

# CHICAGO: READY TO LEARN!

## OVERVIEW



City of Chicago  
Mayor Rahm Emanuel





# CHICAGO: READY TO LEARN!

## Introduction

The City of Chicago is committed to ensuring that children in our city have the early learning experiences they need to be ready to succeed when they enter kindergarten. Recognizing the cost effectiveness of high quality early childhood care and education for preventing the achievement gap, the City is interested in providing those children who are most at risk of later school failure with high quality early childhood care and education services through the Ready to Learn! Initiative.

Chicago has made great strides toward ensuring that all children receive high quality early learning services. However, there are still too many high-need children who do not receive quality services. In addition, early childhood services are not consistent across the city, and are not always of the quality and intensity needed to prepare children for success in school and later life. The City of Chicago Department of Family & Support Services (DFSS) and the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) Office of Early Childhood have been working together for many years to coordinate and align the services they provide and/or fund. The Ready to Learn! Initiative marks a significant leap forward toward the vision of a fully-aligned, well coordinated, and high quality system of early learning services across our city.

The goals of the Ready to Learn! Initiative are to:

- Increase access to early childhood education and care;
- Match early childhood program models to children's and families' needs; and
- Ensure early childhood programs in Chicago are of high quality.

DFSS and CPS are pleased to work with community based-organizations throughout the city to provide high quality early education and care services for children birth to kindergarten entry. As part of the Ready to Learn! Initiative, DFSS and CPS are releasing coordinated

but separate RFPs. Organizations may apply to the appropriate administrator to provide any or all the following programs:

- Head Start (administered by DFSS)
- Early Head Start (administered by DFSS)
- Preschool for All (administered by CPS)
- Prevention Initiative (administered by CPS)

Successful applicants will be invited to enter into contracts with the agency or agencies that administer the funding streams they have been awarded (i.e., successful applicants will be invited to contract with DFSS as a Head Start and/or Early Head Start delegate agency and/or with CPS as a Preschool for All and/or Prevention Initiative provider).



# CHICAGO: READY TO LEARN!

## Section I: Overview of the READY TO LEARN! Initiative

This coordinated set of Requests for Proposals has been designed to facilitate a citywide allocation of early childhood funding to ensure that children—especially children with the greatest need—have access to high quality early learning services in every area of the city.

Applicants are encouraged to use this application process to develop a comprehensive plan for all of the early childhood services they provide in the City of Chicago, including but not limited to home visiting services, full or part-day early childhood education and care, and parent education, and family support services.

DFSS and CPS have developed a coordinated vision for what constitutes high quality in early learning programs. All early learning programs in Chicago funded through DFSS and/or CPS, whether center-based, family child care home (FCCH)-based, or home-based, are expected to:

- Conduct developmental screening using tools and timelines designated by DFSS and CPS.
- Complete assessments of children’s progress towards the Illinois Early Learning Standards using tools and timelines designated by DFSS and CPS.
- Ensure that children identified as potentially having special needs are evaluated and provided services in a timely manner.
- Monitor the quality of instruction and the classroom environment (or implementation of the home visiting curriculum) as well as the implementation of all required program elements.
- Conduct an annual program self assessment that includes measures of both the implementation and quality of the program as well as the progress that children and families are making toward their goals.
- Ensure that staff receive professional development that is targeted to identified staff needs and informed by an analysis of child and family progress.

For center-based and FCCH-based programs, regardless of program model or funding streams, the City and CPS hold the same high expectations that:

- The curriculum is research-based and is aligned with the Illinois Early Learning Standards (which are aligned with the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework).
- The teacher and assistant(s) are well-qualified, provide effective, developmentally-appropriate instruction, and maintain a classroom environment conducive to young children’s healthy social-emotional, physical, language, literacy, and cognitive development.
- Services and instruction are individualized for children on the basis of developmentally-appropriate screenings and assessments.
- Parents are welcomed to participate in the program, are consulted about decisions about the program and about their child, and are supported in their efforts to promote their children’s learning and development.
- Transitions into the program, from one early childhood program or classroom to another, and into kindergarten are carefully planned and supported.
- Children receive nutritious food, engage in limited screen viewing, and are engaged daily in vigorous physical activity as required by the Chicago Child Day Care Standards.

Similarly, home-based early learning services, whether funded by DFSS or CPS, are expected to provide:

- A rigorously implemented, research-based program model that helps parents develop the skills they need to support their children’s health development.
- Well-qualified staff, including adequate supervision for home visiting staff.
- Opportunities for parents and children to interact with and learn together with other parents and children.
- Support for transitions into other early childhood programs (including center-based programs, as appropriate) and into kindergarten.



