponsor multi-site programs. Nonprofit and for-profit agencies administer 75% of the Head Start programs, with the balance managed by community action agencies (16%) and government agencies or school systems (9%). The grantees must provide at least 20%
of the program funding, which can include in-kind contributions. These grantees currently serve approximately 34,000 children in Head Start and 2,000 in Early Head Start at 550 sites in the 47 grantee areas.

Increasingly, Head Start programs are partnering with child care centers or receiving subsidies to provide full-time, year-round care. The Head Start program is free to participants, with a co-payment required for enrollment in full-day, year-round child care provided by collaborative partners.

Head Start programs serve approximately 15% of all children in center-based care in Illinois. Head Start services for preschoolers are primarily offered through community-based centers that provide comprehensive services to low-income children and families. However, services can also be provided through family child care. Over 150 family child care homes in Illinois currently provide Head Start programming.

Seventy-nine percent of the children served by Head Start in Illinois come from families with annual incomes below $15,000. Over 48% of those served reside in Chicago. Head Start spent over $271,000,000 to serve approximately 34,000 of Illinois' 3- and 4-year olds in 2006-2007.

A variety of Head Start programming configurations are available in the state; but the most common is half-day attendance, four days per week. Recent expansion of Head Start has focused on full-day, full-year programming and the extension of services to infants and toddlers through the Early Head Start program. Parent involvement is a strong component of all Head Start programs and has led to the successful training and recruitment of parents as teaching and support staff. Head Start emphasizes inclusion of children with disabilities, and 13% are included in Illinois programs.

The number of Head Start classrooms staffed by degreed and credentialed teachers has steadily increased over the past decade. In Illinois 10% of Head Start teachers have a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential, 41% have an associate's degree, 31% hold a baccalaureate degree, and 9% hold a graduate degree.

Early Head Start serves children from birth to three years of age. The adult-to-child ratio is 4:1, and the average class size is 7 or 8 children. Early Head Start often contracts with licensed family child care homes. However, these homes must meet the high standards of quality required by the Head Start Program Performance Standards. Early Head Start grantees have worked with licensed family child care homes and with centers where they fund classrooms. This partnership has raised the quality of both center- and home-based programs for infants and toddlers.
Early Childhood Special Education Services. Children identified as having a developmental delay or disability are eligible for special education services when they turn three years of age. These services are provided through local school districts and special education cooperatives. In 2008 Illinois served 37,035 children eligible for these services. The delivery of services, however, can be through an array of private or public early care and education programs.

In Illinois many children who receive services attend a preschool program located within their local public school, but services also may be delivered in a child care center, Head Start program, or in the child’s home. Services may include speech and language therapy, audiology services, physical therapy, or occupational therapy. Services are funded partly under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) legislation and through a combination of state and local funds. These services are under the oversight of the Illinois State Board of Education.

Infants and toddlers also may receive specialized services through the state’s early intervention program. Services may be delivered in a variety of settings, the most frequent being homes, followed by the health provider’s setting (clinic) or child care setting. These services are under the oversight of the Illinois Department of Human Services.

Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Preschool for All. The state-funded prekindergarten program for 3- to 5-year-olds who are at-risk of academic failure has been part of the Illinois picture since it was enacted into law in 1985. This legislation reflected a national trend to create school reform in response to the 1983 publication of A Nation at Risk, a report of the U.S. Department of Education’s National Commission on Excellence in Education.

The Prekindergarten At-Risk program made its debut in Illinois in 1986. The program served 6,953 preschoolers in 100 sites in the first year using $12.1 million allocated by the Illinois General Assembly. School districts could write a proposal to receive the grant funds, and it was up to each district to select a screening instrument, determine the selection criteria, and design a program model based on local needs.

When the program was first launched, most ISBE Prekindergarten At-Risk programs operated four days per week, with half-day sessions serving an average of 20 children. The fifth day was used for teachers to attend classes to obtain their Type 04 Early Childhood Certification.

Chicago Prekindergarten At-Risk grants have been administered by the Chicago Public Schools since 1995. The Early Childhood Division of ISBE administers the programs for the rest of the state. However, both entities use the same criteria. Thirty-seven percent of the Early Childhood Block Grant funds currently go to Chicago.
The funding and the number of children served by the Prekindergarten At-Risk funds have increased over time. Figures 3 and 4 reflect this growth over time in the number of children served and state expenditures for the program.

**Figure 3. Number of Children Served in ISBE Prekindergarten and PFA Programs, 1990-2008**

**Figure 4. Expenditures for ISBE Prekindergarten and PFA Programs, 1990-2008**
For the first 11 years of its existence, the program funding was provided through a single state grant. Then, in 1997, the legislature enacted the Early Childhood Education Block Grant, and the funding for the state Prekindergarten At-Risk program was combined with funding for two other ISBE grant programs—the Prevention Initiative and the Parental Training Initiative.

Block grants had emerged on the national and state scene as a method of streamlining the funding process and providing governments with flexibility in designing and implementing programs. The Early Childhood Education Block Grant initially required that 8% of the total funds be used to fund programs for children ages birth to three. In 1998, the proportion was increased to 11%.

Despite the continued increases in funding, many children do not have access to high-quality preschool at a time when research documents the importance of early learning experiences on lifelong learning. Concerns expressed by early childhood leaders and policymakers in the state regarding the number of children in need of care led to the creation of the Illinois Early Learning Council in 2003.

Bipartisan legislation, known as Senate Bill 565, created this council of appointed members to review current early care and education programs and initiatives in the state. The Council was charged to identify gaps in services and barriers to services, and to engage in collaborative planning at the state level with agencies that serve young children. The Early Learning Council released a report called *Preschool for All* in spring 2006. Governor Rod Blagojevich used this report as the blueprint for further legislation, entitled Preschool for All (HB 4705). It was passed in July 2006 and signed into law.

The enactment of Preschool for All (PFA) made Illinois the first state in the nation to initiate funding of high-quality preschool with the goal of eventually making preschool services available to all 3- and 4-year-old children in Illinois whose families choose to participate. The Illinois Early Learning Council recommended that PFA be built on the existing state-funded Prekindergarten At-Risk programs.

As with previously funded programs, funding for PFA is made available through the Early Childhood Block Grant. Soon all preschool programs, serving 3- and 4-year-olds funded through the Early Childhood Block Grant, will be referred to as Preschool for All programs. When fully implemented, it is anticipated that PFA will serve over 190,000 preschoolers.

As with the Prekindergarten At-Risk program, the downstate PFA program is administered through the Illinois State Board of Education. The PFA program in Chicago is administered by Chicago Public Schools, District 299. Both require that the applicants seek funding based on the number of children they plan to serve on a half-day basis. Applicants typically request $60,000 for a single half-day session serving 20 children or $120,000 for two half-day sessions.
In 2007-2008, a total of $347 million was dispersed through the Early Childhood Block Grant to bring the combined capacity of Prekindergarten At-Risk and PFA programs, to 90,000. To become fully implemented, 100,000 more children will need to be served.

The expansion of Preschool for All has raised questions about the supply of certified teachers in early childhood education. Some policymakers and advocates have estimated that nearly 2,000 additional teachers with Type 04 certification will be needed in the next five years.

The Illinois Research Council conducted a study in 2005 on the pipeline for early childhood teachers and identified a reserve pool of teachers. These are certified teachers who have “stepped” out of classroom teaching, either to be at home to raise young children or to pursue other education related options such as pursuing an advanced degree or working within the educational system in a different capacity (e.g., curriculum coordinator or supervisor).

The study found that nearly 3,500 certified teachers are available and willing to consider teaching again “under the right conditions,“ These conditions included the need for a higher salary; nearly half of the reserve pool stated they would need to make a salary near $40,000 and another 29% identified the range of $40,000 to $49,999. At a minimum, these teachers would expect to earn between $23 and $30 per hour given a 10-month public school contract.

While salary expectations match the salaries potentially available through some public school and community-based programs with PFA, this pool of teachers is unlikely to be available where the need is greatest—in Chicago—based on their geographic location primarily outside of the Chicago Metropolitan area. The true availability of a reserve pool of teachers for expansion of PFA remains a question.

**Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS).** The Illinois Department of Human Services subsidizes child care for children whose parents are of low income and are employed or enrolled in approved education or training programs. In FY 2006, IDHS spent over $616.2 million on child care assistance. This funding helped the parents of 299,478 children pay for child care. The average amount paid per month, including subsidy and parent co-pay, was $328 per child. In 2006, IDHS provided child care assistance to 2,741 child care centers and 8,614 licensed family child care homes.
Department of Defense (DoD). The fees for military child care are subsidized by the Department of Defense and are provided on a sliding scale. Fees in 2005-2006 ranged from $43 a week for those at the low end of the income scale to $126 a week for those at the high end of the income scale. The DoD average weekly fee during FY 2005 was $85 per week.

Collaboration and Systems Building

One of the major changes in the early childhood landscape in Illinois during the past decade has been the increase in the number of collaborations across different sectors of the field. For example, Head Start collaborates with child care centers and public school prekindergarten programs. These collaborations are able to reduce duplication in services as well as expand the number of children and families served.

One new feature of PFA is that community-based programs as well as public school programs are eligible to apply for grants to expand the number of children served by Preschool for All. PFA emphasizes a “comprehensive approach to early childhood development and encourages collaboration among providers and other community stakeholders to foster creative strategies to meet the complete needs of young children and their families.” This collaborative approach also recognizes the very real limitations in space and facilities in public schools throughout the state.

Because of the emphasis on community collaboration and maximization of community resources, many children attend programs in community-based settings rather than in public school buildings. However, in some instances, the local school district acts as the fiscal agent for the community-based program. In some cases, PFA is sponsored by an individual program; in other cases, it is sponsored by a multi-partner community collaboration.

These community partnerships and collaborations have substantially increased the number of children that can be served. In 2007-2008, the Rockford school district was able to serve 220 additional students in community settings through collaborations with multiple partners. For example, Circles of Learning, a privately owned center in Rockford, worked in partnership with the Rockford school district and Head Start to apply for PFA funding. The collaboration helped them maximize resources by providing children with a part-day prekindergarten program taught by a certified teacher embedded within a full-day early care and education program.

Establishing Meaningful Community Collaborations

Those who work with Marcia Blascoe often hear her say, “We need to maximize our resources by working together.” These are not empty words for Marcia. She walks the talk. As Director of the Rockford Early Childhood Program, she has been at the center of a community-wide collaboration to increase high-quality early care and education.
The Rockford early childhood community has a long history of collaboration, but relationships were formalized in 2003 with the formation of the Rockford Early Learning Council. The Council provides a structure for community collaboration to flourish. Partnerships have allowed the Rockford Early Childhood Program to grow beyond traditional school-based, part-day programs. Lead teachers with Type 04 early childhood certification now bring standards-based instruction to child care centers such as Circles of Learning/Harrison Park and Trinity Learning Center as well as Head Start classrooms. By collaborating with community-based programs, duplication of services is eliminated and resources benefit more children.

According to Marcia, “all the community’s children are our children since they all eventually transition into the District’s kindergarten classrooms.” Programs bring different strengths to the collaboration. For example Head Start provides medical and health services, child care programs offer a longer day for children whose families need full-day care, and the school district provides a standards-based curriculum, professional development opportunities, and strong language and literacy activities. “Together we provide planned transitions from community-based programs to the public school system,” says Marcia.

As the Rockford programs have expanded, recruiting qualified teachers has been difficult. In response, Rockford has adopted a “grow your own” approach to developing qualified teachers from diverse backgrounds by supporting the professional development of existing staff in programs. They have established an Early Childhood Educators’ Cohort, funded by the Illinois State Board of Education and offered through a partnership between Northern Illinois University, the Rockford Early Learning Council, and the Rockford Public Schools. The initiative provides 30 teachers with the coursework they need to achieve their Type 04 early childhood certification.

The Rockford program has also established a linkage with nearby Rock Valley Community College to transfer coursework of students who earn a two-year early childhood degree to a bachelor’s degree program at Northern Illinois University. Marcia believes “this will make it easier for programs to support aides or assistants as they move through the coursework they need to attain their Type 04 certification.”

The Rockford Early Learning Council is working to develop strategies that will help reduce the barriers to collaboration. Barriers often surface because of conflicting requirements of regulatory agencies such as the differing eligibility requirements of Head Start and the Child Care Assistance Program. In addition, some programs must use two different assessments to meet the Illinois Early Learning Standards and the Head Start national standards. Marcia is optimistic, however, that the Rockford Early Learning Council will be able to develop solutions to these barriers and continue to support meaningful collaboration.
Regulatory Oversight

Regulatory agencies supervise Illinois programs that fall into the formal care category. The state agencies include the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (IDCFS) and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). IDCFS is the agency that legally licenses centers and family child care homes. In addition, programs are required by law to meet state and local fire and health codes. The federal agency for oversight of Head Start is the Administration for Children and Families within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) provides oversight to programs on military bases.

In 2006, the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRRA) ranked states on the basis of their licensing standards and regulatory oversight systems. Illinois was second in the overall ranking of state child care center standards and regulatory oversight. When standards were excluded and only oversight was considered, Illinois ranked 22nd in the nation.

REGULATORY OVERSIGHT IN ILLINOIS

- Illinois Department of Children and Family Service (IDCFS). The Child Care Act of 1969 established the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services as the state agency responsible for child welfare and the regulation of child care programs in centers, family child care homes, and group family child care homes. The Child Care Act also defines those programs that are legally license-exempt.

  IDCFS regulations include minimum qualifications for center staff, including directors, teachers, assistant teachers, school-age workers, school-age assistants, and volunteers. Currently, IDCFS regulations do not include a separate role designation for lead teachers in center-based programs. IDCFS also oversees minimum qualifications for family child care providers and their assistants. In addition to staff, IDCFS provides minimum requirements for health and safety, program policies, curriculum, equipment, space, adult-to-child ratios, and in-service training.

- Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). The Illinois State Board of Education establishes staff qualifications for teachers, aides, and administrators in public schools as well as learning standards and expected outcomes for children. ISBE introduced the Type 04 Early Childhood Certification in 1985 and requires all new public school prekindergarten teachers and all prekindergarten teachers in community-based programs funded by PFA to hold
early childhood certification. In PFA classrooms that include children with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), either the certified teacher must hold a letter of endorsement to teach early childhood special education or services must be provided to children with IEPs from another teacher who is qualified. Several models are used, including co-teaching and itinerant services in which a special education teacher provides services in the classroom for a specified time period.

- Administration for Children and Families. The federal Administration of Children and Families oversees the implementation and regulation of Head Start. Head Start centers are operated by grantees or, in cases where the grantee subcontracts with a separate organization, by delegate agencies. The Head Start Program Performance Standards are the mandatory regulations that grantees and delegate agencies must implement in order to operate a Head Start program. The standards define the services that must be provided by Head Start programs.

- Multiple Agency Oversight. Some programs are overseen by more than one agency or by different branches of the same agency. IDCFS, ISBE, and Head Start have established minimum qualifications for staff, adult-to-child ratios, and in-service training requirements. When programs are part of a collaboration, or include blended funding streams, they are subject to regulatory standards from multiple agencies.

As described in more detail in the next chapter, the minimum qualifications for staff established within this multi-regulated system contrast sharply. The variation in qualifications required by different programs or agencies in turn affects the compensation and professional status of early childhood educators in each sector.
Voluntary Program Accreditation

A number of national associations provide an accreditation process for early childhood centers, after-school programs, and family child care homes. The most well known include the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the National Association of Child Care Professionals (NACCP), the National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC), the American Montessori Society (AMS), and the Council on Accreditation (COA).

