Illinois' first preschool initiative began as the Prekindergarten Program for At-Risk Children in 1985, in response to calls for education reform in the state. Since 1998, funds for the program have been provided through the state's Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG), which supports prekindergarten and provides parent training and coordinated services for at-risk infants and toddlers. At least 11 percent of the block grant must be used to serve children age 3 and under. A new preschool initiative, Preschool for All, was established in 2006 with the goal of offering access to preschool for all 3- and 4-year-olds in the state.

Preschool for All is available in all counties in Illinois. All public school districts and private providers are encouraged to apply for grants. During expansion, programs serving children at risk for school failure are the first priority for new funding, followed by programs serving families earning up to four times the federal poverty level. Individual programs determine criteria for at-risk status, based on needs identified by districts or agencies in their grant proposals. Among the types of risk factors considered by districts are developmental delay, low parental education, poverty, history of abuse, neglect, or family violence, and exposure to drug or alcohol abuse in the family.

The Fiscal Year 2007 budget included a $45 million increase in state funding and provided 10,000 additional slots for 3- to 5-year-olds. Over the next five years, Preschool for All is expected to expand to serve all 3- and 4-year-olds in the state whose parents wish them to attend. When Preschool for All is fully funded, it is expected that a total of 190,000 children will be served annually.
ILLINOIS PRESCHOOL FOR ALL

ACCESS

Total state program enrollment..........................85,186
School districts that offer state program....................78% 1
Income requirement .................................................................None 2
Hours of operation ........................................2.5 hours/day, 5 days/week 3
Operating schedule .................................................Academic year
Special education enrollment ........................................21,431
Federally funded Head Start enrollment..................33,749
State-funded Head Start enrollment.........................0

State spending per child enrolled............................$3,322
All reported spending per child enrolled* ..............$3,322

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY

Early learning standards ..............................................................Comprehensive
Teacher degree .................................................................BA
Teacher specialized training .....................................................EC certificate4
Assistant teacher degree .......................................................AA
Teacher in-service ..............................................................120 clock hours/5 years
Maximum class size ..........................................................20 or lower
3-year-olds ......................................................................20
4-year-olds ......................................................................20
Staff-child ratio .................................................................1:10 or better
3-year-olds ......................................................................1:10
4-year-olds ......................................................................1:10
Screening/referral ..............................................................Vision, hearing, health; and
and support services ..........................................................developmental; and at least 1 support service
Meals ......................................................................................Snack
Monitoring ...............................................................Site visits and other monitoring

BENCHMARK

Comprehensive ..........Comprehensive
BA ..............BA
Specializing in pre-K 4
CDA or equivalent
At least 15 hours/year
20 or lower
20
1:10 or better
1:10
Vision, hearing, health; and
at least 1 support service
At least 1/day
Site visits

DOES REQUIREMENT MEET BENCHMARK?

☑
☑
☑
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☑
☑

RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending.....................................$283,020,000 6
Local match required?......................................................No
State spending per child enrolled............................$3,322
All reported spending per child enrolled* ..............$3,322

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PRE-K*</th>
<th>HDST</th>
<th>K-12**</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$3,322</td>
<td>$7,360</td>
<td>$11,364</td>
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1 In addition to 78% of districts, programs are offered in 91 nonpublic school entities throughout the state.
2 Eligibility criteria are determined locally, but low-income status may be one of the risk factors considered.
3 Some extended-day programs are located in child care centers.
4 The early childhood certificate covers ages 3 through 8.
5 Support services include education services or job training for parents, parenting support or training, parent involvement activities, referral to social services, and transition to kindergarten activities. The number of required annual parent conferences or home visits is locally determined.
6 This figure is an estimate of Early Childhood Block Grant spending directed toward prekindergarten services. The total amount of the block grant was $318,000,000.