# CHICAGO: READY TO LEARN!

Finally, all programs funded by DFSS and CPS through the Ready to Learn! Initiative are required to participate in evaluation activities. Both the Head Start Program Performance Standards and the Early Childhood Block Grant rules require annual system-wide reviews of progress in implementing program requirements and achieving child and family outcomes. DFSS and CPS work together to make these evaluation efforts as well-coordinated as possible.

- Evaluators will periodically conduct observations of program activities with structured instruments.
- Parents, classroom staff, and administrators may be surveyed and/or interviewed to determine their reactions to the program and to gather suggestions for improvement.
- Student attendance, health data, and parent involvement records will be collected and reviewed.
- Based on observations of children during classroom activities, teachers will indicate each child's mastery on citywide child assessment system (currently Teaching Strategies GOLD). This information

will be included in annual citywide analyses of children's progress toward the Illinois Early Learning Standards.

- Participating children enrolled in CPS will be included in a longitudinal study to examine the long-term benefits of early intervention. As a unified data system becomes available, participating children in DFSS-funded programs will also be included in the longitudinal study (subject to parental consent being obtained).

## Funding Streams Included in the Ready to Learn! Initiative

Beyond the common requirements outlined above, each of the funding streams also has specific requirements that are mandated by its authorizing legislation and regulations. A brief summary of these funding streams is provided below; further details of funding stream requirements are provided in the specific RFP instructions for each funding stream.



# CHICAGO: READY TO LEARN!

## Brief Overview of Program Requirements (See RFP Instructions for complete details)

Funding Stream	Participant Eligibility Criteria	Program Model Options	Minimum Staff Requirements	Ratios
<b>Early Head Start</b>	Pregnant women and children under age 3 with family income below Federal Poverty Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Center-based full-day</li> <li>Family Child Care Homes</li> <li>Home-Based</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Classroom teachers/aides: CDA-IT, AA or BA in ECE</li> <li>HV: BA in ECE or related</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CB: Ratio 1:4, group size of 8</li> <li>HB: depends on need/model (usually 1:12 max)</li> </ul>
<b>Head Start</b>	At least age 3 by Sept 1 and not age-eligible for kindergarten, and family income below Federal Poverty Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Center-based full day</li> <li>Center-based half-day</li> <li>Family Child Care Homes</li> <li>Home Based</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead Teacher: BA in ECE</li> <li>Asst Teacher: CDA/AA/BA</li> <li>HV: BA in ECE or related</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CB: Ratio 1:10 max, group size 15-20 based on model</li> <li>HB: depends on need/model (usually 1:12 max)</li> </ul>
<b>Prevention Initiative</b>	Children under age three who are identified as being at risk of academic failure based on free and reduced lunch guidelines and/or receipt of Child Care Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Center-based full-day</li> <li>Home Visiting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead Teacher: BA or AA in ECE</li> <li>Asst Teacher: 30 credits (15 in ECE)</li> <li>Infant-Toddler Specialist on site if serving under age 2</li> <li>HV Supervisor: BA or MA in ECE</li> <li>HV: BA in ECE or related field</li> <li>Case Manager: BA in Social Work or related</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CB: depends on age 6w-12m: ratio 1:4, group of 8 12m-24m: ratio 1:4, group of 12 24m-36m (or age 3): ratio 1:6, group of 12</li> <li>HV: Depends on model</li> </ul>
<b>Preschool for All</b>	At least age 3 by September 1st and not age-eligible for kindergarten, are residents of Chicago, and are identified as being at risk of academic failure based on free and reduced lunch guidelines and/or receipt of Child Care Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Center-based full-day</li> <li>Center-based half-day</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher: Type 04 Certification</li> <li>Asst Teacher: 60 credit hours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ratio: 1:10 max</li> <li>Group size: 20 (unless smaller group required by other funding stream or licensing)</li> </ul>