Currently 442 or about 16% of licensed early childhood centers in Illinois are accredited by NAEYC. There are undoubtedly many programs of high quality that have not pursued accreditation or re-accreditation. The accreditation process is complex, costly, and time-consuming, involving an intensive self-study and report.

To assist more programs in achieving accreditation, the Illinois Association for the Education of Young Children (IAEYC) has established a State Accreditation Mentoring (SAM) project through funds made available from the IDHS. The purpose of SAM is to provide support and assistance to early care and education programs in center- or home-based settings that hope to achieve program accreditation. Fifteen centers currently are assigned an individual mentor to prepare for accreditation. In addition, nine cohorts have been established, each containing center representatives from at least six programs. These cohorts are learning about the essential steps in pursuing accreditation.

In 2008, 12 licensed centers were accredited by the National Association of Child Care Professionals (NACCP). Standards for this accreditation address philosophy and goals, health and safety, administration, parent communication, curriculum, interactions, and classroom health and safety. Fifteen Illinois programs were accredited by the American Montessori Society (AMS) in 2008. The AMS implemented a newly revised set of program standards in 2008.

At the time of the 2001 report, the National Afterschool Association had accredited eight programs in Illinois. However, in March 2008, the association announced that it would transfer the process of program accreditation to the Council on Accreditation (COA).

Of the 10,958 licensed family child care programs in Illinois, only 137 have been accredited by the National Association for Family Child Care. The accreditation standards address excellence in programming, parent involvement, and management practices.
Summary

The picture of early care and education in Illinois is both rich and diverse. Regulated early care and education takes place in over 14,000 settings that may be privately owned or publicly funded, may operate as nonprofit or for-profit, and may be located in homes, child care centers, or schools. Early care and education encompasses both a booming Illinois industry that generates more than $2 billion annually and includes federal- and state-funded programs aimed at reducing the impact of poverty and other risk factors in young children.

Illinois has demonstrated national leadership in supporting high-quality early care and education. While programs are sponsored by a variety of agencies and operate in a myriad of settings, they share a common responsibility for shaping the growth and development of young children. In the following chapter we discuss the development of a highly qualified workforce, a critical issue in providing quality early care and education.
**VOICES FROM THE FIELD**

I find more people are becoming familiar with Gateways to Opportunity and the support it provides. I’m also seeing agencies turning to Gateways and INCCERA to develop new collaborations. For example, the Chicago Public Schools decided to work with Gateways on shaping the Infant Toddler Credential, instead of developing their own credential. This was a smart way to build a new program on existing resources and to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort.

Anne Wharff, Child Care Professional Development Manager
Bureau of Child Care and Development, Illinois Department of Human Services

We are in an enormous transition right now. Raising the bar for teacher qualifications in Head Start and Preschool for All puts great pressure on child care. Child care needs to either raise the bar for all teachers or recognize differentiated roles with different qualifications and expectations for child care center staff.

Barbara Bowman, Chief Officer
Office of Early Childhood Programs, Chicago Public Schools

If we do not get salaries up, the trend will continue to be to draw from a very small pool of applicants. The trend is precarious. Will we have the ability to attract the best and the brightest? We are still so far from seeing all children in high-quality programs. We are making small progress against a very significant goal. While it is appropriate to keep pushing greater qualifications, it is also appropriate to push for more resources for salaries.

Jerry Stermer, President
Voices for Illinois Children

The continued expansion of Preschool for All is going to require increased administrative competency on the part of child care center directors. As directors blend funding in their programs they need to be able to manage additional administrative tasks. We are seeing a trend toward more defined roles and the need for greater administrative capability and administrative structure in child care than we have in the past.

Linda Saterfield, Bureau Chief
Bureau of Child Care and Development, Illinois Department of Human Services

A major obstacle to teachers accessing professional development is that employer support is lacking. The emotional support of directors is not there; you won’t find directors saying, “you can do this, whether you stay with me or not.”

Janice Moenster, Professional Development Advisor
Children’s Home and Aid Society of Illinois

Who’s Caring for the Kids?
Chapter Notes


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The early childhood workforce is a vibrant and growing contributor to the Illinois economy. It includes over 56,000 full-time teachers, directors, and support staff who work in over 5,000 licensed and license-exempt community-based programs, approximately 1,700 teachers who work in Preschool for All programs, and nearly 11,000 licensed family child care providers who care for young children in their homes.\(^1\)

This chapter describes the early childhood workforce in Illinois with respect to demographics, qualifications, compensation, and turnover. It provides information on teachers, directors, and family child care providers drawn from several established data sources and new data collected specifically for this report.\(^2\) It also includes a discussion about new and emerging roles in the field.

### Characteristics of Teachers and Assistant Teachers in Center-Based Programs

Currently, IDCFS licensing standards classify teaching staff in just two categories—teachers and assistant teachers. Thus, the biannual staffing survey conducted by IDHS provides data on teaching personnel in only these two categories. A teacher is defined as an individual who is responsible for a group of infants, toddlers, or preschool-age children. An assistant teacher works under the direct supervision of a teacher and does not assume full responsibility for a group of children.\(^3\)

To be classified as a teacher, an individual must have completed a minimum of 60 semester hours of college credit with six semester hours of coursework directly related to child care or child development. Alternatively, an individual can meet the qualifications by completing a credential program approved by DCFS or having one year of supervised experience in a licensed child care center and 30 hours of college coursework, including 6 semester hours in child care or child development. Assistant teachers must have a high school diploma or an equivalency certificate (GED).\(^4\)
**Education and Experience.** According to data from the 2007 Illinois Salary and Staffing Survey, nearly three-fourths of all early childhood teachers have completed at least an associate of arts degree, but less than half (42%) have concentrated their degree in early childhood education or child development. In contrast only one-fourth of assistant teachers have completed at least an associate of arts degree. Teachers average almost 10 years of experience and assistant teachers average almost 6 years of experience.

**Compensation and Turnover.** The IDHS data indicate that early childhood teachers earn an average hourly wage of $13.16 and assistant teachers earn $9.76. This translates to an average annual salary of $27,373 for teachers and $20,300 for assistant teachers. Turnover is high with 28% of teachers and 41% of assistant teachers leaving their positions over a 24-month period.

**Characteristics of Lead Teachers in Center-Based and Public School Programs**

Because the broad role descriptor of teacher does not capture the wide range of education, specialized training, and experience of teaching staff in center-based programs and does not allow for a comparison of lead teachers working in center-based versus school-based settings, it was important in this 2008 update of the workforce to collect additional data on lead teachers. This study compared certified lead teachers employed in prekindergarten programs in public schools with lead teachers, both with and without certification, employed in center-based early childhood programs.

A lead teacher is defined as the individual with the highest educational qualifications assigned to teach a group of children and responsible for daily lesson planning, parent conferences, child assessment, and curriculum planning. In some settings, the lead teacher supervises other classroom staff. A certified lead teacher is defined as having earned a minimum of a bachelor’s degree in early childhood education and has passed all Illinois state exams and requirements for Illinois Type 04 early childhood certification. Lead teachers who work in programs funded by Preschool for All are required to hold early childhood certification whether they work in center-based or school-based settings.

**Background Demographics.** Surveys conducted for this 2008 report confirm that the demographics of lead teachers in Illinois mirror the national picture. Most are female, relatively young, and Caucasian. In Illinois, 99% percent of all lead teachers are women. More than half of all lead teachers employed in center-based programs are under 40 years of age. In comparison, lead teachers employed by public school prekindergarten programs tend to be older, averaging between 40 and 50 years of age.
Figure 5. Racial/Ethnic Distribution of Lead Teachers in Community-Based vs. Public School Programs

Lead Teachers in Community-Based Programs
- Caucasian, 70%
- African American, 20%
- Hispanic, 6%
- Other, 4%

Lead Teachers in Public School Programs
- Caucasian, 88%
- African American, 8%
- Hispanic, 3%
- Other, 1%
CHAPTER 4

Overall, the degree of diversity has not changed in the Illinois early childhood teaching workforce since 2001. Center-based programs, which include Head Start programs, however, contain a more diverse workforce than public school programs. Figure 5 shows the racial/ethnic distribution of lead teachers in each setting.

The racial and ethnic diversity of the workforce is important when considering outcomes for children. Demographic trends confirm that the ethnic and racial composition of children attending early childhood programs is becoming increasingly diverse. Nearly 80% of lead teachers report that they teach children from racial and ethnic groups that differ from their own.

Lead teachers also report that they are also now teaching a more linguistically diverse population of children. In Illinois lead teachers report over three dozen different languages spoken in their classrooms. This is an important factor as most lead teachers speak only English. Only 12% of center-based lead teachers and 6% of public school lead teachers are fluent in a second language, yet many serve children who are English language learners.

The reported linguistic diversity reflects the current demographics of young children in Illinois. According to the most recent state estimates, 23% of Illinois children, ages five and younger, live in homes that are linguistically isolated and speak a language other than English. Similarly, 21% of households in Illinois with children under age 18 have at least one parent who is an immigrant.

As might be expected, the concentration of English language learners in early childhood classrooms varies by geographic region of the state. Over one-half of the lead teachers in the Chicago Metropolitan area teach children whose first language is not English. About one-fourth of lead teachers in central and northern Illinois teach one or more children who are linguistically diverse. And fewer than one-tenth of lead teachers in the southern region of the state report linguistic diversity in their classrooms.

In many settings, assistant teachers or volunteers speak the home language of children in the classroom. Data are needed to determine the extent to which these individuals support instruction by the lead teacher. The language fluency of bilingual assistant teachers can be an important asset in the classroom.

Lead teachers in public school prekindergarten programs are less culturally diverse than lead teachers in center-based programs.
Serving English Language Learners

Jill Moore is the director of Early Learning Center, a program in East Central Illinois which serves children, from 18 months of age until they enter kindergarten. Over the past 10 years, the center has experienced an increased enrollment of children whose parents are international students attending the nearby university or working for high tech companies. Jill estimates that close to one-half of the children in her center are English language learners. While the majority of these children are Asian, they bring over a dozen languages into the classroom each year.

Jill laughs when she describes a poster displayed at her center. It describes how to say “I need to go to the bathroom” in 12 different languages! Jill says, “Being sensitive to children, reading their body language, and demonstrating simple expectations are the most important ways for teachers to help new children adjust. The kids pick up language pretty quickly and they watch the other children for cues about what to do next. You just have to meet each child at his level of development and comfort and talk with the parents about issues that are unique to their child.”

Jill struggles to find bilingual staff who speak English well enough to function. She also states that it is hard to find teachers who have some knowledge of child development or early childhood and a college background. Her guiding principle for hiring new staff is an acknowledgement and respect for the families who have joined their community. “I wish there were more professional development opportunities focused on issues of cultural diversity.”

The lack of lead teachers with second language fluency has prompted early childhood policymakers to consider different strategies for meeting the diverse linguistic needs of children in Illinois. One strategy is to recruit certified teachers from other countries who speak the home language of the children in the classroom. The other is to develop a new early childhood endorsement which includes fluency in a second language and skills to facilitate early learning in both English and the child’s first language.

Education, Credentials, and Experience. Survey responses for this report indicate that lead teachers in center-based programs and lead teachers in public schools differ the most by education and credentialing. All lead teachers employed in public schools have at least a bachelor’s degree. In fact almost one-half (49%) hold master’s degrees. All lead teachers in public school settings must have a Type 04 early childhood certification and 3% report they have a certification in school administration.
The number of lead teachers in center-based programs with bachelor’s degrees and master’s degrees appears to be growing. In the 2001 report, only 37% of lead teachers in center-based programs reported having a minimum of a bachelor’s degree; currently, 48% of the lead teachers report having a bachelor’s (39%) or master’s degree (9%).

Nearly 40% of lead teachers in center-based programs with baccalaureate or graduate degrees, also report holding an Illinois Type 04 early childhood certification. Although this represents only 17% of all lead teachers in child care centers, it also represents a group that more recently earned its Type 04 certification. The majority of these lead teachers report receiving their Type 04 early childhood certification within the past four years. Of this group, 44% indicate that they are teaching in classrooms funded by Preschool for All.

Interestingly, this means that 56% of center-based lead teachers with Type 04 early childhood certification are teaching in classrooms currently operating without Preschool for All (PFA) funding. Additional research is needed to determine precisely where these teachers are working to determine if they are poised to leave for public school programs or if their community-based child care programs have applied for, but not yet received, Preschool for All funding.

A comparison of educational levels for teachers who work with infants and toddlers versus preschoolers also suggests interesting differences. Only one-third of the infant/toddler teachers have at least a bachelor’s degree, compared to nearly half of the lead teachers in preschool programs.

Many lead teachers have considerable experience. For instance, center-based lead teachers report an average of 11 years of teaching experience and public school lead teachers report an average of 14 years teaching experience. All tend to be relatively stable in their jobs, averaging at least 6 years in their current position.

Lead teachers with Type 04 early childhood certification are more likely to belong to a national professional association such as NAEYC; 36% of lead teachers in public schools reported memberships and 37% of certified lead teachers in center-based programs report membership. In comparison, only 20% of lead teachers without early childhood certification belong to a professional association. These lead teachers are also more likely to be older (40 to 59 years of age). Younger lead teachers without certification are not showing a disposition to participate in professional organizations and also tend to have less education.
A comparison of lead teachers with Type 04 early childhood certification and those without suggest several interesting trends in the field. First, center-based lead teachers with Type 04 early childhood certification tend to be younger than their counterparts who do not have teacher certification. More than half are less than 30 years of age. As such they are also somewhat newer to the profession than other center-based lead teachers. They also tend to be younger than public school lead teachers and are half as likely to have earned a master’s degree (22%) than their colleagues working in public school prekindergarten programs (47%).

Compensation. Compensation is a complex issue that includes both wages and benefits, such as insurance and paid leave. Salary is only one consideration when evaluating employment. In Illinois, compensation is influenced by the funding source of a program more than any other factor. Public school programs and some Head Start programs provide higher wages and benefits for teachers and directors than do programs funded primarily by tuition, fees, and/or IDHS and IDCFS child care subsidies.

Consistent with other national data, prekindergarten teachers working in a public school setting report higher salaries. Responses to the 2008 surveys indicate that the current average hourly wage for prekindergarten public school teachers in Illinois is $29.79 per hour. As previously noted, teachers employed by the public school tend to be somewhat older and more experienced than community-based lead teachers. They also benefit from union representation and collective bargaining.

Lead teachers with a bachelor’s degree and Type 04 early childhood certification employed in center-based programs without PFA funding earn on average $16.55 per hour or $34,424 annually. Their wage is approximately 44% less than that of public school teachers.

One-half of the center-based lead teachers with a bachelor’s degree and Type 04 early childhood certification work at centers with Preschool for All funding. These lead teachers made substantially more ($20.53 per hour or $42,702 annually) than lead teachers with a bachelor’s degree and Type 04 certification who work in center-based programs without PFA funding.

The salary picture is even bleaker for lead teachers without early childhood certification. Lead teachers who have a bachelor's degree but do not have Type 04 certification average $13.06 per hour or $27,165 annually. An analysis of salaries for lead teachers without a bachelor's degree reveals an average salary of only $10.88 per hour or $22,630 annually.
Figure 6 presents the variations in average salary for lead teachers who work in school-based and center-based programs with different qualifications.

