

AN ACT concerning education.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 5. The School Code is amended by changing Section 2-3.71 as follows:

(105 ILCS 5/2-3.71) (from Ch. 122, par. 2-3.71)

Sec. 2-3.71. Grants for preschool educational programs.

(a) Preschool program.

(1) The State Board of Education shall implement and administer a grant program under the provisions of this subsection which shall consist of grants to public school districts and other eligible entities, as defined by the State Board of Education, to conduct voluntary preschool educational programs for children ages 3 to 5 which include a parent education component. A public school district which receives grants under this subsection may subcontract with other entities that are eligible to conduct a preschool educational program. These grants must be used to supplement, not supplant, funds received from any other source.

(2) (Blank).

(3) Except as otherwise provided under this subsection

(a), any ~~Any~~ teacher of preschool children in the program

authorized by this subsection shall hold a Professional Educator License with an early childhood education endorsement ~~teaching certificate~~.

(3.5) Beginning with the 2018-2019 school year and until the 2023-2024 school year, an individual may teach preschool children in an early childhood program under this Section if he or she holds a Professional Educator License with an early childhood education endorsement or with short-term approval for early childhood education or he or she pursues a Professional Educator License and holds any of the following:

(A) An ECE Credential Level of 5 awarded by the Department of Human Services under the Gateways to Opportunity Program developed under Section 10-70 of the Department of Human Services Act.

(B) An Educator License with Stipulations with a transitional bilingual educator endorsement and he or she has (i) passed an early childhood education content test or (ii) completed no less than 9 semester hours of postsecondary coursework in the area of early childhood education.

(4) (Blank).

(4.5) The State Board of Education shall provide the primary source of funding through appropriations for the program. Such funds shall be distributed to achieve a goal of "Preschool for All Children" for the benefit of all

children whose families choose to participate in the program. Based on available appropriations, newly funded programs shall be selected through a process giving first priority to qualified programs serving primarily at-risk children and second priority to qualified programs serving primarily children with a family income of less than 4 times the poverty guidelines updated periodically in the Federal Register by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under the authority of 42 U.S.C. 9902(2). For purposes of this paragraph (4.5), at-risk children are those 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 at risk of academic failure. Such screening procedures shall be based on criteria established by the State Board of Education.

Except as otherwise provided in this paragraph (4.5), grantees under the program must enter into a memorandum of understanding with the appropriate local Head Start agency. This memorandum must be entered into no later than 3 months after the award of a grantee's grant under the program, except that, in the case of the 2009-2010 program year, the memorandum must be entered into no later than the deadline set by the State Board of Education for applications to participate in the program in fiscal year 2011, and must address collaboration between the grantee's

program and the local Head Start agency on certain issues, which shall include without limitation the following:

(A) educational activities, curricular objectives, and instruction;

(B) public information dissemination and access to programs for families contacting programs;

(C) service areas;

(D) selection priorities for eligible children to be served by programs;

(E) maximizing the impact of federal and State funding to benefit young children;

(F) staff training, including opportunities for joint staff training;

(G) technical assistance;

(H) communication and parent outreach for smooth transitions to kindergarten;

(I) provision and use of facilities, transportation, and other program elements;

(J) facilitating each program's fulfillment of its statutory and regulatory requirements;

(K) improving local planning and collaboration; and

(L) providing comprehensive services for the neediest Illinois children and families.

If the appropriate local Head Start agency is unable or unwilling to enter into a memorandum of understanding as

required under this paragraph (4.5), the memorandum of understanding requirement shall not apply and the grantee under the program must notify the State Board of Education in writing of the Head Start agency's inability or unwillingness. The State Board of Education shall compile all such written notices and make them available to the public.

(5) The State Board of Education shall develop and provide evaluation tools, including tests, that school districts and other eligible entities may use to evaluate children for school readiness prior to age 5. The State Board of Education shall require school districts and other eligible entities to obtain consent from the parents or guardians of children before any evaluations are conducted. The State Board of Education shall encourage local school districts and other eligible entities to evaluate the population of preschool children in their communities and provide preschool programs, pursuant to this subsection, where appropriate.

(6) The State Board of Education shall report to the General Assembly by November 1, 2018 and every 2 years thereafter on the results and progress of students who were enrolled in preschool educational programs, including an assessment of which programs have been most successful in promoting academic excellence and alleviating academic failure. The State Board of Education shall assess the

academic progress of all students who have been enrolled in preschool educational programs.

