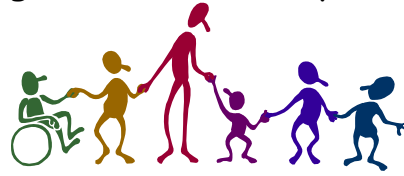


Prekindergarten Partnership Board Report



History

- ✦ In 1985 legislation was established to offer prekindergarten programs for children ages 3 to 5 at risk of academic failure (Preschool Program for Children At Risk of Academic Failure). A grant proposal was submitted by D97 to ISBE and approved. D97 received funds for the enrollment of 80 children meeting the at risk criteria. The at risk criteria were identified as low income and developmental delays. The PKP enrollment included children that were also served at CEDA Head Start. Approximately 30 children attended CEDA Head Start in the AM and were bused to PKP for the PM session. Transportation was funded by CEDA Head Start.
- ✦ In 2006, \$45 million in additional funds was added to the existing budget for the Preschool At Risk Program and Preschool for All was established. The long term goal of the Preschool for All Children program is to provide educational services to all 3- and 4-year-old children whose families choose to participate. The Preschool for All Children program focuses on providing high-quality educational programs for children who are determined to be at risk of academic failure. It also provides funding for programs serving families of low to moderate income whose children are not considered to be at risk academically and other families that choose to participate. This initiative was considered a positive step towards the research that supports Universal Preschool.
- ✦ In 2007, Preschool At Risk funding was increased by \$29 million. The new monies were designated to be used for Preschool for All (PFA). With the support of Dr. Connie Collins, Angela Dolezal and Dr. Felicia Starks-Turner the PKP team submitted a request for funds to the ISBE/ Division of Early Childhood. Funding for an additional 40 children was approved. ABC Toone Towne and OPRF Day Nursery submitted proposals and were also approved for the funding of 40 children each. Classrooms funded by the Preschool At Risk initiative adhered to the criteria put in place in 1985. The classrooms funded by Preschool for All (PFA) initiative were directed to use the criteria defined by Priority 1 and Priority 2 to determine eligibility and enrollment in the PFA program. (see page 4 for ISBE's definition of Priority 1 and Priority 2)
- ✦ In FY2012, Preschool for All and Prekindergarten At Risk were combined into one program. All existing programs were invited to submit one application for the competitive PFA grant. The Collaboration for Early Childhood Education encouraged the directors/coordinators of the existing programs to submit grant proposals for the competitive PFA funding. Diana Rosenbrock and Carolyn Newberry Schwartz provided support in gathering the necessary data for the proposals. In 2011-12 D97's PKP was awarded funding for 120 children or \$360,000.00 for the year. This is the first year that PKP has been fully funded. ABC Toone Towne and OPRF Day Nursery were also awarded funding for the PFA program

- ✦ Preschool for All (PFA) programs provide early education opportunities for children between the ages of three and five, with priority given to children from low-income families and those who are determined to be socially or academically "at risk" due to other family or community factors. PFA is funded through the Illinois Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG), established in 1997 to fund programs serving young, at-risk children and their families throughout the state.

(data from ISBE Preschool for All Implementation Manual)

PKP Staff

Preschool for All Funding

All teaching staff providing instruction to preschool children in the Preschool for All Children initiative must hold either an Initial or Standard Early Childhood Certificate (formerly Type 02 and Type 04 Early Childhood Certificates). Evidence of the certification status of these staff members must be provided prior to final funding approval. See Section 2-3.71(a) (3) of the School Code.)

(From ISBE Preschool for All Implementation Manual)

DeeDee Farmer, Ed.D. - Early Childhood/Human Development and Learning

Jill Pacyna - BA - Early Childhood /MA - Reading

Colleen Berger - BA-Early Childhood/MA - Reading

Noncertified staff employed to assist in the instruction of children shall meet the requirements set forth in 23 Ill. Adm. Code 25.510(c).

(From ISBE Preschool for All Implementation Manual)

Three Teacher Assistants are assigned by D97's Human Resources Department to work in the PKP program.

D97 Special Education Department provides funding to support children with IEP's - Inclusion.