Lead teachers who work with infants and toddlers also earn different rates of pay, depending on their educational levels. Those with a master’s degree earn $17.49 per hour, followed by infant-toddler lead teachers with a bachelor’s degree at $11.82 per hour. Infant-toddler lead teachers without a bachelor’s degree average only $9.90 per hour.

Analysis of the data also indicates that the wages of all lead teachers, whether center-based or public school-based, are influenced by the number of years in the field of early childhood as well as years in their current position.

Consistent with the findings in the 2001 report on Who’s Caring for the Kids, salaries continue to correlate with center type. The highest teacher salaries are paid by university-affiliated or military-sponsored programs. Figure 7 presents the mean teacher salaries by center type.
Current survey results also reveal significant regional difference in salaries for lead teachers. Those who teach in Chicago earn the highest salaries, followed by those who teach in the Chicago Metropolitan area. Salaries in the rest of Illinois are comparable and are on average about 30% lower than in the Chicago area. The cost of living in the Chicago Metropolitan area is estimated to be 18% to 33% more than other cities in the state.

Benefits also differ based on where lead teachers are employed. Only one-third of center-based programs (36%) provide health insurance and only one-third (36%) provide some form of retirement plan. Centers are even less likely to provide dental insurance (24%) or life insurance (29%). In contrast, lead teachers employed in public school settings routinely received these benefits. Community-based centers are more likely to provide paid leave benefits than health or retirement benefits. Specifically, 80% provide paid holidays, 76% provide paid sick leave and 73% provide paid vacation leave. However, public schools routinely provide paid sick leave and holidays as well and require fewer days of teaching per year.

Who’s Caring for the Kids?
A PFA Collaboration with Community-Based Programs

Tammy Muerhoff works with the Rock Island County Regional Office of Education (ROE). Even though she works in the public school sector, she is all too familiar with the challenge of collaboration and the struggle to retain teachers with Type 04 early childhood certification.

Tammy’s office coordinates the hiring and supervision of Preschool for All (PFA) teachers. She currently oversees 33 PFA half-day classes housed in 13 child care centers and one family child care network. The children attending these programs participate in PFA during a portion of their full-day, full-year program.

“One of the biggest challenges is the difference in schedules between the PFA classes and the programs in which they are housed,” says Tammy. “The centers rarely close except for major holidays, but the PFA classes usually follow the school district calendar. The differences in schedules create tension at times. Teachers who work at the centers don’t get as much time off as the Type 04 certified teachers.”

Sharing space is another challenge. “Since PFA teachers are there for only 2½ hours, we see some dissension. Essentially the PFA teachers go into someone else’s classroom to teach for part of the morning and then leave and go into someone else’s classroom for part of the afternoon. Our teachers don’t really have a place to call their own and they don’t always have space for planning. It can be a challenge at times.”

Tammy has struggled to retain lead teachers with Type 04 certification, many of whom were leaving her program to work in other school districts. She notes, “We did have quite a bit of turnover a year ago, so we made changes to our teaching schedule to be comparable with other districts. We changed our calendar from 232 days of teaching to 192 days, which includes two days of in-service training. We kept the salaries the same.”

“We have a very unique model,” says Tammy. “The key is finding teachers who want to work in community-based programs. The teachers we hire have an opportunity to teach in a center, work closely with families, and collaborate with other teachers in the center. We think it’s a great model.”

Job Satisfaction. The issue of job satisfaction is central to the stability of the early childhood workforce. Individuals choose to work in different jobs based on a variety of reasons, some internal, some external. Understanding these factors provides insight into the factors that impact recruitment and retention of a highly trained workforce.
Given the sharp contrast in compensation between center-based and school-based settings, it is important to understand the motivations of certified lead teachers who choose to work in community-based child care programs rather than public schools. The majority of their responses fall into the following five categories:

- Prefer the sense of community they experience in their center-based program (e.g., close-knit group, creative teachers, relaxed setting)
- Feel they have a good fit with the philosophy and educational orientation of the program (faith-based, curriculum, family-oriented, lack of standardized tests)
- Like the convenience of their job (e.g., close to home, flexible hours, can accommodate family obligations)
- Are committed to the specific student population served by the program (infants and toddlers, children considered at-risk)
- Like the reputation of the center and working conditions (small groups, ample resources, strong collegial support system)

Many lead teachers without Type 04 early childhood certification candidly report that they work in their community-based center because they are not eligible for a public school position. But even these teachers are keenly aware of the trade-offs. Many state that the smaller size of the program, the convenience of having their own children attend the same center, and the collegial work climate make their center-based program a good place to work.

Lead teachers in public schools identify salary, benefits, and a 9-month school schedule among the most important factors for choosing their position. Two other factors—availability of the position and the opportunity to work with children identified as at-risk—are also reported frequently as a motivation for working in a school-based setting. Nearly one-third of the public school teachers (30%) also report that they had previous teaching experience in a community-based center.

**Turnover.** Teacher turnover includes job changes within the field of early care and education as well as attrition from the field. Both types of turnover affect the stability of adult-child relationships within a classroom and can have a negative impact on children’s development.

Teacher turnover is most frequently characterized by job changes from one center-based program to another or a move to a public school setting. Some turnover is positive as teachers seek new opportunities, higher salaries, and promotions. This kind of turnover does not represent a loss of capital for the field; other programs and children continue to benefit from the skills and experience of these teachers. Teacher attrition to jobs outside the field, however, represents a true loss to the profession.
According to data from the 2007 Illinois Salary and Staffing Survey, replacing a lead teacher typically takes directors at least three weeks, and in some cases a month or longer. This process often results in disruption to the center as the staff and director struggle to provide coverage for the vacated position. There are also significant direct and indirect program costs, including advertising the open position and time spent orienting and training new staff. Clearly, it also disrupts the previously established teacher-child relationships and the smooth operation of the classroom.

More than half of the directors attribute turnover to teachers who left because they were unhappy with their pay and benefits. Some of these job changes were for better-paying positions at other centers or public schools, but half of the teacher turnover was attrition from the field as individuals took jobs outside of early childhood education. Nearly all directors stated that they had difficulty recruiting new staff to fill vacant positions because of low salaries (94%) and/or inadequate benefits (83%).

Teacher turnover is associated with the type of center, with significantly higher levels of turnover experienced in for-profit centers. The lowest rate of turnover is in public school-sponsored and university-affiliated programs, program types that also pay the highest salaries and offer the best benefit packages.

**Characteristics of Center Directors**

Early childhood center directors are the individuals located on-site who are responsible for planning, implementing, and evaluating the early care and education program. In many ways, directors are similar to principals of elementary schools who also oversee the administrative and educational functions of their programs.

Data for this 2008 update of *Who’s Caring for the Kids* are based on responses from more than 400 directors across the state. These directors represent the full spectrum of early care and education programs—large and small, for-profit and nonprofit, public and private. The average enrollment across centers was about 100 children, but the size of programs ranged from a dozen children to several hundred. Not surprisingly, the largest centers were located in the Chicago Metropolitan area. More than one-fifth of programs (23%) were affiliated with a faith-based organization.

**Background Demographics.** As with lead teachers, the background demographics of early childhood directors in Illinois reflect the national picture. Approximately three-fourths are Caucasian and nearly all early childhood directors are female (99%). This does suggest a change since the last *Who’s Caring for the Kids* report, when 4% of respondent directors were male. It appears the field is losing ground in achieving greater gender diversity.
Directors tend to be a bit older than community-based lead teachers, with the majority reporting that they are in the age range of 40 to 59 years of age. Most directors have extensive experience in the field of early care and education, averaging 11 years. They also report serving in their current position an average of 8 years. The older age of many directors in Illinois has raised a concern about the aging-out of directors and the need to prepare the next generation of administrators.

Not surprisingly, directors who successfully acquired PFA funds differed somewhat from their counterparts. They have substantially more experience in the field (19 years) and have served as administrators longer (13 years). As a group, directors with PFA funding are more diverse than directors who do not have PFA funding; 38% are African American or Hispanic.

**Education and Credentials.** Directors are likely to be more highly educated than center-based lead teachers. Two-thirds of directors (66%) hold a minimum of a bachelor’s degree and one-third of these hold a master’s degree. Directors who are older (40 to 59 years of age) have higher levels of education than directors who are younger (20 to 39 years of age). Educational degree is also correlated with number of years in the field. This too suggests a change from the 2001 report, where 72% of the directors held a minimum of a bachelor’s degree. It appears that the field is losing ground in attracting more highly educated directors as directors leave their positions due to retirement or other reasons.

According to INCCRA data, currently 296 directors have attained the Illinois Director Credential (IDC). Of those, approximately one-third have earned the Level I credential, one-third have earned Level II, and one-third have earned Level III.

Directors of accredited centers are significantly more likely to have a director credential than directors of centers that are not accredited. There is also a significant association between age and attainment of the IDC, with directors in the age range of 40 to 59 more likely to have attained the credential than directors in the age range of 20 to 39. Interestingly, directors of centers with PFA funding are more likely to have the IDC than directors of centers without PFA funding: 25% of directors of centers with PFA funding have the IDC.

**Compensation.** On average, most directors earn more than lead teachers in community-based programs, but less than lead teachers in public schools. Where directors work makes a difference in what they are paid. The most recent Illinois survey of directors indicates that full-time directors earn an average of $18.19 per hour ($37,835 annually). However, directors who work at for-profit centers make significantly less than those who work for nonprofit centers. The average salary for directors of nonprofit centers is $20.14 per hour ($41,891 annually) compared to $16.77 per hour ($34,882 annually) for directors who successfully attained Preschool For All funding have higher levels of education, are more experienced, and are more likely to hold an Illinois Director Credential.
of for-profit centers. Directors who are owners of centers, however, have capital gains available when and if they choose to sell their businesses, which eventually supplements the income accrued through their administrative position.

Interestingly, the size of the center is not associated with differences in salary. As was found to be the case with lead teachers, however, salaries are associated with the region of the state. Directors in the Chicago Metropolitan area earn more than directors in the central and southern regions of the state.

**Characteristics of Licensed Family Child Care Providers**

As stated earlier, there are approximately 11,000 licensed family child care providers in Illinois. Most report they have capacity to serve 9 to 10 children. Almost one-third of them (31%) report that they employ an assistant and slightly more than one-fourth (28%) indicate that they have unpaid assistants.

**Background Demographics.** As is true with early childhood teachers in community-based and public school programs, nearly all family child care providers in the state are female (99%). Data from the most recent IDHS Salary and Staffing Study indicate that providers are slightly more diverse than teachers in center-based programs with 40% representing people of color. Figure 8 provides the distribution of the racial/ethnic background of family home providers. The majority of family child care providers (63%) report that they are 40 years of age or older and have been caring for children, on average, for 10 years.

**Figure 8. Racial/Ethnic Composition of Family Child Care Providers**

- Caucasian, 60%
- African American, 30%
- Hispanic, 7%
- Other, 3%
**Education and Experience.** Nearly one-half of family child care providers have earned a minimum of an associate’s degree. In contrast to lead teachers in center-based programs, only 2% hold a Type 04 certification. One-fourth of providers (27%) report they have worked previously in a child care center or public school. On average, they report six years of experience working in early childhood education.

**Compensation.** Family child care providers report working many hours beyond the traditional 40-hour work week. According to data from the 2007 Illinois Salary and Staffing Survey, providers indicate serving children an average of 49 hours per week and spending an additional 16 hours a week in activities related to their work (e.g., shopping, record keeping, planning). Providers report average gross earnings of $28,165; their net earnings average $14,503.

If these annual salaries are calculated using the National Bureau of Labor standards, the gross hourly wage for family child care providers is $13.54 per hour; their net hourly wage is $6.97 per hour. Unlike the findings reported for center directors and lead teachers, there is no association between educational level and net earnings for family child care providers.

Given the modest to very low earning power of family child care providers, it comes as no surprise that as a group they participate in a variety of assistance programs. Approximately one in five family child care providers (23%) report they have applied for some form of public assistance in the past two years (e.g., All Kids for their children, Medicaid for themselves).

Access to benefits is a concern for many providers. Although 75% report they have some health insurance, most note that the coverage comes through their spouse’s employment. About 18% buy their own insurance and about 15% are eligible for Medicaid/Medicare. Also troubling is that three-fourths report they are unable to save money for retirement and over one-half (56%) do not contribute to social security and Medicare.

**Turnover.** Turnover of family child care providers continues to be an issue for the field. One-fourth of providers who were operating in 2005 were no longer operating in 2007. However, almost as many new providers entered the ranks of family child care during that same time period, replacing all but 4% of the providers who had left.

While the statewide loss in the provider workforce was minimal, the impact of turnover on children and families was not. This high turnover rate also has consequences for the provision of professional development, particularly the need for training in starting a family child care business.
Job Satisfaction. Given the low wages for licensed family child care providers, it is important to understand the factors that contribute to their professional fulfillment. The majority of their responses fall into four categories:

➤ Prefer to stay at home with their own children
➤ Good way to earn an income
➤ Enjoy teaching children
➤ Want to be in business for self

It is also important to understand what factors may drive providers from the field. Nearly one-half of current family child care providers indicate that they are unsure about continuing in the early childhood profession. The most frequently identified reasons for leaving are:

➤ Dissatisfaction with pay and benefits
➤ Dissatisfaction with the working conditions
➤ Frustrations in dealing with parents
➤ Desire to return to school

Impact of Unionization. A change for family child care providers occurred in 2006 when Illinois became the first state to complete union negotiations and sign a statewide contract with family child care providers providing care for children receiving a subsidy. The union (SEIU) now represents approximately 11,000 licensed and 40,000 license-exempt family child care providers that participate in the Child Care Assistance Program.

The union and the State of Illinois agreed to a three-year contract in which providers would receive subsidy rate increases to the base rate, totaling 35% over three years. Licensed family child care providers who meet specific quality standards are now able to receive an additional 5% to 20% by participating in the state’s Quality Counts–Quality Rating System.

As license-exempt family child care providers complete the 48 clock hours of training leading to the Level 1 ECE credential, they are able to receive an additional 10% to 20% in the subsidy rate by participating in Quality Counts–Quality Rating System. These incentives are focused on increasing the training and professional development of family child care providers and encouraging those without a license to become licensed.

New and Emerging Roles in the Field

In addition to the traditional teaching and administrative roles associated with early childhood education, a number of new roles and titles have emerged over the past decade as the field has grown. Support roles within programs may include teacher mentor, curriculum coordinator, family service coordinator, network coordinator, and home visitor.
Practitioners are also benefiting from external support roles including professional development advisors (PDAs), faculty advisors, child care resource and referral counselors, training and technical assistance specialists, and licensing representatives. While these support roles are not the focus of this report, they do represent an area of growth for the early childhood profession in Illinois.

With the inclusion of children with developmental delays and disabilities into community-based programs, additional new roles have also emerged including nurse consultant, early intervention specialist, and infant mental health consultant. This trend has also resulted in the expansion of traditional supportive roles of parent liaison, developmental specialist, speech and language therapist, occupational therapist, and physical therapist.

**Summary**

The State of Illinois has a range of child care configurations, both licensed and license-exempt, to serve the thousands of young children and their families. The early childhood workforce includes those who have not yet finished high school to those with advanced degrees and certification. The programs which require lead teachers to have Type 04 early childhood certification and a minimum of a bachelor's degree are most often located in public schools or community-based organizations with Preschool for All funding.