# CHICAGO: READY TO LEARN!

Funding Stream	Parent Engagement & Support Services Required	Health-Related Services Required	Governance Structures Required	Estimated Funding per child
<b>Early Head Start</b>  <b>Head Start</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individualized Family Partnership Agreement</li> <li>Parent trainings offered</li> <li>Parent-teacher conferences (for center-based &amp; FCCH)</li> <li>•Opportunities to participate in program governance</li> <li>Minimum of 2 home visits/yr</li> <li>Connect families to other needed resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure all children receive health physicals and follow-up treatment when necessary</li> <li>Ensure all children receive oral health check-ups and follow-up treatment if necessary</li> <li>Ensure all children receive hearing and vision screening</li> <li>Ensure children receive mental health services if necessary (through referral and follow-up)</li> <li>Provide nutrition education</li> <li>Family style dining for full day programs (2 meals &amp; snack)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure Board of Directors meets Head Start Performance Standards, including composition requirement (one each: parent of a current or former Head Start child, attorney, finance expert, and early childhood education and development expert as well as members with additional experience in education, business administration, and community affairs)</li> <li>Ensure parent policy committee is established and meets Head Start Performance Standards</li> <li>Ensure Board and Parent Policy Committee receive annual training</li> <li>Ensure board and Parent Policy Committee approve all grant applications, budgets, hires, and program related decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early Head Start: \$5,412 per enrolled, eligible child or pregnant woman</li> <li>Head Start: \$5,331 per enrolled, eligible child</li> </ul>
<b>Prevention Initiative</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intensive and comprehensive parent education</li> <li>Individualized family services</li> <li>Case management services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure children receive required immunizations and well-child care</li> <li>Ensure all children receive hearing and vision screening</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$6,000-8,000 per enrolled, eligible child per year for center-based program, depending upon services provided and staffing pattern.</li> <li>Per child amount for home visiting models varies</li> </ul>
<b>Preschool for All</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parent-teacher conferences</li> <li>At least 3 other parent education opportunities/yr</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure all children receive hearing and vision screening</li> <li>Ensure all children are up-to-date on immunizations</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$4,000 per enrolled, eligible child per year</li> </ul>



## SECTION II: APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROCESS

### A. Overview

The Chicago: Ready to Learn! Initiative competition includes four coordinated Requests for Proposals. The first three—for Head Start/Early Head Start, Preschool for All, and Prevention Initiative—are for community based organizations, including non-profit and for-profit organizations and private, parochial and charter schools. The fourth is an internal application for CPS schools interested in providing early childhood programs.

- Head Start/Early Head Start RFP is to select delegate agencies to provide Head Start and/or Early Head Start services in the city of Chicago. DFSS award delegate agency status independently of CPS.
- Preschool for All and Prevention Initiative RFPs are to select partner agencies to provide preschool and birth to three services. CPS will review these applications and determine which applicants are highly qualified, qualified, and not qualified independently of DFSS.
- CPS is also issuing the internal CPS application for CPS schools (not including charters) that are

interested in providing early childhood services. These applications will be reviewed by CPS, who will determine which schools are highly qualified, qualified, or not qualified to offer high quality services to children most at risk. CPS will make this determination independently of DFSS.

- Once DFSS awards delegate agency status and CPS reviews PFA, PI, and school applications, DFSS and CPS will work together to determine the allocation of “slots” for Head Start, Early Head Start, Preschool for All and Prevention Initiative to ensure maximum access across the city for all children with high needs for early childhood education.