The goal for local school districts/public school, academies, and agencies should be to provide high-quality preschool experiences for all preschool-age children, including children with disabilities. Local school districts and/or special education cooperatives may determine, through the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team process, that the Illinois Preschool for All grant program is the most appropriate placement for children who are eligible for early childhood special education services.

The Department of Special Education assigns the staff necessary to support the children and families with IEP's. The ECSE staff consults with the PKP teachers to determine the most appropriate methods and activities for the children with IEP's and to determine Response to Intervention (RTI) for PKP children in need of support before referring them for special education evaluation.

(In classroom full time)

ECSE teacher - Jessica Alexander, M.Ed. - Special Education

(In classrooms based on number of minutes determined by children's IEP's)

Speech Therapist - to be determined

OT - Jessie Johns

PT - Ann Kois

Social Worker - Theresa Rhea/Mandi Rebman

(Provides small group instruction for children designated as English as Second Language Learners)

ESL teacher - Pat Bacom

Collaboration with other Publically Funded Programs

In FY 2009, the Collaboration for Early Childhood and D97 hired Diana Rosenbrock to serve as Coordinator for Professional Development. One of Diana's many responsibilities is to facilitate an ongoing relationship amongst all of the Publically Funded Programs. The program directors/coordinators meet once a month to dialogue about the following: recruitment of at-risk children into the programs, collaborative curriculum planning, implementation of a common assessment process (Teaching Strategies Gold), and plans for professional development and parent education. The goal of these activities is to assure that all of Oak Park's at-risk children arrive at kindergarten ready to succeed.

Under Diana's leadership, the PFP directors/coordinators have designed and implemented the use of the following data collection forms:

- ✚ Eligibility Criteria Checklist
- ✚ Preliminary Screening Form
- ✚ Consent for PreK Screening

Although the Preschool for All Funds are awarded by ISBE to each of the programs individually based on separate grant applications, the ISBE Division of Early Childhood views the collaboration amongst the publically funded programs as an exemplary model of shared responsibility to serve the families most at risk.

Based on program specifics, the PFA programs and Head Start serve a good percentage of Oak Park's neediest families. We recognize that the lowest income families have the greatest needs and that working class poor are a close 2nd. We will continue to make every effort to identify and recruit the neediest families.

Results of recruitment and screening support the fact that at least 95% of the children served by the PFA and Head Start Initiatives are designated as Priority 1 and less than 5% of the children served by the Initiatives are designated as Priority 2.

In awarding Preschool for All grants, the Illinois State Board of Education must address two legislatively mandated priorities:

The first priority in awarding grants must be given to applicants that propose to serve primarily children who have been identified as being at risk of academic failure. At-risk children are those who, because of their home and community environment, are subject to such language, cultural, economic, and like disadvantages. They have been determined, as a result of screening procedures, to be at risk of academic failure. The screening tool must measure the child's development in these specific areas: vocabulary, visual-motor integration, language and speech development, English proficiency, fine and gross motor skills, social skills, and cognitive development. A disproportionate share of all children considered to be at risk come from low-income families, including low-income working families, homeless families, families where English is not the primary language spoken in the home, or families where one or both parents are teenagers or have not completed high school. However, neither a child's membership in a certain group nor a child's family situation should determine whether that child is at risk.

The second priority in awarding grants must be given to applicants proposing to serve primarily children whose family's income is less than four times the poverty guidelines updated periodically in the *Federal Register* by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under the authority of 42 U.S.C. 9902(2). For each child whose participation is based on the family's income, the successful applicant must collect evidence of family income level.

For purposes of the Preschool for All grant, "programs serving primarily at-risk children" are defined as those programs which have **80 percent or more of the enrolled children identified as at risk; prioritize at-risk students over non-at-risk students when making enrollment decisions;** and have taken specific, proactive measures to ensure that parents of potentially at-risk children in the community are aware of the opportunity for preschool education through the program. (From ISBE Preschool for All Implementation Manual)

Priority 1 - children who have been identified as being at risk of academic failure

- ✦ Home and community environment factors - language, cultural, economic, and like disadvantages/ low-income families, including low-income working families, homeless families, families where English is not the primary language spoken in the home, or families where one or both parents are teenagers or have not completed high school.
- ✦ Academic risks - screening measures vocabulary, visual-motor integration, language and speech development, English proficiency, fine and gross motor skills, social skills, and cognitive development.