Lead teachers with higher educational qualifications and Type 04 certification tend to be paid more than those without certification; likewise, lead teachers with a bachelor's degree but without certification are paid less, but typically more than their colleagues who have not completed a degree. The data on salaries, however, need to be interpreted with caution because they do not factor in benefits. In some situations, the provision of benefits may mitigate the impact of a lower salary; in other situations the lack of benefits further exacerbates the hardship experienced by the practitioner.

Current research indicates that programs that employ a director with a bachelor's degree and administrator credential as well as teaching staff with a degree and credential are likely to provide higher quality services than those with less qualified staff. However, the research literature is also quite clear that professional development should not stop with completion of a degree or credential.21

The newly established Quality Counts–Quality Rating System, currently provides an incentive for license-exempt family child care providers to attain a Level I Credential, issued by the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS). The quality rating system will eventually recognize and reward programs that employ staff who hold other credentials on the Gateways to Opportunity career lattice.

The next chapter will focus on the current state of professional development in Illinois and the extent to which the early childhood workforce is able and willing to access more education and specialized training.
VOICES FROM THE FIELD

We need to connect early care and education credentials so all credentials are recognized in all systems. For example, Illinois Type 04 certification should be recognized in other systems than just in the public schools. Licensing regulations should recognize the Type 04 specifically. Consider the CDA. It is recognized in every state’s licensing regulations. This was an intentional, state-by-state campaign. First, you recognize it, then, you require it!

Anne Mitchell, President
Early Childhood Policy Research

We struggle statewide in finding qualified staff who are representative of the children being served. We have huge regional disparities in access to qualified early childhood teachers. And there are different opinions on what constitutes being qualified to teach young and linguistically diverse children. We know that just being bilingual is not enough to facilitate early learning in the classroom. Teachers must have experience both in early childhood and fluency in the children’s language.

Kay Henderson, Division Administrator
Early Childhood Education, Illinois State Board of Education

I was recently in a bilingual pre-k classroom. The lead teacher spoke only English and the assistant teacher was bilingual. The lead teacher was called by her last name and the assistant was called “Maria.” What does this say to Maria, and to the parents in the program? I believe that if our early education efforts are going to make a difference, we have to build them from the community level. This means hiring classroom teachers from the children’s neighborhoods and honoring their skill and knowledge.

Maria Whelan, President and CEO
Illinois Action for Children

The difference in salaries and the option to be part of a teacher retirement system in public schools are key factors pulling teachers away from community-based programs.

Jan Maruna, Executive Director
Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies

Many directors are ready to retire. We need to develop succession plans in Head Start in anticipation of these retirements. One solution will be to hire from within organizations. But this means providing the necessary professional development and preparation for promoting staff.

Lauri Morrison-Frichtl, Director
Illinois Head Start Association

The status of the early childhood workforce in Illinois–2008
Chapter Notes


5. The Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) definition of a work year as constituting 2080 hours was used to calculate respondents’ hourly and annual wage. When respondents provided salary data for part-year positions, the full-time equivalent salary was calculated for cross-group comparison purposes.

6. The Illinois Joint Commission on Administrative Rules (JCAR) recently approved new language that expands the types of early childhood certification allowed (in addition to the standard Type 04 certificate) in the ECBG-funded programs for children 3 to 5 years. Teachers of children ages 3 to 5 years must hold an initial, initial alternative, standard, master, provisional, provisional alternative, resident teacher, or visiting international teacher early childhood certificate. See Section 2-3.71(a) (30) of the School Code and Appendix A of 23 IL. Adm. Code 1.


Who’s Caring for the Kids?


12. This finding underscores the importance of differentiating teaching roles. When data are combined for both lead teachers and teachers, the turnover rate appears higher, indicating a less stable workforce. Lead teacher turnover is not as high as teacher or assistant teacher turnover, however. Aggregating the data masks the variation found between different roles.


20. Advocates in Illinois were successful in arguing for rate parity for centers and leveraged an almost 20% child care subsidy rate increase for centers during the past three years.

The initial preparation of the early childhood workforce and the ongoing support and professional development of practitioners take place in a variety of formal and informal contexts. Illinois has a complex system of private and public institutions of higher education as well as an established Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) system that provide pre-service and in-service training. In addition, many early childhood professional associations and organizations provide training, career counseling, and mentoring for teaching, administrative, and support staff.

Illinois has made significant strides in the development of a state system to support practitioners’ access to formal and informal professional development. The Professional Development Advisory Council (PDAC) was created in 2002 to design a professional development support system for the early childhood workforce, including a career lattice, training registry, and Web site. The professional development support system, named Gateways to Opportunity, identifies the knowledge and skills that define competency for different roles in early care and education and the state-issued credentials that recognize these competencies.

Nonetheless, there continue to be gaps in access to training for practitioners who live in some regions of the state. Transferring credits from community colleges to four-year colleges presents challenges for many practitioners pursuing a four-year degree and certification. Significant differences in the support available for individuals can depend on the program auspices in which they work.

Concern also remains about whether Illinois will have an adequate supply of early childhood teachers in the future. Demand for child care is likely to increase as women with young children continue to be part of the workforce during the early years of their children’s lives. The expansion of Preschool for All has raised questions about the supply of certified early childhood teachers. Some policymakers and advocates have estimated that nearly 2,000 additional teachers with Type 04 certification will be needed in the next five years.¹

Gateways to Opportunity identifies the knowledge and skills that define competency for different roles in early care and education and the state-issued credentials that recognize these competencies.
CHAPTER 5

This chapter describes the different types of formal and informal training offered in the state as well as incentive systems and funding sources available to encourage practitioners to participate in professional development.

**Formal Professional Preparation Programs**

The formal system of early childhood professional preparation in Illinois is offered through public and private institutions of higher education. Degrees can be pursued through the community college system (associate of arts level) and through baccalaureate and graduate programs at four-year colleges and universities.

**Illinois Community College System.** The community college is often the first point of entry for formal training in early childhood education. Illinois is home to 48 community colleges of which 45 currently provide courses in early childhood education, child development, and child care. The offerings range from individual courses to early childhood certificates to two-year degrees.

The community colleges provide terminal degrees in early childhood education but also provide the preparation for students to transfer to four-year institutions in order to complete a bachelor's degree and the requirements for Illinois Type 04 early childhood certification. Transfers are supported through the Illinois Articulation Initiative, developed in 1993, which involves voluntary transfer agreements among 110 two-year and four-year institutions.2

An initiative begun in 2001 to increase the supply of teacher candidates in high-need fields is the Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT). The AAT in early childhood education was approved in 2005. Students who enroll in the AAT program in early childhood education gain field experience with young children while still completing their general education coursework and taking some specialized coursework in child development and education. Students complete the first two years of requirements at the community college level, culminating in the receipt of an AAT degree. Students are then eligible to transfer into a teacher preparation program with junior standing at a four-year college and complete their degree in the same time period as all other students who entered as freshmen.

An important component of the new AAT degree is that students must successfully pass the Illinois Basic Skills Test before receiving the degree from a community college. Failing to pass the Illinois Basic Skills Test has been a significant barrier to degree completion in the past. Currently eight community colleges have the AAT degree in early childhood in place and six universities are accepting transfer students with the AAT from these community colleges.
Four-Year Colleges and Universities. Currently 25 four-year colleges and universities in Illinois provide degrees that lead to Type 04 early childhood certification. In 2007 one significant barrier faced by many non-degreed early childhood teachers was lifted by changes made to the Illinois School Code. The code now allows payment for student teaching if the student has worked in the classroom for one year previously.

This is an important recognition that teachers who are seeking to complete their bachelor's degree or obtain early childhood certification should not have to forgo their salary in order to complete the student teaching requirement for certification. The change in the code allows practicing early childhood teachers enrolled in a teacher certification program to complete their supervised teaching experience in their place of employment.

Several four-year colleges and universities provide individual courses in the areas of child development or early childhood education through an online format or through other modes of distance education (e.g., video download). However, only two institutions (Kendall College and National-Louis University) provide a degree program in early childhood education through an online format. In addition, Erikson Institute in Chicago offers an infant-toddler certificate through online coursework. The Gateways to Opportunity Web site identifies an additional 24 institutions located outside of Illinois that offer online degree programs in early care and education.

Institutions of higher education have implemented innovative approaches to meet the needs of the current workforce. Some examples include:

➤ University of Illinois at Chicago provides an alternative certification program. This program allows practitioners who already have a bachelor’s degree to obtain a provisional teaching certificate allowing them to work in their community-based early childhood programs with PFA funding. They complete their certification requirements “on the job.”

➤ In addition to its traditional undergraduate and graduate early childhood certification options, National-Louis University (NLU) offers a post-baccalaureate program for teachers who already have teaching certification in elementary, secondary, or special education. This program is known as a “subsequent certification program” and is portfolio-based. NLU also offers a non-certification bachelor’s degree program in early childhood education. Students may specialize in either infant-toddler studies or program administration.

➤ Kendall College provides two routes to teacher preparation, one with certification and one without. A student can achieve a bachelor’s degree in early childhood without meeting the requirements of certification and add the certification components at a later date. The courses are the same regardless of the route the student chooses.
Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville has developed the EChOS Program, a nontraditional route to teacher certification. This program is designed for students working in an early childhood setting who may be able to complete some or all of their student teaching in their current place of employment while being paid. Students at the undergraduate or graduate level attend two classes a semester, all offered as night classes.

Opportunities for completing a bachelor's degree with Type 04 early childhood certification are available in Illinois at 25 four-year colleges and universities. However, most programs remain traditional in format (classes on campus) and scheduling (daytime classes). As a result, practitioners continue to face challenges in finding teacher preparation programs that offer flexibility in course schedules and credit for experience.

**Teachers’ Interest and Involvement in Pursuing Formal Coursework**

Responses from the 2008 surveys for this report indicate that more than one-third of lead teachers in community-based programs report that they enrolled in coursework during the previous 12 months. Directors support this finding, indicating that, on average, three teachers in their centers are taking college courses.

The pattern of course taking is higher among younger teachers (20 to 39) than teachers 40 or older. Those with some college or an associate's degree also are most likely to have taken a course recently, either at a community college or university. Slightly more than one-third of the directors confirm that they support college enrollment by providing tuition reimbursement when they can.

Teachers indicate a variety of ways in which they are interested in taking courses. As seen in Table 5, the most preferred instructional format is online instruction or evening classes. Traditional daytime classes are not an option for most. Although teachers identify distance education and alternative approaches to classes as a priority, the ability of the state's professional development system and institutions of higher education to deliver in these instructional formats is not yet well developed.

A consistent theme in interviews with state leaders is that professional development needs to be offered at nontraditional times, with more opportunities for online learning. Recruiting and preparing students in cohort groups is also recommended.
Survey responses indicate that nearly three-fourths of lead teachers who are not currently certified have some interest in pursuing Type 04 early childhood certification. They range from very interested (41%) to somewhat interested (36%). Table 6 presents the requirements remaining for teachers who indicated interest in completing their Type 04 certification.

Table 6. Requirements Remaining for Type 04 Certification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complete associate’s degree</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass Basic Skills Test</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass state certification exam</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete certification coursework and student teaching</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Respondents could identify more than one requirement, thus total equals more than 100%.

The fact that 40% are not sure what they need to do to become certified suggests that more information about the Type 04 certification requirements, perhaps a link on the Gateways to Opportunity Web site, will be necessary to engage and inform teachers who are interested in pursuing certification.
Nearly one-half of the lead teachers identified access to higher education programs that would enable them to earn their bachelor’s degree with Type 04 certification as an issue. Many lead teachers mentioned additional obstacles that interfere with their access to education toward certification.

The most frequently cited obstacles fall under the category of not having enough time to pursue additional courses (24%) and not having enough money or financial resources (28%). Others mentioned the challenge of pursuing education while raising children. Only a few teachers express concern about being able to complete student teaching without losing their current teaching position. Other teachers who had started but not completed college years earlier reported that they were worried about transferring credits from one institution to another.

Having paid release time from work for many practitioners may be the only way for them to attend college courses. Teachers frequently cite that many courses that are geographically available do not match their work schedules and are not available in the evenings or weekends, instead offered during the times teachers work. Until colleges provide more flexibility through online courses or schedule more courses at nontraditional times, access to continued education will remain difficult for many teachers.

**Full-time College Student**

Kelly Alvarez is a full-time college student. After working as a lead teacher for eight years at the child care center associated with Danville Area Community College, she decided to go back to school for her bachelor’s degree and to earn her Type 04 early childhood certification. Kelly has an associate’s degree in early childhood education, but says that’s not enough. “The associate’s degree limits my employment options; someday I may want to teach kindergarten, become a director, or even a college instructor.”

Kelly says she decided to make the change last year when the children in her classroom were part of an early literacy project from the University of Illinois. She gained confidence in her teaching abilities and really enjoyed presenting information on her classroom activities to other teachers and college students.

Kelly made the difficult choice to leave her preschool teaching job in order to return to college as a full-time student. She says, “I knew it would take forever to finish college, taking one class a semester. And juggling full-time teaching with my own children’s activities and college coursework was extremely hard.” But Kelly believes the short-term sacrifice is worth it. She will be able to make more money when she completes her bachelor’s degree and certification and expand her job options. “I want to love coming to work every day. Having the options that a bachelor’s degree provides can make that possible.”

The status of the early childhood workforce in Illinois–2008
Lead teachers who are not interested in pursuing Type 04 early childhood certification mentioned some of the same issues—lack of time due to work and family and the cost involved in furthering their education. However, many simply state that certification is not a requirement for their position so the incentive to pursue the Type 04 just isn't there. Others note that they already have a different certification (e.g., elementary education) or an advanced degree and are not interested in pursuing another one. Of those who have certification or advanced degrees, 20% indicate that they might leave the field to teach in their content areas in the K-12 system in the future.

**Informal Professional Development**

Survey data collected for this report indicate that informal professional development is a part of most teachers' and directors' work lives in Illinois. Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, ISBE, Head Start programs, early childhood professional associations, and human service organizations in Illinois offer a wide variety of informal in-service training for practitioners on early childhood topics. The breadth of the training is critical for meeting the varied needs of the workforce.

In 2009, Gateways to Opportunity will provide a regularly updated training registry of workshops, conferences, and other trainings across the state as well as a registry for approved trainers. The site currently contains information on professional development available in the state as well as information on financial resources, scholarships, and incentives linked to advancement on the career lattice.

The extent to which lead teachers and directors are familiar with and access informal professional development supports varies considerably. More than 80% of lead teachers who work in public school settings report that they received paid registration to a conference or training during the previous year compared to 60% of center-based lead teachers. Paid release time to visit other schools is another frequently reported support by public school lead teachers. However, it is accessed by less than one-third of the center-based lead teachers.

Interestingly, few teachers list supports such as access to a mentor or paid release time to attend college classes. INCCRRA, through Gateways to Opportunity, has initiated a program of professional development advisors—seasoned early childhood professionals—who are matched to practitioners in the field seeking to advance their career through professional development. This initiative is relatively new and according to the survey data has not yet become a ready source of career development support for teachers.

