



Smart Start Child Care: Workforce Grants and Quality Supports

Quality & Workforce Committee of the ELC

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GOALS

- Smart Start Workforce Grants
 - Share the Guiding Principles for Decision Making
 - Share the Grant Parameter
- Smart Start Quality Supports
 - Share the background / history
 - Share future goals / direction



AGENDA

- Share overview of the following programs:
 - Smart Start Workforce Grants
 - Smart Start Quality Support

There several components of Smart Start Illinois, administered by IDHS and ISBE

IDHS: Smart Start
Child Care

- **Smart Start Workforce Grants:** Help child care providers meet a new, higher wage floor for their staff
- **Smart Start Quality Supports:** Invest in increased staffing and compensation for educator credentials
- Illinois **Early Childhood Apprenticeship Pilot**

IDHS: Home Visiting

- Expand **Home Visiting** so more families can receive this support

IDHS: Early
Intervention

- Invest in **Early Intervention** to enhance services for families and give providers a raise

ISBE: Early Childhood
Block Grant (ECBG)

- Increase funding for ECBG to create new preschool seats and improve overall access and care quality

Smart Start Workforce Grants



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Smart Start Workforce Grants will invest in programs to pay attractive wages without raising costs for families

- Eligible child care providers will receive Smart Start Workforce Grants to support higher wages for their staff members
- Those who participate in the program must pay teachers and teaching assistants at or above a required wage floor
- All grant funding must be spent on wages
- Illinois is the first state in the nation to implement this type of workforce compensation program



Smart Start Workforce Grants decisions align to guiding principles

Smart Start Guiding Principles



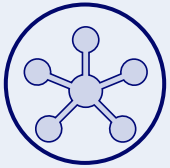
Decisions must be grounded in equity, prioritizing programs with limited access to funding



Decisions must be informed by child care providers and educators who stand to be most impacted by them



The program must stay within the allocated budget and meet the Governor's stated goals



Grants should maximize program reach while also setting a wage scale that creates competitive wages for the field



Grants must provide eligible programs with enough funding to cover the costs associated with requirements



We recognize that we need to make decisions on a timeline with the best information we have.

Smart Start Workforce Grants Decisions

Grants focus on **programs serving children receiving CCAP** and account for **raising wages** for home-based providers and their assistants.

Smart Start Workforce Grants were informed by **community engagement** with over 1,800 programs providing input on costs associated with running their programs.

Smart Start Workforce Grants require programs to **serve more children with CCAP** than Smart Start Transition Grants. With a lower overall budget for SSWG, eligibility criteria increased.

Smart Start Workforce Grants are estimated to reach approximately 4,000 programs, which is **62% of full day licensed child care programs in Illinois**.

The **cost model was updated** and accounted for the cost for an average program to raise starting wages by at least \$2-\$3 to the wage floor.

Smart Start Workforce Grants decisions reflect a **year of planning**.

Eligibility for Smart Start Workforce Grants will be similar to Smart Start Transition Grants with a few differences

	Smart Start Transition Grants	Smart Start Workforce Grants
Who qualifies	<p>Licensed centers and licensed family child care</p> <p>Open and operating by 1 month prior to application</p> <p>Full-day, full-year program</p>	<p>Same as transition year grants</p>
CCAP Requirements	<p>Must enroll 10% or more of licensed capacity with children receiving CCAP</p>	<p>Centers: At least 15% of program's current licensed capacity enrolled and funded by CCAP</p> <p>Homes: 1 or more CCAP-enrolled children</p> <p>Group Homes: 2 or more CCAP-enrolled children</p>
Revenue sources	<p>Less than 75% of total revenues from other public funding streams (e.g., Head Start, Preschool For All)</p>	<p>Classrooms with only CCAP and private tuition funding and that meet classroom enrollment criteria</p>

Center-based programs will be required to pay teachers and teacher assistants at least an established wage floor*

	Region		
Role	Group 1A	Group 1B	Group 2
Wage floor for lead teachers	\$19.25 per hour	\$18.50 per hour	\$18.25 per hour
<i>Current median wage</i>	<i>\$17 per hour</i>	<i>\$16 per hour</i>	<i>\$15.40 per hour</i>
Wage floor for assistant teacher or floater	\$18 per hour	\$17.25 per hour	\$17 per hour
<i>Current median wage</i>	<i>\$15 per hour</i>	<i>\$14 per hour</i>	<i>\$14 per hour</i>

*A **wage floor** is a minimum required wage but is different from the legally required minimum wage. For SSWG, the wage floor is a requirement that programs agree to when they accept the grant.

Group 1A: Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, and McHenry counties.

Group 1B: Boone, Champaign, Kankakee, Madison, McLean, Monroe, Ogle, Peoria, Rock Island, Sangamon, St. Clair, Tazewell, Whiteside, Will, Winnebago, and Woodford counties.

Group 2: all counties not listed in Group 1A or 1B

Draft parameters are subject to appropriation from the Illinois General Assembly.

Home-based programs will be required to pay teacher assistants at least an established wage floor*

	Region		
Role	Group 1A	Group 1B	Group 2
Wage floor for home-based assistants	\$18 per hour	\$17 per hour	\$17 per hour
Current median wage	\$15 per hour	\$14 per hour	\$14 per hour

A **wage floor is a minimum required wage but is different from the legally required minimum wage. For SSWG, the wage floor is a requirement that programs agree to when they accept the grant.*

Home-based provider/owners may use the rest of their grant funds for their own compensation, or to invest in their home-based business.

Group 1A: Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, and McHenry counties.