Priority 2 - children whose family's income is less than four times the poverty guidelines updated periodically in the *Federal Register* by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under the authority of 42 U.S.C. 9902(2). These children might also demonstrate academic risks as measured by the screening tool.

	Percentages of families identified as Priority 1	2011-2012 School Year
Head Start	100% Priority 1 - families need DAP, transportation and social service support (Financial need and developmental delays)	
ABC Toone Towne	100% Priority 1 - families need DAP and financial wrap around services for child care (Financial need and/or developmental delays)	
OPRF Day Nursery	100% Priority 1 - families need DAP and financial wrap around services child care (Financial need and/or developmental delays)	
D97 PKP	96% Priority 1 - families need DAP (Financial need and/or developmental delays) 4% of the PKP population was identified as Priority 2 because there were no more children identified as Priority 1 on the waiting list at the beginning of the 2011-12 school year. Priority 2 children did have documented developmental lags in one area.	

Recruitment

The recruitment process begins in the early spring of the preceding year of the start of the program. The Collaboration for Early Education is pivotal in getting the word out. The Collaboration for Early Education has hired an outreach worker for the sole purpose of being visible in the community to share information about the PFP's. At this year's Day in Our Village, the outreach worker collected contact information from nine potential families. Diana Rosenbrock contacted all nine families and other families referred by the OP Health Department's visiting nurse, and private preschool directors, via email, snail mail, and telephone. Diana also accesses the Village's public aid recipient list and mails info about the PFA programs to all potentially eligible families. She then shares this contact information with all of the PFA program directors/coordinators.

Diana shared the results of her potential family contacts with the PFA directors/coordinators at our July 2nd meeting via her referral form.

Types of education/care needed as indicated on referral forms.

- a. Full day = 18 families
- b. Half day = 3 families
- c. Half day with transportation = 5 families
- d. Unknown -- 9 (no response)

(From PFA Committee Meeting Minutes July 2, 2012)

Flyers are posted throughout the community and in the local newspapers. Posters are displayed at the OP Health Departments, OP Libraries, OP District 97 Administrative Office and local businesses such as Laundromats, grocery stores, doctors' offices, beauty shops and nail salons as well as notifying home visit specialists through the Village of Oak Park's Health Department and community mental health agencies. The Early Childhood Diagnostic Team, elementary school social workers, special education teachers, ESL teachers, nurses and school psychologists make information about the PKP program to families in need.

Once referrals are received, DeeDee Farmer contacts the parent/guardian and documents pertinent information using the Preliminary Screening form. DeeDee directs parents/guardians to the D97 web site so that they can access specific information about the PKP program. Information about the other PFP's are also shared. The initial phone interview can result in an appointment for a screening interview or referral to another program.

Screening

The goal of screening is to identify and serve Illinois' neediest children. The Oak Park PFA programs have developed procedures that are used to screen all children and their families to determine their need for services. Screenings are conducted on a communitywide basis implemented with cooperation among programs serving young children operating in Oak Park (e.g., public schools, preschool programs, licensed child care providers/centers, special education, Head Start, Early Intervention and Child Find).

Currently the Oak Park PFA programs use the ESI-R and Ages and Stages Parent Questionnaire to measure the individual child's areas of weakness and/or need for further evaluation. Preschool for All programs must use a research based instrument as well as weighted eligibility criteria. The ESI-R and Ages & Stages are assessment instruments that meet the ISBE criteria.