In 2007 the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) launched a new collaborative initiative to enhance the educational opportunities for young children enrolled in community-based preschool settings through professional development opportunities that include training, program consultation, and targeted technical assistance. The project, Great Expectations, is
one of the key components of ISBE Division of Early Childhood's comprehensive quality assurance initiative. Its primary focus is on program development and curriculum enhancement, and it is designed to promote improved outcomes for young children. The partners of this project include ISBE Division of Early Childhood, the Illinois Resource Center, Chicago Metro AEYC, and the Illinois Association for the Education of Young Children.

Several significant associations are evident between directors’ use of supports and directors’ educational level. Directors with a bachelor's degree or higher are significantly more likely to provide their teachers with tuition reimbursement, access to a mentor, paid release time to attend college, and paid conference registration than directors with less education.

Likewise, directors whose centers are accredited are more likely to have staff enrolled in college courses than directors of centers whose programs are not accredited. These findings highlight the importance of providing incentives for directors without a college degree to pursue further education.

Interviews with key state leaders indicate that directors often are the gatekeepers for their staff's access to professional development. And directors must be convinced of the importance of spending staff time and center funds for ongoing education.

National and state leaders frequently note that collaboration across the sectors of early care and education services (Head Start, Preschool for All, and child care) is essential in order for programs to share resources and eliminate duplication. They emphasize the importance of using the state’s early learning standards as benchmarks, along with those established nationally by NAEYC. Specific concerns include the need to create more cross-sector professional development opportunities and increase the value of such professional development through strategies that make compensation more equitable across sectors.

Knowledge of State Supports for Professional Development

Survey responses also indicate that familiarity with the Illinois system of professional development—Gateways to Opportunity—varies among directors and lead teachers. Although more than one-half of all directors indicate that they have heard of Gateways to Opportunity, only one-fourth rate themselves as very knowledgeable about the state's professional development system. Further, 60% of the lead teacher respondents report that they had not heard of it.
Interviews with state leaders indicate that knowledge of the Gateways to Opportunity state professional development system is growing. Gateways to Opportunity is now being advertised through state and regional conferences and through the 16 regional CCR&R agencies in Illinois.

**Great START Wage Supplement Program.** The most familiar program to teachers and directors is Great START. This program provides wage supplements to teaching staff and directors with educational qualifications that exceed those set in licensing regulations and that meet additional eligibility criteria. One criterion is that participants must maintain employment at the same program site. More than one-half of the directors rate themselves as very knowledgeable about the program and indicate that they have teachers who have received supplements through this program. In addition, 35% of the lead teachers note that they are very familiar with the program.

Directors report that they believe the Great START Program has a positive impact on staff retention. The benefits of Great START funds were highlighted in a 2006 evaluation study of 40 Illinois child care programs. The study compared 20 programs with high use of Great START wage supplements funds and 20 programs with low use of these funds. Programs with a high use of Great START funds were rated significantly higher on classroom quality and teaching indicators as well as on management practices. These programs were three times more likely to be accredited than programs that did not have staff that accessed these funds.

There is a significant association between type of center and receipt of wage supplements. Directors of private nonprofit programs affiliated with a social service agency or hospital, college-affiliated programs, and corporate-sponsored programs are most likely to have eligible staff members who receive wage supplements through Great START.

Not all programs and not all staff are eligible for wage supplement funds. Among the directors who reported they do not have teaching staff who receive Great START funding, 22% indicate that their staff are not eligible because their salaries exceed the $15/hour salary cap. Another 23% report that their staff are not eligible because the center provides only part-day or part-year programming. Others report that the staff education levels are too low to meet eligibility requirements or staff have not yet worked a full year in the program.

**Not all early care and education programs and not all program staff are eligible for wage supplement funds.**
Gateways to Opportunity Scholarship Program. This new scholarship program beginning in fall 2008 replaces T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship Illinois. It is administered by INCCRRA and funded by IDHS and ISBE. There are a number of eligibility requirements. The individual must work in a full-day, year-round licensed child care setting and commit to continue to work in the field of early care and education. The scholarships, based on a sliding fee scale, pay a percentage of tuition, fees, and books for those pursuing degrees, as well as those working toward a CDA, Type 04 certification, or a credential identified on the Gateways to Opportunity career lattice. The new program is aligned with and linked directly to the career lattice and credentials in Gateways to Opportunity. It allows center staff to apply individually and does not require center sponsorship as the previous program did.

Leadership Development… Leadership Succession

In 1999 Rhonda Clark fulfilled a dream and purchased Kids Kingdom Early Learning Center in her home town of Oblong, population 1,600. Today the program serves 93 children from infancy through 12 years of age. When Rhonda became the owner and director of Kids Kingdom, she had college courses in business, a few courses in early childhood education, and limited experience running a private preschool. While the business courses were helpful for managing the center’s financial operations, she knew she was lacking the early childhood education she needed to be an effective leader for her program.

To achieve her educational goals, Rhonda applied for T.E.A.C.H. Illinois scholarships, and over time earned an associate’s degree, bachelor’s degree, and then a master’s degree in early childhood administration, along with the Illinois Director Credential, Level III. Rhonda states, “I simply couldn’t have done this without the availability of online courses and career advising.” Persistent in pursuing her vision of creating a high-quality program, Rhonda helped her center achieve NAEYC accreditation and receive ISBE funds for the Prekindergarten At-Risk Program.

Understanding that “quality is a moving target,” Rhonda, enrolled in Taking Charge of Change (TCC), a leadership development program offered through National-Louis University and funded by IDHS. “TCC helped me plan for my center’s future and for leadership succession.” In 2005, Rhonda accepted a position in her local Regional Office of Education to provide support for early childhood programs throughout her multi-county area. She mentored her lead teacher, Tina Staley, to assume the directorship of her center.

As Rhonda recounts, “There’s never enough time to prepare the next director, but Tina and I talked on the phone a lot, and I met with her as needed on weekends and evenings over two years.” Tina also attended Taking Charge of Change. Rhonda felt confident she had the foundation needed to do the job. Judging the transition a success, in 2008 Rhonda sold the center to the Staley family and accepted a position in the Early Childhood Division at ISBE. She feels confident that Kids Kingdom Early Learning Center will continue to be a star in her small community and an example of what directors who believe in quality can accomplish in rural areas.
Quality Counts. Over one-half of the directors (54%) rate their knowledge of the Quality Counts Grant program as high but only one-third indicate a clear understanding of the newer Quality Counts–QRS implemented in 2007. Interviews with key stakeholders attribute Illinois’ implementation of the quality rating system to the recent unionization of family child care providers, and that ultimately it may serve as an important lever to increasing salaries for child care staff. Others note that the use of the QRS will help parents as consumers become better informed about the quality of care provided by different programs.

Preferred Content and Format for Professional Development

When asked to identify the three content areas in which they are most interested in pursuing additional coursework, a majority of lead teachers in both center-based and public school programs selected social emotional development and early literacy. Nearly one-half of all lead teachers also identified classroom management and learning more about children with special needs. Table 7 presents the rank order of preferred topic areas for professional development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Content Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Social-emotional development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Early literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Classroom management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Children with special needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Early math and science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Technology training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>English language acquisition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interestingly, few teachers selected English language acquisition despite the fact that so many report teaching children whose first language is not English. It seems the other immediate demands of meeting the social and emotional needs of young children, often paired with effectively managing the classroom, were of higher priority.

Professional development must be offered in high-need areas of the field, such as learning to support children with disabilities or strategies for teaching children who are English language learners.
These results are not surprising given that an increasing number of teachers work with young children who have learning and developmental challenges. Illinois is one of the few states to have early learning standards focused on social and emotional development. Head Start in particular has emphasized the importance of meeting the emotional needs of young children as a critical step in preparing them to become successful learners through building relationships with peers and teachers.

Current estimates for expulsion of preschool children across the country indicate that nearly 12 children per thousand served are asked to leave child care programs each year because staff are concerned about their ability to manage these children's disruptive behavior. This number drops by half in state-funded prekindergarten and Head Start programs where teachers have higher levels of early childhood education and may be better prepared to work with children with greater needs.

Teachers' interest in learning more about children with special needs is also understandable given current estimates in Illinois that 4% of children between ages 3 and 5 are likely to qualify for special education services during their preschool years and have an individualized education plan (IEP). While many of these children receive services in public school programs, they are also likely to be enrolled in community-based programs for all or part of their day.

One-half of lead teachers in center-based programs report having at least one child in their classroom with a disability. Virtually all lead teachers in public schools report working with children with disabilities. Less than one-third of these teachers, however, have an endorsement in early childhood special education.

The changing demographics of children are creating new challenges and complexities for teachers. They are serving a more diverse group of children, who may differ culturally and linguistically from the teaching staff. This places new demands on teachers to support the inclusion of children who are learning English, to understand cultural differences, and to incorporate different teaching strategies into their classrooms that support children from all backgrounds. They also face the immediate demands of ensuring that all children in their classroom acquire the social and pre-academic skills that serve as precursors to successful formal school entry.

The demographic changes and increased expectations of children entering school suggest that in-service professional development for many teachers will require much more than single workshops or conferences. Teachers need extended opportunities to learn more deeply about emerging and recommended practices in the field. These issues may involve
cultural and linguistic diversity, new knowledge on children’s cognitive development as well as issues of school readiness. Professional development will need to address both extended learning opportunities as well as focused short-term training requirements.

In 2008, Illinois was selected as a grant recipient by the National Professional Development Center on Inclusion (NPDCI). Over the next three years, Illinois, in partnership with NPDCI, will be examining policies, structures, and training opportunities supportive of the full inclusion of children with disabilities and those who are culturally and linguistically diverse. One of the main foci of the grant work will center on ensuring that the professionals who provide teacher education and training are well versed in strategies designed to prepare front-line professionals in meeting the diverse needs of each and every child and their family.

**Directors’ Participation in the Illinois Director Credential**

The Illinois Director Credential (IDC), offered at the associate, baccalaureate, and graduate degree levels, has been available since 2000. The IDC was developed to increase and validate the knowledge and skills of early childhood program administrators. There are 19 colleges and universities in Illinois that offer IDC-entitled programs. This means that directors can attain the IDC at the same time they complete a degree program. Directors can also apply and submit documentation of the achievement of competency directly to INCCRRA for approval.

Although only 16% of the directors surveyed as part of this study indicate that they have achieved the IDC, 10% note that they have begun the application process. Another 30% rated themselves as very interested in pursuing the credential.

When asked to identify the most important supports to assist them in obtaining a credential, directors identified supports associated with funding. Over one-half listed tuition reimbursement as desirable, and nearly one-third indicated that paid release time or a scholarship would be helpful. Written comments from directors also indicate that a number of them need assistance in identifying a program and information about the classes and requirements involved in completing the credential.

To support directors who live in geographic regions of the state where access to director credential courses is not readily available, National-Louis University will be launching a national online director credential, Aim4Excellence, in early 2009. This will support directors in achieving the equivalent of 9 semester hours of credit toward the IDC credential.
Summary

Professional development is a linchpin issue in early care and education. New requirements and expectations that lead teachers hold a bachelor’s degree and in many cases state certification will create enormous pressures on the current workforce. Those without degrees will need support, both financial and time, in order to balance their positions with coursework. Coursework must become available in a format and at times that are convenient for teachers.

All teachers, directors, and family child care providers require access to ongoing professional development. The Gateways to Opportunity professional development system provides a promising avenue for practitioners in all parts of the state to identify and access training opportunities through a Web-based registry. This study confirms that the extent to which professional development opportunities are accessible and affordable and tied to career advancement impacts participation. The career lattice and the development of new credentials for the early childhood workforce provide direction and incentives. However, awareness of the state’s system of professional development is still growing and is not common knowledge to many members of the workforce.
VOICES FROM THE FIELD

It is not just about qualifications, it is about the mechanisms, the systems that are in place to help people meet those qualifications. We must address those systems at the same time we seek to increase the qualifications. There are institutional practices that are embedded in higher education that are obstacles... I realize it is a big problem. It is tempting to say “we should forget about being advocates for higher qualifications...that it will destroy the diversity of the workforce.” No! I say it will destroy the diversity of the workforce if we don’t change higher education.

Carol Brunson Day, Executive Director
National Black Child Development Institute

Some directors are not telling their staff about professional development opportunities. They may not be able to release teachers for trainings because the release may involve coverage or the need to hire substitute teachers in order to meet DCFS staffing requirements.

Kay Henderson, Division Administrator
Early Childhood Education, Illinois State Board of Education

We need greater emphasis on support for practitioners from diverse cultural backgrounds. We lack a workforce that reflects the diversity of the children and families served. We are now a day late and a dollar short. We need a major investment and we need it now.

Jan Maruna, Executive Director
Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies

Many practitioners need to travel a great distance to reach an institution of higher education; that is why access to online learning is so critical. Another obstacle to career development is that the associate of arts in teaching degree (AAT) in early childhood education is not widely available yet in community colleges; more work needs to be done to promote this degree.

Margie Wallen, Assistant Director of National Policy Consultation
Ounce of Prevention Fund

I encourage all of my staff to further their education, even though it may mean I am counseling them to advance out of employment at my center. I try to create a climate that provides other incentives to stay, since we all know that staff retention has a direct impact on the quality of our programs.

Cindy Mahr, Executive Director
In a Kids World

Who’s Caring for the Kids?
Chapter Notes


We know that early childhood educators play a critical role in promoting young children's development. The highest quality programs are associated with teachers and program directors who have early childhood degrees and who continue to grow through ongoing professional development. Their programs support warm and caring relationships with children, promote language development, and demonstrate intentional teaching practices. Likewise, family child care providers who provide higher quality programming demonstrate their commitment to their craft by engaging in formal training and ongoing professional development.

Based on the accumulating evidence that formal training and ongoing professional development make a difference, states, national associations, and federal agencies are increasing the professional development requirements of early childhood practitioners. Many states require a bachelor's degree and teaching certificate for state-funded prekindergarten programs. The revised NAEYC accreditation standards now call for increased levels of education for teachers, assistant teachers, and program administrators. And Head Start is requiring that by 2013, 50% of its teachers have a bachelor's degree in early childhood and its assistant teachers have a CDA credential and be working towards completion of an early childhood degree.

We also know that despite increased requirements, the level of compensation for practitioners around the country remains an issue. The field of early care and education continues to be woefully underfunded and the disparities that exist in regulations and funding between different sectors only serve to exacerbate the situation.

Building a comprehensive and coordinated system of early care and education is an incremental process and one in which the State of Illinois has made great strides in the past decade. This chapter summarizes the key findings of this report regarding the characteristics of the early childhood workforce in Illinois and the provision of formal and informal professional development opportunities. In each area, recommendations for improvement over the next decade are included.
Finding #1: Education Matters

The educational level of lead teachers in community-based programs has substantially increased since 2001.

- Lead teachers with a minimum of a bachelor's degree have increased from 37% to 48% between 2001 and 2008.
- In community-based programs lead teachers have considerably more education than teachers, and teachers have considerably more education than assistant teachers.
- Nearly 20% of lead teachers in community-based programs hold Type 04 early childhood certification in addition to a bachelor's degree.
- More than 75% of lead teachers who do not currently have a Type 04 early childhood certification report they are interested in continuing their education to complete a bachelor's degree and/or attain Type 04 certification.
- Only one-third of lead teachers working with infants and toddlers have a bachelor's degree or higher.
- Less than 50% of family child care providers have earned a minimum of an associate's degree.