### B. Timeline and Decision Making process

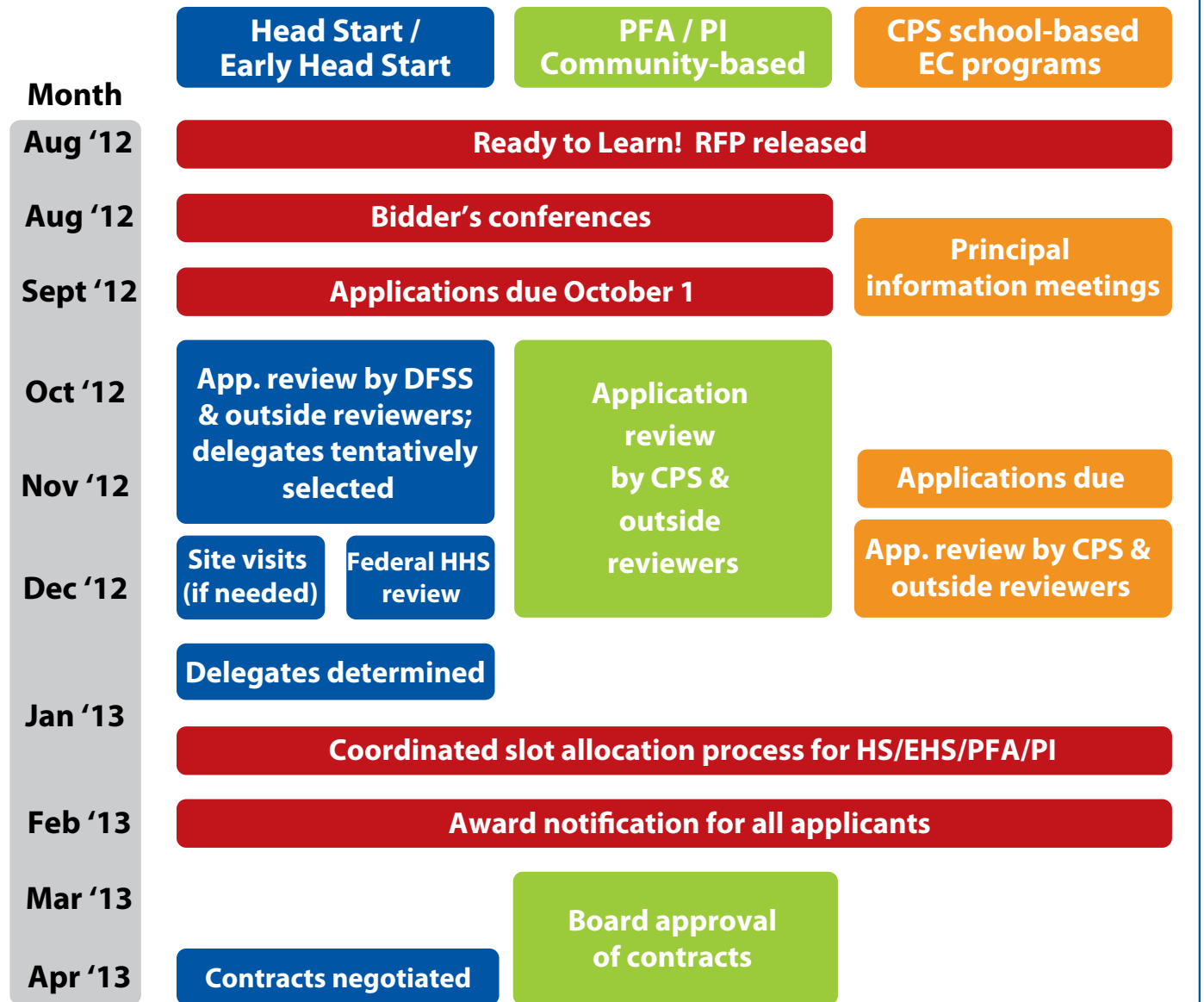
The timeline for proposal review and decision making for the Ready to Learn! Initiative is presented on the following page.





# CHICAGO: READY TO LEARN!

## RFP Timeline (for services beginning August 2013)



# CHICAGO: READY TO LEARN!

## C. Eligible Applicants

The Chicago: Ready to Learn! Initiative is a competitive process open to a wide range of organizations: non-profit organizations, and for-profit organizations and private, parochial and charter schools (note: CPS is eligible to apply for delegate status for Head Start and Early Head Start, but individual schools within CPS are not). While for-profit entities are allowed to apply for Head Start, Preschool for All, and Prevention Initiative funds, by law they are not allowed to profit from these funding streams. In addition, for-profit agencies applying for Preschool for All and/or Prevention Initiative must demonstrate that they comply with the provisions of the CPS Plan for Minority and Women Business Enterprise Contract. Additional information is available online at <http://www.csc.cps.k12.il.us/purchasing/index.php?tab=1&id=46.htm>.

Organizations that are not eligible include organizations that:

- have existing contracts that are not in good standing with CPS, DFSS, or the City of Chicago;
- have had a City or CPS contract terminated for default;
- are currently debarred and/or have been issued a final determination by a city, state, or federal agency for performance of a criminal act, abridgement of human rights, or illegal/fraudulent practices;

- have outstanding, unresolved state or federal debt;
- do not qualify or are ineligible for the federal Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

## D. Bidders Conferences

Three pre-proposal conferences will be held at Malcolm X College at the following dates and times:

Friday, August 10, 2012	1-3:30 pm
Saturday, August 11, 2012	9-11:30 am
Wednesday, August 22, 2012	6-8:30 am

The agenda for these bidders conferences will include overviews of:

- the Chicago: Ready to Learn! Initiative,
- the Head Start/Early Head Start application process,
- the Preschool for All application process,
- the Prevention Initiative application process.

Separate meetings will be held to inform CPS principals about the application process for CPS schools. Information will be distributed.

Prior registration for the bidders conference is encouraged but not required. Please register at the Children Services Division website at [www.childserviceschicago.org](http://www.childserviceschicago.org).