The comprehensive screening procedures include the following:

- ✦ Criteria is used to determine at what point performance on the ESI-R indicates that children are at risk of academic failure as well as to assess other environmental, economic, and demographic information that indicates a likelihood that the children would be at risk.
- ✦ All screening instruments and activities relate to and measure the child's development in these specific areas: vocabulary, visual-motor integration, language and speech development, English proficiency, fine and gross motor skills, social skills, and cognitive development.
- ✦ All screening procedures include a parent interview (to be conducted in the parents' home/native language, if necessary). This interview is designed to obtain a summary of the child's health history and social development and include questions about the parents' education level, employment, income and age; the number of children in the household; and the number of school-age siblings experiencing academic difficulty.
- ✦ Vision and hearing screening, in accordance with 77 Illinois Administrative Code 685 (Vision Screening) and 77 Illinois Administrative Code 675 (Hearing Screening) is provided.
- ✦ Written parental permission for the screening is obtained.
- ✦ The teaching staff of the Preschool for All programs is involved in the screening process.
- ✦ Results of the screening are shared with parents through an exit interview.

Research has shown that a successful screening component addresses the following elements:

- ✦ The at-risk factors to determine eligibility are agreed upon by all partners.
- ✦ The at-risk factors used for program eligibility are based upon the risk factors present in the community.
- ✦ The most at-risk children with the greatest number of eligibility criteria are enrolled in the program.

(From ISBE Preschool for All Implementation Manual)

Eligibility Criteria

Eligibility requirements are based on local need to identify children at risk of academic failure. At-risk children are those who, because of their home and community environment, are subject to such language, cultural, economic, and like disadvantages to be at risk of academic failure. A disproportionate share of all children considered to be at risk come from low-income families, including low-income working families, homeless families, families where English is not the primary language spoken in the home, or families where one or both parents are teenagers or have not completed high school. However, neither a child's membership in a certain group or a child's family situation should determine whether that child is at risk. Eligibility criteria may be established for Preschool for All to meet the needs of the programs and community.

When determining eligibility criteria for the Preschool for All Program, a good tool to consider is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs created by psychologist, Dr. Abraham Maslow. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is broken into five levels; however, only four levels are applicable to screening. (Illinois State Board of Education)

Program Monitoring

To insure that the PKP program is complying with grant requirements and meeting quality standards, assessors make regular monitoring visits to observe and evaluate PFA programs. The assessor assigned to monitor the program makes contact well in advance of the visit to identify a three week period during which the visit will take place and to provide the program with needed information. Both the administrative and classroom components of the program are be monitored. The visit includes classroom observations and a review of children's records, screening and enrollment procedures, educational program, staff certification, professional development, snack procedures, and parent involvement. The Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS) is used to assess program quality and the ISBE 3-5 Compliance Checklist is used to assess administrative compliance with the grant. Following the monitoring visit, the PKP program receives a follow up report. We are asked to submit an improvement plan that addresses any components in need of development or out of compliance.

Curriculum

The Illinois State Board of Education does not endorse a specific curriculum. Guidelines for choosing a curriculum are listed in the implementation manual and on the Illinois State Board of Education website. The curriculum must be research based and meet the criteria provided by the Illinois State Board of Education. The following criteria must be considered by local projects in evaluating curricula for use in these programs. Curriculum models should

- align with the Illinois Early Learning Standards;
- include significant content to be taught with intentionality and integration;
- include child initiation and engagement;

- use clear research-based content based on a systematic and comprehensive review; of research of how children learn
- provide parent involvement by using curricula that helps build meaningful communication with families;
- align with an authentic assessment tool that is ongoing and comprehensive;
- consider the child's linguistic and cultural background;
- be appropriate for all early childhood teachers to implement regardless of their qualifications (certified, paraprofessional);
- be appropriate for children with a wide range of abilities; and
- provide research evidence of the model's effectiveness.

(From *Preschool for All Implementation Manual*)

Teaching Strategies Gold

The Oak Park Preschool for All programs use *Teaching Strategies Gold* as a curriculum and assessment tool. *Teaching Strategies GOLD* can be used to support all types of learners, including children with special needs and children with advanced knowledge and skills. Because *Teaching Strategies GOLD* is a fully bilingual tool, it offers teachers support for assessing the dual-language learners in their classrooms who are learning English and Spanish.