Recommendations:

➤ Revise the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services Licensing Standards for Center Staffing by adding lead teacher as a separate role category for the teacher with the highest professional qualifications assigned to teach a group of children and who is responsible for daily lesson planning, parent conferences, child assessment, and curriculum planning.

➤ Collect data for the biannual Illinois Salary and Staffing Survey of Licensed Child Care Facilities on lead teachers, in addition to teachers and assistant teachers, even in the absence of revisions to the IDCFS Licensing Standards.

➤ Phase in over time, the Level 1 ECE Credential as a minimum entry requirement for assistant teachers, the Level 3 ECE Credential as a minimum entry requirement for teachers, and the Level 4 ECE Credential as a minimum entry requirement for lead teachers in licensed child care centers.

➤ Phase in over time, the Level 1 ECE Credential as a minimum entry requirement for licensed family child care providers.

➤ Phase in over time, the Level 5 ECE Credential and Infant Toddler Credential as a minimum entry requirement for lead teachers working with infants and toddlers in programs funded by Preschool for All.
Finding #2: Compensation Matters

The wide variation in compensation—wages and benefits—across sectors is drawing teachers with degrees and Type 04 early childhood certification from community-based programs to public school programs.

- Market forces continue to drive the wages and benefits of early childhood teachers. Those who work for programs that depend on parent fees and/or IDHS subsidies make far less than those who work for programs receiving federal and state funds. They are also less likely to receive comparable benefits in terms of paid leave, health insurance, retirement, or opportunities for continued professional development.

- Lead teachers with a bachelor’s degree earn 20% more than those without the degree. With certification and a bachelor’s degree, lead teachers working in public schools have the potential to earn almost three times more than lead teachers without a bachelor’s degree.

- Lead teachers with Type 04 certification employed by community-based programs earn 44% less than comparably certified teachers in public school programs.

- Nearly one-third of prekindergarten teachers in public schools indicate that they left community-based programs, attracted largely by higher salaries and greater benefits.

- The turnover rate for teachers is closely associated with compensation levels. In licensed programs, the two-year turnover rate for teachers is 28% while the rate for the lower-paid assistant teachers is 41%.

- Approximately 38% of lead teachers in community-based programs report working in their current positions for less than two years.

Recommendations:

➤ Utilize the Gateways to Opportunity career lattice and Quality Counts–QRS to function as levers to increase the wages as well as the education of practitioners in the field. Develop clear linkages between the credentials identified on the Gateways to Opportunity career lattice and Quality Counts–QRS.

➤ Fully fund Great START through cross-sector support in order to provide wage supplements for all income-eligible practitioners who complete credentials identified on the Gateways to Opportunity career lattice.

➤ Within each school district, equalize wages and benefits across sectors for lead teachers working in Preschool for All programs to reduce turnover and provide access to comparable early learning opportunities for Illinois children.
Finding #3: Leadership Matters

Director qualifications, including level of education, specialized training in early childhood education, specialized training in program administration, and experience, are directly related to program quality.

- Directors with a bachelor’s degree or higher are more likely to have centers that are NAEYC-accredited.
- Directors with a bachelor’s degree or higher are more likely to support the professional development of their teaching staff and help them attain college credit.
- Directors who have successfully acquired Preschool for All funds have higher levels of education and administrative experience than other directors. In fact, one-fourth of center directors receiving PFA funds hold an Illinois Director Credential.
- The qualifications of directors appear to be declining. In 2001, 72% of full-time directors reported having a bachelor’s degree or higher compared to only 66% in 2008.
- Directors with higher levels of education and specialized training are near retirement age and only a few report planning for leadership succession.

Recommendations:

➤ Provide directors with the specialized training in early childhood education and program administration needed to lead high-quality programs with the capacity to participate in Preschool for All and Quality Counts–QRS.
➤ Provide directors who are considering retirement with training and technical assistance in succession planning.
➤ Identify emerging leaders in the field and provide them with leadership training and mentoring to develop the skills needed to assume administrative roles.
➤ Phase in over time, the IDC Level I as a minimum entry requirement for directors of licensed centers and the IDC Level II as a minimum requirement for administrators of community-based programs with Preschool for All funding.
➤ Require the IDC Level I for the director of a three-star center participating in Quality Counts–QRS and the IDC Level II for the director of a four-star center participating in Quality Counts–QRS.
Finding #4: Diversity Matters

Early childhood teachers are not representative of or prepared to teach the changing population of children in Illinois.

- Seventy percent of lead teachers in center-based programs and 88% of prekindergarten teachers in public schools are Caucasian. Only 57% of Illinois children five and under are Caucasian.
- Family child care providers are more diverse, better reflecting Illinois families; 40% are people of color.
- Most early childhood teachers speak only English, yet more than one-third of children in Illinois speak a home language other than English.
- Approximately 20% of Illinois households with children under age 18 have at least one immigrant parent.
- Only 1% of lead teachers and center directors are male.
- Over 50,000 children in Illinois, ages five and under, have been identified as having disabilities or developmental delays. Some of these children are enrolled in early care and education programs with teachers or providers who have little knowledge of special education services.

Recommendations:

➤ Expand statewide initiatives aimed at increasing the cultural and linguistic diversity and competence of those who work in early care and education settings. Identify, recruit, hire, and educate more teachers who speak Spanish and other languages prevalent among immigrants in Illinois.

➤ Provide incentives for teachers to increase specific skills and competence in high-need areas of the field, such as instructional strategies to support children who are English language learners.

➤ Encourage colleges and universities to provide the coursework necessary for a certificate in bilingual education with early childhood education.

➤ Promote the importance of male role models in early education in marketing and public relations materials aimed at attracting new teachers.

➤ Offer more professional development opportunities for practitioners who currently care for children with developmental delays and disabilities and collaborate with professionals in early intervention and special education.
Finding #5: The Professional Development System Matters

Illinois has an emerging and sophisticated system of professional development and a career lattice tied to credentials and college degrees but not necessarily linked to the requirements for working in state-funded early care and education programs.

- Currently, there is no connection between the credentials identified on the Gateways to Opportunity career lattice and the differing roles, job opportunities, and levels of compensation available to early childhood practitioners.

- Despite the emergence of distance education and online learning, most early childhood education degree programs remain entrenched in traditional formats and daytime scheduling of classes, making courses inaccessible for many practitioners. Only two colleges in Illinois offer an early childhood degree program through an online format.

- Currently, the majority of lead teachers (60%) are unfamiliar with Gateways to Opportunity. While 75% of non-certified lead teachers in community-based programs are interested in attaining Type 04 early childhood certification, 40% do not know what they need to do to accomplish this goal.

Recommendations:

➤ Embed the Gateways to Opportunity professional development system and career lattice into state government by recognizing the ECE Credential, Illinois Director Credential, and Infant Toddler Credential in IDCFS Licensing Standards.

➤ Require the appropriate level of the ECE Credential, Illinois Director Credential, and Infant Toddler Credential in rule making for all publicly funded early care and education programs.

➤ Increase marketing and outreach efforts to ensure that practitioners are aware of the career lattice and credentials identified on the Gateways to Opportunity Web site.

➤ Increase cross-sector support for scholarships for early childhood practitioners seeking credentials identified on the career lattice, including but not limited to, Type 04 early childhood certification.

➤ Provide tutoring and other supports needed by early childhood practitioners to pass the Illinois Basic Skills Test.

➤ Provide incentives for institutions of higher education to develop more flexible program models, using online delivery and intensive weekend formats as well as credit for prior experience, to encourage early childhood practitioners to continue their education.
A Call to Action

Illinois has emerged as a national leader in the design and implementation of its professional development system. It leads the nation in funding prekindergarten for 3-year-olds and has invested substantially in expanding prekindergarten to serve more 4-year-olds. In 2008, Preschool for All served more than 90,000 children. The state has a coordinating council looking at critical issues in the field, such as workforce development, oversight and coordination, linguistic and cultural diversity, public awareness, and space capacity. It also works to coordinate resources across state agencies.

In order to maintain the tremendous gains evidenced since 2001, it will require the continued engagement of multiple stakeholders and constituents.

➤ **Early childhood practitioners** must be well-qualified and competent in their respective roles. They must commit themselves to obtaining the professional credentials identified on the Gateways to Opportunity career lattice that validate requisite knowledge, skills, and experience. They must commit to grow professionally through ongoing professional development and acquire knowledge and skills to teach an increasingly diverse population of children. They also must acquire the skills to support the inclusion of children with developmental delays and meet the social and emotional needs of all children. They must commit to participating in continuous program improvement efforts such as Quality Counts–QRS.

➤ **Teacher educators** must develop flexible programs to respond to the needs of early childhood practitioners in all settings by designing educational opportunities that are available at nontraditional times and places, can be delivered online or through cohort models, and that provide appropriate credit for experience. All programs must have clear articulation between community colleges and four-year colleges to support the transfer of students. Certification programs must address the cultural and linguistic diversity in the state and prepare teachers to work with children who are English language learners, as well as children who are at-risk of school failure or who have developmental delays or disabilities.

➤ **Policymakers** must embed the credentials identified on the Gateways to Opportunity career lattice in state rule making and link the credentials to enhanced compensation strategies so that practitioners who obtain credentials see economic benefits for their efforts. Policymakers must make compensation—salaries and benefits—equitable across sectors to assure comparable, high-quality, early care and education for young children in all Preschool for All settings.
Accreditation – A seal of approval by an independent professional organization that signifies a program has met high-quality program and performance standards.

Administrator – The director, executive director, manager, or principal of an early childhood program. (See also Director)

Apprentice teacher/aide – A member of the teaching team assigned to a group of children who works under the direct supervision of the lead teacher or teacher and is required by IDCFS Licensing Standards to have a high school diploma or GED. This individual is sometimes called an assistant teacher.

Assistant teacher – A member of the teaching team who works with a group of children under the direct supervision of a lead teacher or teacher and is required by IDCFS Licensing Standards to have a high school diploma or GED. This individual is sometimes called an aide or apprentice teacher. The Preschool for All Program requires an assistant teacher with 30 hours of college credit to assist in classroom instruction.

At-risk – Term used by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to refer to children who are at-risk of academic failure because of economic status of the family, condition of birth, developmental delays, or environmental factors.

Career lattice – A framework that identifies the core knowledge, skills, and dispositions for roles in early care and education. The lattice lays out pathways and options for professional preparation and describes how individuals can move (horizontally, vertically, and diagonally) within a single system or across professional development systems.

Certification – Professional license required by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) for anyone who teaches children in the public school or who teaches children who are 3- to 5-years of age in a community-based Preschool for All funded program. Type 04 early childhood certification requires a bachelor’s degree in education and specialized coursework in early childhood education.

Child care – Generic term that refers to non-parental care of children by another adult; referred to as "day care" in the IDCFS licensing standards to distinguish from the 24-hour care arrangements that IDCFS also regulates.

Child care resource and referral agencies – Community organizations that track child care supply and demand, provide training and technical assistance to early childhood practitioners, work with communities to assess community needs, and recruit new providers.
**Child care subsidy** – Payment or waiver made to assist what parents pay for early childhood programs that charge tuition or fees. The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) through the local CCR&Rs makes payments to child care programs for tuition and fees to assist low-income families who need child care while they work or pursue training. Employers, colleges and universities, faith-based organizations, child care centers, and human service organizations may also offer child care subsidies to low-income families, employees, staff, students, or members.

**Credential** – Evidence of attainment and/or demonstration of defined knowledge, skills, and other professional requirements.

**Director** – Administrator of a center-based program, similar to the principal of an elementary school, who is responsible for planning, implementing, and evaluating an early childhood program. Role titles may include administrator, executive director, manager, and principal.

**ECE Credential** – A voluntary credential awarded at multiple levels by the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) and administered through the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) that identifies what individuals working directly with young children should know and be able to demonstrate at various levels of training, education, and experience.

**E-learning** – Refers to a variety of digital applications and processes, such as Web-based learning, computer-based learning, virtual classrooms, and digital collaboration.

**Early childhood education** – Generic term used to describe the field of early care and education of children birth through age 8.

**Early Head Start** – Early Head Start extends the philosophy and services of Head Start to children birth to age 3 and to pregnant women. These young children are served in center-based programs, family child care homes, and home visitor programs.

**Family child care** – Refers to a home-based program that is licensed by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services as a day care home (enrolls up to a maximum of twelve children), as a group day care home (maximum enrollment 16 children), or is license-exempt (maximum enrollment of three unrelated children).

**Formal care** – Refers to school- and center-based programs that are licensed or license-exempt and to licensed family child care, all of which are regulated. Formal care contrasts with informal care, also called family, friend, and neighbor care, which is license-exempt.
**Gateways to Opportunity** – The statewide professional development network designed to provide support and recognition to individuals and programs serving young children, youth, and their families. It supports early childhood career pathways and provides coordination of resources for education and training. Gateways to Opportunity defines the competencies and provides the framework for the awarding of credentials issued by the Illinois Department of Human Services, including the ECE Credential, the Illinois Director Credential, and the Infant Toddler Credential.

**Gateways to Opportunity Scholarships** – A scholarship program administered by INCCRA and funded by IDHS to support the professional development of early care and education practitioners. Financial support is available for college coursework and training to attain the credentials identified on the career lattice.

**Great START (Strategy to Attract and Retain Teachers)** – A wage supplement program designed to reward early care and education practitioners who exceed the qualifications required for their roles as defined in IDCFS Licensing Standards and who remain employed at their program.

**Head Start** – Federally funded, comprehensive child development program that serves children from 3- to 5-years of age. Head Start has the overall goal of increasing the school readiness of young children in low-income families.

**Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI)** – Effort to promote articulation between associate and baccalaureate programs. Currently, six articulated ECE classes representing up to 18 semester hours can be transferred contingent on the receiving institution accepting these credits.

**Illinois Community Colleges Online Initiative (ILCCO)** – Statewide online degree or certificate program. ILCCO’s purpose is to provide a wide range of online learning opportunities to Illinois residents at a reasonable cost and allow students at any community college to access, through their home college, online courses and programs delivered from other Illinois community colleges.

**Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (IDCFS)** – State agency that oversees the regulation of child care centers, family child care homes, and family group homes, as required by the Child Care Act of 1969, revised.

**Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS)** – State agency that funds the Child Care Assistance Program (providing tuition assistance to low-income families) and a range of programs designed to improve program quality and outcomes for children including the statewide child care resource and referral system, Quality Counts–QRS, and Gateways to Opportunity.
**Illinois Director Credential (IDC)** – Voluntary credential awarded at the associate, baccalaureate, and graduate level by the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) and administered through the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) that validates the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for those administering an early care and education program.

**Illinois Early Learning Standards (IELS)** – Provides benchmarks for children ages 3 to 5. These benchmarks align with the Illinois Learning Standards, which define what elementary and secondary students are expected to know and be able to do in various subject areas.

**Illinois Network of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (INCCRRA)** – Statewide organization funded by the Illinois Department of Human Service and philanthropic foundations that works in partnership with its member child care resource and referral (CCR&R) agencies to support families in locating child care and to provide local and statewide professional development opportunities for practitioners. It administers Gateways to Opportunity and Quality Counts–QRS.

**Illinois Resource Center** – A nonprofit organization that provides a broad range of professional development services and instructional resources (spanning from early education through adult learning) for school communities throughout Illinois.

**Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)** – State agency that administers programs pursuant to the School Code and distributes funds to school districts. ISBE administers the Early Childhood Education Block Grant, which funds Preschool for All, as well as federally funded programs such as Early Childhood Special Education and Even Start.

