**Section 235.10 Purpose; Eligible Applicants**

a) This Subpart A establishes the procedures and criteria for the approval of proposals submitted to the State Board of Education by eligible applicants for grants to assist in establishing early childhood education programs funded through the Early Childhood Block Grant authorized by Section 1C-2 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/1C-2]. The Early Childhood Block Grant program shall include:

1) preschool education primarily for at-risk and low-income children ages 3 years old to kindergarten enrollment age as defined in Section 10-20.12 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/10-20.12], to include those programs and activities that meet the requirements of Section 2-3.71 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/2-3.71]; and

2) prevention initiative for at-risk children from birth to age 3 and their families, to include those programs and activities that meet the requirements of Section 2-3.89 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/2-3.89].

3) For the purposes of this Part, "at risk" is defined as those children *who because of their home and community environment are subject to such language, cultural, economic and like disadvantages to cause them to have been determined as a result of screening procedures* (to be carried out in conformance with Section 235.20(c)(5) of this Part) *to be at risk of academic failure*. (Section 2-3.71(a)(4.5) of the School Code)

1. Eligible applicants for Early Childhood Block Grant programs include any public or private not-for-profit or for-profit entity with experience in providing educational, health, social and/or child development services to young children and their families. If the Early Childhood Block Grant program is operated in or by a child care center subject to the licensure requirements of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), then that child care center must hold the appropriate licensure in accordance with rules promulgated by DCFS (see 89 Ill. Adm. Code 403 (Licensing Standards for Group Homes), 405 (Licensing Standards for Day Care Agencies), 406 (Licensing Standards for Day Care Homes), 407 (Licensing Standards for Day Care Centers) and 408 (Licensing Standards for Group Day Care Homes)).

c) Joint applications for funds may be submitted by any combination of eligible applicants, as described in subsection (b) of this Section.

1) If a joint application is submitted, then an administrative agent shall be designated.

2) A school district or other eligible applicant shall only participate in one proposal for a specific program.

d) Eligible applicants may subcontract with a private school, not-for-profit or for-profit corporation, or other governmental agency that would otherwise be eligible under subsection (b) of this Section to conduct an Early Childhood Block Grant program.

(Source: Amended at 35 Ill. Reg. 3742, effective February 17, 2011)