With *Teaching Strategies GOLD* online, teachers can:

- use a variety of online tools to gather and organize meaningful data quickly, including online portfolios where children's work can be stored
- create a developmental profile of each child to answer the questions, "What does this child know? What is he or she able to do?"
- understand how their observations relate to important objectives for development and learning and use that understanding to scaffold each child's learning
- determine if a child is making progress and compare the child's knowledge, skills, and behaviors to those of most children of his or her age or class/group
- recognize children who might benefit from special help, screening, or further evaluation
- generate comprehensive reports that can be customized easily and shared with family members



The Collaboration for Early Childhood Education has been instrumental in assuring that all of the PFA programs and Early Childhood Special Education are using the *Teaching Strategies Gold Curriculum and Assessment Online System*.

The PFA teaching staff at all sites are in the process of completing the *Teaching Strategies Gold Interrater Reliability Certificate*. The rationale for completing the *Teaching Strategies interrater reliability certification* is to:

- increase the accuracy and consistency of the teacher's judgments as they use *Teaching Strategies GOLD®*

- improve planning for individual children by helping teachers assess children accurately
- identify professional development needs by using data collected during the certification process

Parent/Family Involvement

The creation of a family/school partnership is considered to be an essential ingredient of an effective preschool program. The PKP teachers actively encourage parent involvement in their children's school experiences. Program staff partner with parents and support them in their role by understanding their perspectives, enhancing their understanding of child development, assisting them in reaching their goals, and involving them in the program.

The PKP parents are asked to complete a survey at the beginning of the year. The results of this survey are used to plan parent education workshops, family events, opportunities to share family and cultural traditions, ways to volunteer in the classroom or at home and special talents to share with the PKP program.

The following workshop topics and activities were a part of the PKP Parent/Family Involvement Program:

- Welcome to PKP - parent orientation
- Reading to Your Child Everyday
- Math Is Everywhere
- Sharing Winter Holidays/Celebrations
- Family Storytelling Event with Chris Fascione
- Helping Your Child During Stressful Times
- Family Day Themed Events - Math Day, Science Day, Process Oriented Hands-on Art Day, Board Game Day, Movement and Music Day
- Kohl Children's Museum Parent Workshops
- Kohl Children's Museum In School Field Trips
- PKP Spring Arts Festival
- End of the Year Family Dinner
- Getting Ready for Kindergarten

Parents are encouraged to use materials in the Parent Resource Lending Library. The Parent Lending Library is equipped with books, CD's and DVD's covering a variety of parent education topics i.e.; effective parenting, parent's as their children's first teachers, sensory integration needs, autism spectrum, language development, healthy cooking, appropriate at home activities that support learning, reducing stress, helping children deal with divorce, helping children deal with death and toilet teaching.

Parents and children are encouraged to use the Book, Game and Toy Lending Library. Parents and children have access to a wide assortment of quality children's literature, learning games and educational toys.

In conclusion

The PKP team would like to thank you for giving us this opportunity to share with you a picture of PKP and the Preschool for All Programs. We are committed to providing an exemplary early childhood program to the neediest families in Oak Park. Families come in all shapes and sizes. The PKP families are as diverse as the population of Oak Park. Although our families have been designated "at risk", we feel that they all have gifts to share with us and one another. PKP is a place where parents learn from one another, each and every child is celebrated and encouraged to learn, parents network with one another, children learn to sing, play, share, begin to read and write, and obstacles are overcome.

It is our goal to continue the collaboration with the other PFA programs in an effort to provide a quality early childhood education to our families. With the support of the Collaboration for Early Education we would like to realize the following:

- Continue to identify the families most at risk and assist families as they navigate the agencies that provide support.
- Secure funding to increase the number of children served and appropriate staff.
- Celebrate the development and opening of an inclusive Early Childhood Child and Parent Center.
- Secure funds so that we can provide to and from school transportation for families in need.
- Successfully complete the Teaching Strategies Interrater Reliability Certificate.

We invite you to come and visit the PKP program. Bring a book to donate, wear your play clothes and share your talents. You will want to come back for more.

Respectfully,
DeeDee Farmer, Ed.D.
Angela Dolezal, Principal
Jill Pacyna, M.A.
Colleen Berger, M.A.