**Illinois Trainers Network (ITN)** – Group of trainers throughout the state who provide high-quality training and professional resources for center-based staff and family child care providers. This program is funded by IDHS and administered by the INCCRRA.

**Illinois Training Directory of Early Childhood Training Organizations** – Directory published by the Ounce of Prevention Fund that lists Illinois organizations that offer training, education, and professional development opportunities for staff working with expecting parents and families with young children.

**Illinois Virtual Campus (IVC)** – Online clearinghouse that lists all the distance learning courses being offered throughout the state on one searchable Web site.

**Infant** – Child under 15 months of age.
**Infant Toddler Credential (ITC)** – Voluntary credential awarded by IDHS and administered by INCCRRA that builds on the ECE Credential and validates knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for those working with infants and toddlers.

**Informal care** – License exempt family child care, also called family, friend, and neighbor care, in which a provider cares for no more than three unrelated children. Informal care contrasts with formal care, child care provided in a licensed family child care home or a licensed or license-exempt center or school.

**ISBE Early Childhood Block Grant** – State-funded grant that funds Preschool for All.

**ISBE Prekindergarten At-Risk** – The state-funded program that was the precursor to Preschool for All. Begun in 1985, it was funded through the Early Childhood Block Grant and provided early education services for children, ages 3 to 5, identified as at-risk for academic failure.

**Kith and kin care** – An informal, license-exempt care arrangement for no more than three children; also known as family, friend, and neighbor care.

**Lead teacher** – The individual with the highest professional qualifications assigned to teach a group of children and who is responsible for daily lesson planning, parent conferences, child assessment, and curriculum planning. In some settings, the lead teacher supervises other classroom staff.

**Licensed programs** – Early care and education programs regulated and monitored by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (IDCFS), under the guidelines established by the Child Care Act of 1969, as revised.

**License-exempt programs** – Includes programs operated by public or private elementary school systems, high schools, or institutions of higher education; programs conducted on federal government premises; and other programs recognized or registered with the Illinois State Board of Education, if children in the program are over age 3. In a license-exempt child care home, there can be no more than three unrelated children under the age of 12, including the provider's children.

**Practitioner** – Any individual who works in a teaching, administrative, or support capacity in a center-based, school-based, or home-based early childhood program.

**Preschool** – Any early childhood program offered to children younger than kindergarten age.
Pre-service requirements – Minimum qualifications that individuals are required to have prior to assuming specific positions.

Professional Development Advisors (PDAs) – Skilled counselors who provide guidance and resources about career options, educational opportunities, and financial support available to early care and education practitioners. The PDA program is offered through Gateways to Opportunity and administered by INCCRR.A.

Professional Development Advisory Council (PDAC) – Statewide council of practitioners, state agency representatives, teacher educators, and advocates that first developed and now advises Gateways to Opportunity.

Registry – Recognition system that provides a way to track and document an individual practitioner's attainment of training, accumulation of work experience in the field, and attainment of credentials and degrees. A registry also provides a quality assurance mechanism to track approved trainers and trainings that support the credentials identified in Gateways to Opportunity.

Regulated care – A generic term applied to center- and school-based programs and licensed family child care homes that are subject to various regulations that include: building safety, fire safety, and sanitation approvals; licensing standards; criminal background checks; and child abuse and neglect clearances.

Reimbursement rate – The amount paid by IDHS to a provider caring for children through the Illinois Child Care Assistance Program. An additional tiered reimbursement rate is available to those providers who choose to participate in the Quality Counts–QRS.

School-age child care – Any program offered to school-age children, ages 5 to 12, before or after school, during vacations, or during summer break.

Stability – A term used to refer to the tenure and turnover of staff in an early childhood program. Centers with high turnover and/or staff who have not worked at the program for a long period of time have low staff stability.

Standards – A set of knowledge and abilities on which an individual or group of individuals can be measured or a set of criteria on which programs can be measured; a mechanism to compare educational results.

STARNET (Illinois Support and Technical Assistance Regional Network) – An organization that assists ISBE in meeting local needs by providing services to professionals and parents of young children with special needs throughout Illinois. STARNET provides training, consultation, and resources to the early childhood community.
**T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps)** – A national scholarship and compensation project designed to help child care professionals obtain funding for college coursework or tuition. In Illinois, this model of scholarship assistance was replaced with the Gateways to Opportunity Scholarships in 2008.

**Teacher** – A member of the teaching team who shares responsibility with the lead teacher for the care and education of an assigned group of children.

**Teacher educator** – College instructor or professor who teaches early childhood practitioners.

**Tiered reimbursement** – Increased payment rates based on quality in a state's child care subsidy system.

**Toddler** – A child between 15 months and 2 years of age. The term may include a child up to 30 months of age depending upon physical or social development.

**Turnover** – Percentage of staff leaving employment within a 12-month or other specified period. Turnover is calculated by dividing the number of staff who have left employment by the number of staff on the payroll.

**Web-based training (WBT)** – Delivery of educational content via a Web browser on the Internet. Web-based training often provides links to other learning resources such as references, e-mail, bulletin boards, and discussion groups.
Finding #1: There are wide disparities in the qualifications required and the compensation paid for comparable work in different early childhood settings. These disparities, fueled by funding and regulatory inequities, are major contributors to the staffing crisis that negatively impacts the well-being of children.

**Recommendation:** Implement strategies to address current inequities in qualifications and pay. Convene a work group representing a cross-section of early childhood stakeholders to create an early childhood career lattice, including roles, requisite qualifications, and recommended salary ranges for different positions.

Finding #2: Director qualifications are directly related to program quality. Directors’ ability to effectively address the staffing crisis in their own programs and oversee other facets of program operations is directly related to their own level of formal education and specialized training in leadership and management.

**Recommendation:** Improve the leadership and management skills of early childhood practitioners by fully funding the Illinois Director Credential and supporting the development and articulation of early childhood management coursework and training.

Finding #3: Accreditation has a positive impact on overall program quality by reducing staff turnover and creating a more stable workforce.

**Recommendation:** Implement a statewide, public/private partnership to support center and family child care accreditation. Implement higher reimbursement rates for accredited programs.

Finding #4: Illinois lacks a coherent system of initial preparation, ongoing professional development, and career counseling for teaching, administrative, and support staff in early childhood programs.

**Recommendation:** Create a statewide registry to track early childhood coursework and offerings that lead to a degree as well as to monitor practitioners’ progress on the career lattice. Train a cadre of master-level career advisors to mentor and guide individuals in their career goals. Increase availability of specialized training in critical shortage areas for specific age groups.

Finding #5: Many caregivers operate outside the established early childhood regulatory system and thus do not have access to technical assistance or professional training.

**Recommendation:** Expand the Quality Counts program to train all license-exempt providers, who serve children receiving a publicly funded child care subsidy, in basic health and safety, individual and group guidance, and program management.
# APPENDIX B: ECE CREDENTIAL, INFANT TODDLER CREDENTIAL, AND ILLINOIS DIRECTOR CREDENTIAL

## ECE Credential Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>General Education Requirements</th>
<th>Education and Training in Early Care &amp; Education</th>
<th>Work and Practical Experience in Early Care &amp; Education</th>
<th>Professional Contributions in Early Care &amp; Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 6</td>
<td></td>
<td>To Be Determined</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 5</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>30 points* in the ECE Core Content Areas (of level 6 benchmarks) – of which a maximum of 6 points may be from approved training</td>
<td>Minimum of 280 hours of ECE supervised experience or 1200 hours of documented ECE work experience</td>
<td>Four professional contributions in three different areas within the last five years – one contribution must be in the area of program improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>Associate Degree or 60 semester hours (including the nine semester hours listed at level 3)</td>
<td>24 points* in the ECE Core Content Areas (of level 4 benchmarks) – of which a maximum of 3 points may be from approved training (must include 20 clock hours of ECE observation)</td>
<td>100 total hours of ECE supervised experience or 600 hours of documented ECE work experience</td>
<td>Two professional contributions in two different areas within the last five years – one contribution must be in the area of program improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>Three semester hours: Math Three semester hours: English Three semester hours: General Education elective (Psychology, Sociology, etc) (These 9 credits must be transferable)</td>
<td>18 points* in the ECE Core Content Areas (of level 3 benchmarks) – of which a maximum of 3 points may be from approved training (must include 20 clock hours of ECE observation)</td>
<td>10 hours of ECE supervised experience or 400 hours of documented ECE work experience</td>
<td>One professional contribution in any area within the last five years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>12 points in the ECE Core Content Areas (of level 2 benchmarks) – 3 points in Child, Growth and Development, 3 points in Health, Safety and Nutrition, and 6 points from ECE electives or 6 points in ECE electives and a CDA/CCF; 3 points may be from approved training</td>
<td>10 hours of ECE observation or 200 hours of documented ECE work experience</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: A point is equivalent to one semester hour of college credit.

*ECE course work must equal to a minimum of 1 point in each of the seven ECE content areas.

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Who’s Caring for the Kids?
# Infant Toddler Credential Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infant Toddler Credential Levels</th>
<th>Education and Training in Infants &amp; Toddlers</th>
<th>Work and Practical Experience in Infants &amp; Toddlers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 6</td>
<td>To Be Determined</td>
<td>100 hours of supervised experience in Infants and Toddlers or 1800 hours of documented IT work experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 5</td>
<td>12 points in Infant and Toddler education and approved training, of which a minimum of 6 points must be from college course work</td>
<td>60 hours of supervised experience in Infants and Toddlers or 900 hours of documented IT work experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>6 points in Infant and Toddler education and approved training, of which a minimum of 3 points must be from college course work</td>
<td>30 hours of supervised experience in Infants and Toddlers or 450 hours of documented IT work experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>6 points in Infant and Toddler education and approved training, of which a minimum of 3 points must be from college course work</td>
<td>10 hours of supervised experience in Infants and Toddlers or 450 hours of documented IT work experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>3 points in Infant and Toddler education and approved training, of which all 3 points may come from approved training</td>
<td>5 hours of supervised experience in Infants and Toddlers or 200 hours of documented IT work experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Must meet ECE Credential requirements as the foundation of the Infant Toddler Credential.**

| Level 5 | Bachelor’s Degree | Minimum of 360 hours of ECE supervised experience or 1200 hours of documented ECE work experience | Four professional contributions in ECE to prove eligibility and in the last five years one must be in the area of program improvement |
| Level 4 | Associate Degree | 24 credits in the ECE Core Content Areas | 180 total hours of ECE supervised experience or 450 hours of documented ECE work experience |
| Level 3 | Three credit hour Math | 18 credits in the ECE Core Content Areas | 11 hours of ECE supervised experience or 450 hours of documented ECE work experience |
| Level 2 | None | 12 points in the ECE Core Content Areas | 11 hours of ECE supervised experience or 200 hours of documented ECE work experience |

Guide:
A point is equivalent to one semester hour of college credit.

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The status of the early childhood workforce in Illinois—2008
### Illinois Director Credential (IDC) Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Illinois Director Credential Levels</th>
<th>General Education Requirements</th>
<th>Education and Training in Early Care &amp; Education</th>
<th>Work and Practical Experience in Early Care &amp; Education</th>
<th>Education and Training in Early Care &amp; Education Administration</th>
<th>Work and Practical Experience in Early Care &amp; Education Administration</th>
<th>Professional Contributions in Early Care &amp; Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level III</td>
<td>Master Degree</td>
<td>36 points in the ECE Core Content Areas - of which a maximum of 6 points may be from approved training</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>21 points in administrative education and training</td>
<td>6000 hours of documented ECE administrative experience</td>
<td>Six professional contributions in four different areas within the last five years; one contribution must be in the area of program improvement. Must include documentation of specialized expertise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level II</td>
<td>Baccalaureate Degree</td>
<td>24 points in the ECE Core Content Areas - of which a maximum of 6 points may be from approved training</td>
<td>100 hours of teaching experience</td>
<td>15 points in administrative education and training</td>
<td>300 hours of a supervised ECE administrative practicum or 3600 hours of documented ECE administrative experience</td>
<td>Four professional contributions in three different areas within the last five years; one contribution must be in the area of program improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level I</td>
<td>Associate Degree</td>
<td>21 points in the ECE Core Content Areas - of which a maximum of 3 points may be from approved training (Must include 30 clock hours of ECE observation)</td>
<td>100 hours of teaching experience</td>
<td>9 points in administrative education and training</td>
<td>300 hours of a supervised ECE administrative practicum or 1200 hours of documented ECE administrative experience</td>
<td>Two professional contributions in two different areas within the last five years; one contribution must be in the area of program improvement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# APPENDIX C: QUALITY COUNTS-QRS FOR LICENSED CENTERS

Illinois Department of Human Services  
Quality Rating System - Star Levels  
LICENSED CENTERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CCAP Rate Add-on</th>
<th>5 percent</th>
<th>10 percent</th>
<th>15 percent</th>
<th>20 percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regulatory Compliance</td>
<td>*IDCFS license in good standing</td>
<td>*IDCFS license in good standing</td>
<td>*IDCFS license in good standing</td>
<td>*IDCFS license in good standing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Environment</td>
<td>ERS Rating of 3.0</td>
<td>ERS Rating of 3.5</td>
<td>** Current national accreditation in good standing OR ERS Rating of 4.25</td>
<td>** Current national accreditation in good standing AND ERS Rating of 5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Administration</td>
<td>Receive information packet on national accreditations</td>
<td>Receive information on the Program Administration Scale (PAS)</td>
<td>** Current national accreditation in good standing OR PAS Rating of 4.25</td>
<td>** Current national accreditation in good standing AND PAS Rating of 5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Qualifications &amp; Training***</td>
<td>10% of staff meet Great START education levels (for Great START eligible positions)</td>
<td>20% of staff meet Great START education levels (for Great START eligible positions)</td>
<td>25% of teaching staff meet Great START education levels for teachers.</td>
<td>30% of teaching staff meet Great START education level 6 or above for teachers. 30% of staff have current certification in CPR &amp; First Aid</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Day Care Information Line is contacted for violations.

** Level 3 & 4: Recognized national accreditations are: National Association of the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA), National Association of Child Care Professionals (NACCP), National Afterschool Association (NAA). Validation by the Administration of Children and Families as in compliance with the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) may also be accepted if a program site was visited during last review. If various age groups are cared for, must have a minimum of one national accreditation for the largest age group(s) in care.

***Staff is defined as permanent full time or part time, not substitute or temporary.
Dear Director,

We need your help. The McCormick Foundation is sponsoring a 2008 update of Who’s Caring for the Kids? The initial report was published in 2001 as a joint effort by the McCormick Tribune Center for Early Childhood Leadership and the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA). It helped set the stage for many innovations in Illinois, including the development of Gateways to Opportunity, Preschool for All, and other educational opportunities for early childhood professionals like you.

Please take ten minutes out of your busy schedule to complete this survey about different aspects of your professional role. The survey should be completed by the on-site administrator who has the primary responsibility for planning, implementing, and evaluating the early care and education program. When you have completed all questions, please fold and return in the enclosed pre-addressed, stamped envelope.

