The Illinois Infant/Toddler Set-Aside

The Importance of Birth-to-Three Funding

It's amazing what they absorb before they're five.
Agenda

• Why birth-to-three?
• History of early childhood funding in Illinois
• Building a system in Illinois
• Financing policy considerations
• Revenue sources
• Questions?
Illinois: 43 percent of infants and toddlers live in low income families
(Young children by income, 2015)

Source: National Center on Children in Poverty
The Risk of “Too little, too late.”

• For many vulnerable children, one or two years of preschool is not enough.

• Waiting until children are three or four ignores the potential of the earliest years and of fully engaging parents.

• Increasing the number of high-quality preschool and birth-to-three programs, especially for children at risk, is essential.
Illinois’ Long History as a Leader in Early Childhood

1985: State-funded preschool for at-risk children is established.

1989: Two new early childhood education programs for families with infants and toddlers (birth to age 3) are established in statute: 1) Parental Training, which offers parenting education classes and parent-child interactive activities for all families with young children and 2) Prevention Initiative (PI) programs that deliver child development and family support services to children at risk of school failure and their families.

1997: The Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) is enacted, which combined funding for the Illinois State Board of Education’s early childhood education programs – PI, Parental Training, and PreK – into one funding stream. A minimum of 8 percent of total funds must be used to fund programs for children ages birth to 3.

2003: Legislation passed to increase the ECBG’s infant/toddler set-aside to 11 percent of total funding.

2006: Illinois passes “Preschool for All,” becoming the first state in the nation to include preschool for both 3- and 4-year olds in the statutory framework.

2009: Legislation passed to codify 11 percent as the floor for birth-to-three funding and to create a ramp to 20 percent of the total by FY2015. Clarifies that if in a given year there is not sufficient funding to increase birth-to-three funding without decreasing preschool funding, that funding shall be held constant.

2014: Legislation passed to increase the funding floor for birth-to-three programs within the ECBG to meet the current birth-to-three spending (outside of Chicago Public Schools, which exceeds the statewide average) of 14 percent. The law also pushes out the 20 percent goal to FY2016.

2016: Legislation passed, which removes the target date for achievement of 20 percent of the ECBG to instead target a significant amount of new funds when available to achieve that goal. Without this change, ISBE would have had to cut funding for preschool programs in order to meet the statutorily-required 20 percent.
(c) An Early Childhood Education Block Grant shall be created by combining the following programs: Preschool Education, Parental Training and Prevention Initiative. These funds shall be distributed to school districts and other entities on a competitive basis. Not less than 14% of the Early Childhood Education Block Grant allocation of funds from this grant shall be used to fund programs for children ages 0-3, which percentage shall increase to at least 20% by Fiscal Year 2016. Beginning in Fiscal Year 2016, at least 25% of any additional Early Childhood Education Block Grant funding over and above the previous fiscal year's allocation shall be used to fund programs for children ages 0-3. Once the percentage of Early Childhood Education Block Grant funding allocated to programs for children ages 0-3 reaches 20% of the overall Early Childhood Education Block Grant allocation for a full fiscal year, thereafter in subsequent fiscal years the percentage of Early Childhood Education Block Grant funding allocated to programs for children ages 0-3 each fiscal year shall remain at least 20% of the overall Early Childhood Education Block Grant allocation. However, if, in a given fiscal year, the amount appropriated for the Early Childhood Education Block Grant is insufficient to increase the percentage of the grant to fund programs for children ages 0-3 without reducing the amount of the grant for existing providers of preschool education programs, then the percentage of the grant to fund programs for children ages 0-3 may be held steady instead of increased.

Source: PA 99-589
What types of programs does the set-aside fund?

- Home visiting services for young, at-risk mothers
- Enhancing infant/toddler child care
State Board of Education (ISBE)
• State-funded preschool (75,000 students)
• PI program for infants and toddlers (14,000 slots)

Department of Human Services (DHS)
• Child Care Assistance Program (160,000)*
• Home Visiting services (4,000)
• Early Intervention (IDEA Part C)
Financing Policy Considerations

• Services for infants and toddlers have adequate and stable funding

• Resources are offered to renovate or construct facilities to serve infants and toddlers

• As best you can, align program eligibility for 0-5
Revenue Sources - Examples

Public Funds
• IL = general revenue in State Board of Education
• KS = tobacco settlement
• OR = general revenue to support state-funded EHS

Public & Private Funds
• OK = general revenue + private funds
• NE = Sixpence fund

Dedicated Taxes & Tax Credits
• LA = School Readiness Tax Credits
• CA, AZ = tobacco tax
• AR = beer tax
The Sixpence Early Learning Fund combines $20 million from the private sector with a $40 million state investment.

The earnings from these investments fuel the grants made to school districts and community partnerships.

Recipients commit to matching the grant at 100%.

In the 2014-2015, the fund supported 25 programs across the state. (Programs were funded through a combination of sources, including Sixpence, federal, state, and local funds.)
Questions?
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