Group 1B: Boone, Champaign, Kankakee, Madison, McLean, Monroe, Ogle, Peoria, Rock Island, Sangamon, St. Clair, Tazewell, Whiteside, Will, Winnebago, and Woodford counties.

Group 2: all counties not listed in Group 1A or 1B

Draft parameters are subject to appropriation from the Illinois General Assembly.

Smart Start Workforce Grants will support center-based programs to increase wages for assistant teachers, teachers, and other program staff




Center-based programs will be eligible for the following grant awards for each classroom:

Classroom type	Annual award	Quarterly award
Smart Start Workforce Grants, Infant/Toddler	\$27,000	\$6,750
<i>Smart Start Transition Grants, Infant/Toddler</i>	<i>\$28,000</i>	<i>\$7,000</i>
Smart Start Workforce Grants, Ages 2-5	\$24,000	\$6,000
<i>Smart Start Transition Grants, Ages 2-5</i>	<i>\$24,000</i>	<i>\$6,000</i>

Smart Start Workforce Grants will support family child care providers to increase their wages and their assistants' wages

Family child care homes and group homes will receive a **base award of \$9,000 annually** and additional funding if they have an assistant, based on the number of hours assistant(s) work

"Payment to me is a foreign language because I pay myself from what's leftover once staff and supplies are taken care of."
 – Focus Group Participant

	Assistant weekly hours	Annual grant award	Quarterly grant award
Workforce Grants: Family Child Care Homes and Group Homes	0-20 hours/week 	\$9,000	\$2,250
	20-60 hours/week 	\$16,000	\$4,000
	60+ hours/week (only available for group homes) 	\$23,000	\$5,750
Transition grants, Family Day Care Home	N/A	\$10,000	\$2,500
Transition grants, Group Day Care Home	N/A	\$15,000	\$3,750

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Smart Start Quality Supports Program



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Smart Start Quality Support Program began as the **ExceleRate Child Care Center Pilot Program** in 2020

Initiated by the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development as part of Illinois' **Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five.**



Designed to test:

- Contract funding method
- Additional supports for Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)
- Execution of new standards



Includes:

- 34 Licensed child care centers
- CCAP Region 2
- At least 40% of enrolled children participating in CCAP

In FY 24, the ExceleRate Child Care Center Pilot became the Smart Start Quality Support Program

The Smart Start Quality Support Program intended to:

Pay staff members wages that honor their credentials

Participating centers are paid fixed rates based on the highest credential earned by each member of the teaching staff*

Improve staffing patterns

Participating centers may use funds to hire additional staff above minimum licensing standards

Offer activities to support continuous quality improvement

Activities include 1-1 coaching and a community of practice for directors, using tools like Environmental Rating Scales and Plan-Do-Review processes

**For Smart Start Quality Support in SFY24, "teaching staff" is defined as directors, teachers and assistant teachers*

Several evaluations have examined the outcomes of the pilot.



The number of staff at participating sites grew.



Teaching staff at participating sites earned additional credentials.

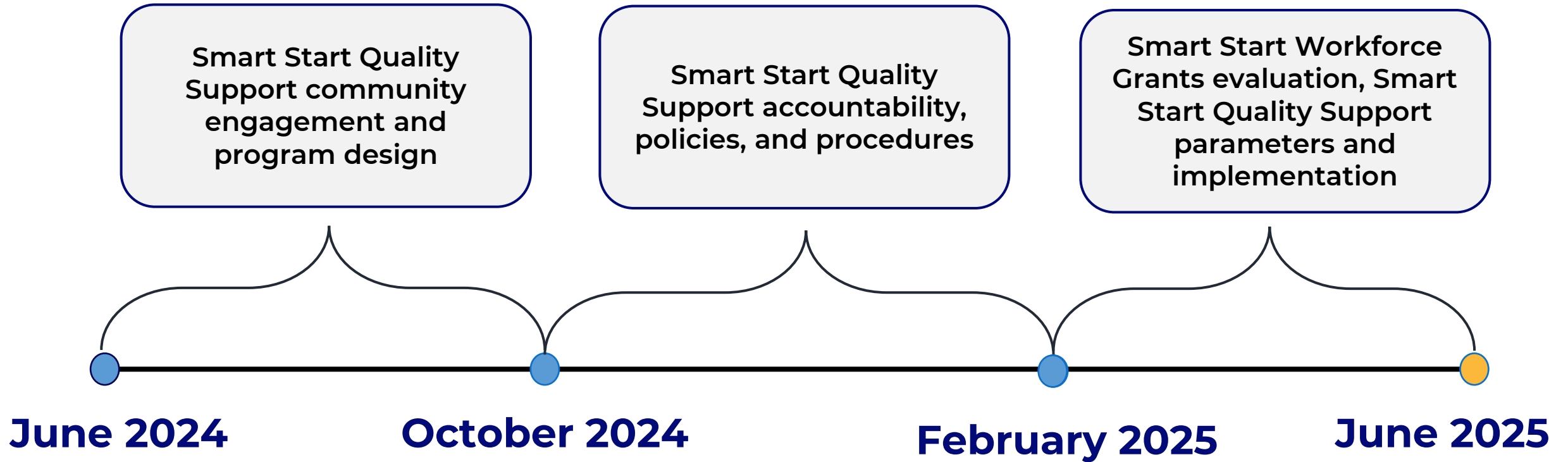


Turnover at participating sites decreased, particularly for those individuals who earned a new credential.



Qualitative feedback identified overall positive impacts of the program, as well as opportunities for improvement.

Smart Start Quality Support planning year for Quality Support expansion



Questions or Comments?

To learn more about Smart Start Workforce
Grants visit:

<https://www.ilgateways.com/smart-start/smart-start-workforce-grants>



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