On or before November 1 of each fiscal year in which the General Assembly provides funding for new programs under paragraph (4.5) of this Section, the State Board of Education shall report to the General Assembly on what percentage of new funding was provided to programs serving primarily at-risk children, what percentage of new funding was provided to programs serving primarily children with a family income of less than 4 times the federal poverty level, and what percentage of new funding was provided to other programs.

(7) Due to evidence that expulsion practices in the preschool years are linked to poor child outcomes and are employed inconsistently across racial and gender groups, early childhood programs receiving State funds under this subsection (a) shall prohibit expulsions. Planned transitions to settings that are able to better meet a child's needs are not considered expulsion under this paragraph (7).

(A) When persistent and serious challenging behaviors emerge, the early childhood program shall document steps taken to ensure that the child can participate safely in the program; including observations of initial and ongoing challenging behaviors, strategies for remediation and intervention

plans to address the behaviors, and communication with the parent or legal guardian, including participation of the parent or legal guardian in planning and decision-making.

(B) The early childhood program shall, with parental or legal guardian consent as required, utilize a range of community resources, if available and deemed necessary, including, but not limited to, developmental screenings, referrals to programs and services administered by a local educational agency or early intervention agency under Parts B and C of the federal Individual with Disabilities Education Act, and consultation with infant and early childhood mental health consultants and the child's health care provider. The program shall document attempts to engage these resources, including parent or legal guardian participation and consent attempted and obtained. Communication with the parent or legal guardian shall take place in a culturally and linguistically competent manner.

(C) If there is documented evidence that all available interventions and supports recommended by a qualified professional have been exhausted and the program determines in its professional judgment that transitioning a child to another program is necessary for the well-being of the child or his or her peers and

staff, with parent or legal guardian permission, both the current and pending programs shall create a transition plan designed to ensure continuity of services and the comprehensive development of the child. Communication with families shall occur in a culturally and linguistically competent manner.

(D) Nothing in this paragraph (7) shall preclude a parent's or legal guardian's right to voluntarily withdraw his or her child from an early childhood program. Early childhood programs shall request and keep on file, when received, a written statement from the parent or legal guardian stating the reason for his or her decision to withdraw his or her child.

(E) In the case of the determination of a serious safety threat to a child or others or in the case of behaviors listed in subsection (d) of Section 10-22.6 of this Code, the temporary removal of a child from attendance in group settings may be used. Temporary removal of a child from attendance in a group setting shall trigger the process detailed in subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C) of this paragraph (7), with the child placed back in a group setting as quickly as possible.

(F) Early childhood programs may utilize and the State Board of Education, the Department of Human Services, and the Department of Children and Family Services shall recommend training, technical support,

and professional development resources to improve the ability of teachers, administrators, program directors, and other staff to promote social-emotional development and behavioral health, to address challenging behaviors, and to understand trauma and trauma-informed care, cultural competence, family engagement with diverse populations, the impact of implicit bias on adult behavior, and the use of reflective practice techniques. Support shall include the availability of resources to contract with infant and early childhood mental health consultants.

(G) Beginning on July 1, 2018, early childhood programs shall annually report to the State Board of Education, and, beginning in fiscal year 2020, the State Board of Education shall make available on a biennial basis, in an existing report, all of the following data for children from birth to age 5 who are served by the program:

(i) Total number served over the course of the program year and the total number of children who left the program during the program year.

(ii) Number of planned transitions to another program due to children's behavior, by children's race, gender, disability, language, class/group size, teacher-child ratio, and length of program day.

(iii) Number of temporary removals of a child from attendance in group settings due to a serious safety threat under subparagraph (E) of this paragraph (7), by children's race, gender, disability, language, class/group size, teacher-child ratio, and length of program day.

(iv) Hours of infant and early childhood mental health consultant contact with program leaders, staff, and families over the program year.

(H) Changes to services for children with an individualized education program or individual family service plan shall be construed in a manner consistent with the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

The State Board of Education, in consultation with the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development and the Department of Children and Family Services, shall adopt rules to administer this paragraph (7).

(b) (Blank).

(Source: P.A. 100-105, eff. 1-1-18.)

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect July 1, 2018.