We also ask that you distribute the enclosed blue surveys to three lead teachers in your center who represent the different age groups served by your program. For the purposes of this research the Lead Teacher is defined as the individual with the highest educational qualifications assigned to teach a group of children and who is responsible for daily lesson planning, parent conferences, child assessment, and curriculum planning. There can be only one Lead Teacher per classroom. If you do not have at least three classrooms, discard the extra surveys. As an incentive for you and your teachers, we will be drawing the names of twenty centers from the pool of respondents and sending them a $50 gift certificate to purchase professional resources.

Please know that your responses and those of your Lead Teachers will be held confidential and that individual names or centers will not be entered with the data. Our plan is to combine information from all surveys to present the current picture of the early childhood workforce in Illinois. The 2008 report will be shared with state policymakers, state agencies, and practitioners. In addition, we will send you a copy of the Executive Summary that you can share with your staff, board, and parents. The full report will also be available on our Web site.

Thank you for your contribution to this important research.

Cordially,

Paula Jorde Bloom, Ph.D.

ABOUT YOUR CENTER

Director’s name: ____________________________________________

Center name: _______________________________________________________

Street: ___________________________________________________________________

City: ___________________________ State: __________ Zip: ______________

Phone: ______________________________ E-mail: __________________________

1. Licensed status: [ ] licensed  [ ] license-exempt

2. Total enrollment: ________ children (part-day + full-day)
3. Program options provided: ☐ part-day ☐ full-day (> 8 hrs) ☐ before/after school

4. Ages served: ☐ infants ☐ toddlers ☐ preschoolers ☐ school-agers

5. Do any enrolled children speak a primary language other than English? ☐ yes ☐ no

6. Estimate the percentage of children in each category: *(The total should equal 100%)*
   - ☐ African American
   - ☐ Asian/Pacific Islander
   - ☐ Caucasian
   - ☐ Hispanic
   - ☐ Native American
   - ☐ Multi-racial
   - ☐ Other

7. Center type: *(Check only one)*
   - ☐ for-profit—private proprietary or partnership
   - ☐ for-profit—corporation or chain (e.g., KinderCare, La Petite Academy)
   - ☐ for-profit—corporate-sponsored (e.g., Bright Horizons Family Solutions)
   - ☐ private nonprofit—independent
   - ☐ private nonprofit—affiliated with a social service agency or hospital
   - ☐ public nonprofit—sponsored by federal, state, or local government
   - ☐ college or university affiliated
   - ☐ military-sponsored
   - ☐ public school

8. Is the center sponsored by a faith-based organization? ☐ yes ☐ no

9. Is the center accredited? ☐ yes ☐ no
   - If yes, by what organization? ☐ NAEYC ☐ NAA ☐ NACCP

10. Check all current sources of funding received by the center:
    - ☐ Preschool for All, state-funded pre-kindergarten, or other ISBE early childhood block grants
    - ☐ Head Start or Early Head Start
    - ☐ IDHS or Chicago CYS child care subsidies (CCAP program)

**STAFFING**

Respond to questions in this section using the definitions on the last page of this survey.

1. Total number of paid teaching staff at the center: ______
   - Lead Teachers: ______
   - Teachers: ______
   - Apprentice Teachers/Aides: ______

2. Salary range of Lead Teachers:
   - Highest paid Lead Teacher: $______ per hour
   - Lowest paid Lead Teacher: $______ per hour

3. Total number of Lead Teachers who hold a Type 04 Certification: ______

4. How many Lead Teachers left the center during the last 12 months? ______
   - Of those that left, how many possessed a Type 04 Certification? ______
OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Please indicate how knowledgeable you are about the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunity</th>
<th>never heard of it</th>
<th>somewhat knowledgeable</th>
<th>moderately knowledgeable</th>
<th>very knowledgeable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great START</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T.E.A.C.H. scholarship</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gateways to Opportunity</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool for All</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Counts—Grants</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Counts—QRS (Quality Rating System)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Do any members of your teaching staff currently receive wage supplements through Great START?
☑ yes How many? ______

Please identify the extent to which you believe Great START has had a positive effect on retention of participating teachers at your center:
☑ no impact ☐ some impact ☐ substantial impact

☑ no Have not applied for Great START funding or staff are ineligible because: (Check all that apply)
☐ Their salaries exceed the salary cap
☐ The center does not provide full-day programming
☐ Other factors: ____________________________________________________________

3. Did any teaching staff at the center enroll in college coursework during the past 12 months?
☑ yes How many? ______ ☐ no

4. During the past 12 months, identify the ways in which your center has been able to support the professional development of your teaching staff: (For items checked, indicate the number of staff receiving support)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Check</th>
<th>Number of staff supported</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>mentor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>participation in T.E.A.C.H. scholarship program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>tuition reimbursement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>stipend for books and/or travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>paid release time to attend college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>helped staff secure professional development funds from CCR&amp;R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>paid conference/training registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>in-service training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>other: ____________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Identify up to three obstacles that prevent your teaching staff from pursuing formal education:

__________________________________________  _________________  ______________________
6. Have you attained the Illinois Director Credential? □ yes □ no
   If you responded yes, what level? □ I □ II □ III
   If you responded no, have you made application to begin the process? □ yes □ no
   If you have not made application, what is your level of interest in pursuing the credential?
   □ no interest □ mild interest □ strong interest
   If you checked no interest, indicate why: _______________________________________
   If you checked mild or strong interest, identify two supports that would help you attain the credential:
   □ mentor
   □ T.E.A.C.H. scholarship
   □ tuition reimbursement
   □ stipend for books/transportation
   □ paid release time to attend college
   □ access to transportation
   □ other: ____________________________________________

ABOUT YOU

1. Age: □ 20-29 □ 30-39 □ 40-49 □ 50-59 □ 60+
2. Gender: □ male □ female
3. Race/ethnicity:
   _____ African American _____ Asian/Pacific Islander _____ Caucasian _____ Hispanic
   _____ Native American _____ Multi-racial _____ Other
4. Highest education level: □ some college □ AA/AAS/AAT □ BA/BS □ MA/MS □ Ph.D.
5. How many years experience do you have in the field of early childhood? ______
6. How many years experience do you have in an early childhood administrative role? ______
7. How long have you held your current position? ______

Staffing Definitions

- A **Lead Teacher** is the individual with the highest educational qualifications assigned to teach a group of children and who is responsible for daily lesson planning, parent conferences, child assessment, and curriculum planning. Note: There can be only one Lead Teacher per classroom.
- A **Teacher** is a member of the teaching team who shares responsibility with the Lead Teacher for the care and education of an assigned group of children.
- An **Apprentice Teacher/Aide** is a member of the teaching team assigned to a group of children who works under the direct supervision of the Lead Teacher and/or Teacher.
- **Type 04 Certification** is granted by the State of Illinois to educators who have earned a BA degree in early childhood education, and passed all state exams and requirements to teach in a publicly funded program serving children pre-kindergarten through third grade.

Thank you for completing this survey
Dear Lead Teacher,

Please take five minutes out of your busy schedule to complete this confidential survey about different aspects of your professional role. The responses to your survey and those of other early childhood educators will be compiled to develop an updated profile of the early childhood teaching workforce in Illinois.

For the purposes of this research, Lead Teacher is defined as the classroom teacher with the highest educational qualifications who is assigned to teach a group of children and responsible for daily lesson planning, parent conferences, child assessment, and curriculum planning. In some settings the Lead Teacher supervises other members of the teaching team. Only one person per classroom should complete this survey. When you have completed all questions, please fold, seal, and return as a self-mailer.

Thank you for your contribution to this important research.

ABOUT YOU

1. Age: □ 20-29 □ 30-39 □ 40-49 □ 50-59 □ 60+

2. Gender: □ male □ female

3. Race/ethnicity: 
   □ African American □ Asian/Pacific Islander □ Caucasian □ Hispanic
   □ Native American □ Multi-racial □ Other

4. Highest education level: □ some college □ BA/BS □ MA/MS □ Ph.D.

5. Credentials or certifications: (Check all that you hold)
   □ CDA □ Type 04 □ Type 75 □ Montessori □ Other: ____________________________

6. Organizations to which you currently pay dues: (Check all that apply)
   □ NAEYC □ ASCD □ CEC □ Other: ____________________________

7. If you are fluent in any languages other than English, please indicate: ____________________________

ABOUT YOUR PROFESSIONAL POSITION

1. How many years experience do you have in the field of early childhood? ______

2. How long have you held your current teaching position? ______

3. Age-group(s) you currently teach: □ infants □ toddlers □ preschoolers □ school-agers

4. Number of paid hours you work per week: ______
   Number of weeks you work per year: ______ or Number of months you work per year: ______

5. Current salary: $___________ per hour or $___________ per year
6. Do you have any children in your group with an IEP or IFSP?  □ yes  □ no

7. Do you have children in your group whose primary language is not English?  □ yes  □ no
   If yes, please identify languages spoken: _____________________________________________

8. Estimate the percentage of children enrolled in your group in each category: (The total should equal 100%)
   □ African American  □ Asian/Pacific Islander  □ Caucasian  □ Hispanic
   □ Native American  □ Multi-racial  □ Other

9. Is the center in which you teach accredited by: □ NAEYC  □ NAA  □ NACCP  □ Don’t know

10. Location of your center: Zip code ____________

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

1. Please indicate how knowledgeable you are about the following:

<table>
<thead>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCR&amp;R professional dev funds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Have you enrolled in college coursework during the past 12 months?  □ yes  □ no
   If yes, please list courses taken: __________________________________________________

3. If you have taught in your current position for at least a year, indicate any supports you have received for professional development over the past 12 months:
   □ mentor  □ T.E.A.C.H. scholarship
   □ tuition reimbursement  □ stipend for books/transportation
   □ paid release time to attend college  □ paid conference/training registration
   □ paid release time to visit other centers  □ other: ___________________________

4. To what extent are you interested in pursuing additional formal education?
   □ not interested  □ somewhat interested  □ very interested

5. If you decide to pursue additional coursework, identify the three content areas of most interest to you:
   □ early literacy  □ early math and science
   □ social/emotional development  □ classroom management
   □ children with special needs  □ English language acquisition
   □ technology training  □ other: ___________________________
6. What instructional formats appeal most to your lifestyle?

- [ ] intensive summer session
- [ ] intensive weekend format
- [ ] evening classes
- [ ] online courses
- [ ] traditional day classes
- [ ] other: _____________________________

**EARLY CHILDHOOD CERTIFICATION**

1. Do you currently hold Illinois early childhood teacher certification (Type 04)?
   - [ ] yes
   - [ ] no
   If you responded no, skip to Question #3.
   If you responded yes, indicate the year you received your Type 04 certification: _________
   Do you teach in a Preschool for All funded classroom?
   - [ ] yes
   - [ ] no

2. What were the two primary reasons you choose to teach in a community-based early childhood center instead of a public school pre-kindergarten program?

__________________________________________________________________________

3. If you are not certified in early childhood, are you interested in obtaining this certification?
   - [ ] not interested: Please indicate your reason why ____________________________
   - [ ] somewhat interested
   - [ ] very interested

   If you responded somewhat or very interested, indicate any obstacles that have prevented you from attaining the Type 04 certification:

__________________________________________________________________________

4. If you decided to pursue a Type 04 certification, what additional degrees, assessments, and coursework would you need?
   - [ ] associate degree
   - [ ] baccalaureate degree
   - [ ] pass state certification exam
   - [ ] pass Basic Skills Test
   - [ ] certification coursework and student teaching
   - [ ] not sure or other: ____________________________

*Thank you for completing this survey*

Who’s Caring for the Kids?
Dear Pre-K Teacher,

Please take five minutes out of your busy schedule to complete this confidential survey about different aspects of your professional role. The responses to your survey and those of other early childhood educators will be compiled to develop an updated profile of the early childhood teaching workforce in Illinois and posted on our Web site for use by policymakers, state agencies, and practitioners like you.

For the purposes of this survey, Pre-K Teacher is defined as the pre-kindergarten teacher in a public school setting with the highest educational qualifications assigned to teach a group of children and responsible for daily lesson planning, parent conferences, child assessment, and curriculum planning. In some settings the Pre-K Teacher also supervises other members of the teaching team. Only one teacher per classroom should complete this survey. When you have completed all questions, please fold, seal, and return as a self-mailer. Thank you for your contribution to this important research in early childhood education.

ABOUT YOU

1. Age: □ 20-29 □ 30-39 □ 40-49 □ 50-59 □ 60+
2. Gender: □ male □ female
3. Race/ethnicity:
   □ African American □ Asian/Pacific Islander □ Caucasian □ Hispanic
   □ Native American □ Multi-racial □ Other
4. Highest education level: □ BA/BS □ MA/MS □ Ph.D.
5. Credentials or certifications: (Check all that you hold)
   □ Type 04 □ Type 75 □ ECSE endorsement □ Other: ______________________
6. Organizations to which you currently pay dues: (Check all that apply)
   □ NAEYC □ ASCD □ CEC □ Other: ______________________
7. If you are fluent in any languages other than English, please indicate: ______________________

ABOUT YOUR PROFESSIONAL POSITION

1. How many years experience do you have in the field of early childhood? ______
2. How long have you held your current teaching position? ______
3. Number of paid hours you work per week: ______
   Number of weeks you work per year: ______ or Number of months you work per year: ______
4. Current salary: $___________ per hour or $___________ per year
5. Do you have any children in your class with an IEP? □ yes □ no
6. Do you have children in your group whose primary language is not English?  
☐ yes  ☐ no
If yes, please identify languages spoken: ___________________________________________

7. Estimate the percentage of children enrolled in your group in each category: (The total should equal 100%)  
   ☐ African American  ☐ Asian/Pacific Islander  ☐ Caucasian  ☐ Hispanic
   ☐ Native American  ☐ Multi-racial  ☐ Other

8. Please identify the three most important factors that influenced you to seek employment in a pre-kindergarten program in the public school rather than a community-based program:
   ☐ availability of the position  ☐ opportunity to work with at-risk children
   ☐ opportunity to be more autonomous  ☐ opportunities for professional development
   ☐ starting salary  ☐ 9 or 10-month work schedule
   ☐ job security  ☐ professional status of working in a public school
   ☐ annual salary increases  ☐ other: ___________________________________
   ☐ work environment

9. Have you ever worked as a pre-kindergarten teacher in a community-based program?  ☐ yes  ☐ no

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

1. Have you enrolled in college coursework during the past 12 months?  ☐ yes  ☐ no
   If yes, please list courses taken: _____________________________________________

2. If you have taught in your current position for at least a year, indicate any supports you have received for professional development over the past 12 months:
   ☐ mentor  ☐ district-sponsored in-service training
   ☐ tuition reimbursement  ☐ stipend for books/transportation
   ☐ paid release time to attend college  ☐ paid conference/training registration
   ☐ paid release time to visit other schools  ☐ other: ___________________________________

3. To what extent are you interested in pursuing additional formal education?
   ☐ not interested  ☐ somewhat interested  ☐ very interested

4. If you decide to pursue additional coursework, identify the three content areas of most interest to you:
   ☐ early literacy  ☐ early math and science
   ☐ social/emotional development  ☐ classroom management
   ☐ ECSE endorsement  ☐ English language acquisition
   ☐ technology training  ☐ other: ___________________________________

5. Which instructional formats appeal most to your lifestyle?
   ☐ intensive summer session  ☐ intensive weekend format
   ☐ evening classes  ☐ online courses
   ☐ traditional day classes  ☐ other: ___________________________________

6. Location of your school: Zip code ________

Thank you for completing this survey

Who’s Caring for the Kids?