
Indiana Glossary on Early Learning Terms and Organizations



Indiana Early Learning
Advisory Committee

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This glossary was compiled and written by Transform Consulting Group for the Indiana Early Learning Advisory Committee.

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Glossary on Early Learning Definitions

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Accreditation: A voluntary system which evaluates child care and early childhood education programs against specific criteria in areas of curriculum, health and safety, parent communication, and staff qualifications which has been validated by a nationally recognized early childhood organization or institution.

ASQ/ASQ-SE: Ages and Stages Questionnaire/ASQ-Social Emotional. Standardized development and social-emotional developmental screening tool.

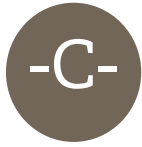
Assessment: The process of observation and recording initiated by teachers or an external evaluator to provide information about children's development (social, emotional, cognitive, fine and gross motor abilities, speech, and language) and identify children's specific strengths and needs. In early childhood, assessment serves different purposes: to plan instruction, to communicate with parents, to identify children who may be in need of specialized services or intervention, and to evaluate how well the instruction and curriculum are meeting goals.

Assuring Better Child Health and Development (ABCD): A program administered by the National Academy for State Health Policy (NASHP) designed to assist states in improving the delivery of early child development services for low-income children ages 0-3 and their families.

Authentic Assessment: The process of gathering evidence and documentation of a child's learning and growth in ways that resemble real life as closely as possible (e.g. observing and documenting a child's work in the environment and routines, such as when the child plays in the block area or is eating a meal). To measure growth and progress, a child's work is compared to his/her previous work rather than to the work of others. Authentic assessment is based on what the child actually does in a variety of contexts at points throughout the school year and represents the child's application, not mere acquisition, of knowledge and skills.

-B-

Birth to 5: Watch Me Thrive! A coordinated federal effort to encourage healthy child development and a social-emotional developmental screening tool.



Caregiver: A person who provides direct care for children in an early learning setting, such as a home, early childhood education program, or other environment, and can include formal caregivers, such as teachers, or other adults, such as parents or relatives.

Child Care: See Early Care and Education Program..

Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG): CCDBG is also referred to as Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). CCDF is a principal source of federal funding for child care subsidies for low-income, working families and to improve the quality of child care in Indiana. The Family and Social Service Administration (FSSA) administers CCDF under the Office of Early Childhood and Out of School Learning (OECOSL).

Child Health¹: Child health is a state of physical, mental, intellectual, social and emotional well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Healthy children live in families, environments, and communities that provide them with the opportunity to reach their fullest developmental potential.

Child Care Health Consultant (CCHC): A professional who provides health expertise to child care providers, often connected to a public state system.

Child Care Professional: See Early Childhood Education Professional.

Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R): Agencies that help families find the child care they need, educates families and the community about child care choices and quality, and supports child care providers' improvement in quality through training, technical assistance, and other support services.

Child Care Voucher: A document which states the authorized subsidy for child care services for a specific eligible child, eligible provider, begin date, end date, and dollar amount. The voucher is provided by the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF).

Child Care Waiting List: A list of children who preliminarily meet eligibility criteria for the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) program, but for whom there are no available funds (or "slots"). Head Start programs also maintain waitlists.

Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential™: A national competency-based certification credential for individual child care professionals that is awarded through the National Council for Professional Recognition. The credentialing program focuses on the skills of early care and education professionals and is designed to provide performance-based training and assessment of infant/toddler teachers, preschool teachers, home visitors, and family child care providers.

1. A definition that was developed and approved by the Early Learning Advisory Committee (ELAC) for the state of Indiana in 2015, adopting the World Health Organization definition of child health for Indiana.

Children with Disabilities: Children who require special education and related services for conditions that may include: intellectual disability, hearing impairments, speech or language impairments, visual impairments, serious emotional disturbances, orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, or specific learning disabilities.

Cognitive Development: Domain refers to the process of growth and change in children's intellectual/mental abilities such as thinking, learning, reasoning, and understanding.

Core Knowledge and Competencies (CKCs): Refers to the expectations adopted by the Indiana Professional Development Network for what the early childhood education workforce should know (content) and be able to do (skills) in their role working with and/or on behalf of children and their families.

Criterion-reference Test and Assessments: Designed to measure student performance against a fixed set of predetermined criteria or learning standards (i.e. concise, written descriptions of what students are expected to know and be able to do at a specific stage of their education).

Curriculum: A written plan that includes goals for children's development and learning, the experiences through which they will achieve the goals, what staff and parents should do to help children achieve the goals, and the materials needed to support the implementation of the curriculum.



Developmental Stages: Natural or common divisions of the process of human growth characterized by types of behavior, biological properties or manifestations, and mental processes.

Developmentally Appropriate: An approach to teaching grounded in the research on child development, learning, and effective early education. Its framework is designed to promote young children's optimal learning and development by supporting each child with respect to age, needs, interests, developmental levels, and cultural background.

Director: The individual responsible for the day-to-day program implementation who is present at the Early Childhood Education Program to oversee and/or participate in the program.

Domain: A category of learning and development in which goals and strategies are grouped. There are five domains of early childhood development: motor, language, cognitive, social/emotional, and self-help/adaptive. Each of these domains are also interrelated.



Early Care and Education (ECE): Referring to educational programs and strategies geared toward children from birth to age eight (8). This time period is widely considered the most vulnerable and crucial stage of a person's life and focuses on guiding children through play.

Early Childhood: Birth to eight (8) years of age.

Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS): A federal grant program to strengthen systems of care for children from birth to kindergarten entry. The Indiana State Department of Health's Maternal and Child Health Services Office administers the program.

Early Childhood Development: The process by which children from birth to age eight (8) gradually gain the skills and confidence needed to succeed in their present environment and the cognitive skills needed to form a foundation for school readiness and later school success.

Early Care and Education Professional: A title used to describe a qualified person who works with young children birth to eight (8) years of age, often used interchangeably with Early Childhood Professional, Early Childhood Teacher, Early Childhood Educator, Early Childhood Practitioner, Early Childhood Provider, Child Care Professional, or Child Care Provider.

Early Care and Education (ECE) Professional Development: A continuum of learning and supporting activities designed to prepare professionals for work with, and on behalf of, young children and their families, as well as ongoing experiences to enhance this work. These opportunities lead to improvements in the knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions of early education professionals. Professional development encompasses education, training, and technical assistance.

Early Care and Education (ECE) Program: Provision of safe environments, nurturing care, and appropriate developmental learning experiences for children — usually while their parent(s) or caregiver(s) work or attend school. (Program types: Licensed Child Care Centers, Family Child Care, Licensed Child Care Home, Private Preschool Program, Public Preschool Program, Unlicensed Registered Child Care Ministry, and Voluntary Certification Registered Ministry).

Early Care and Educator: See Early Childhood Education Professional.

Early Care and Education Workforce: See Early Childhood Education Professional.

Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH): The social and emotional well-being of infants, toddlers, and young children.

Early Education Matching Grant (EEMG): A state-funded pilot program that provides high-quality pre-k for low-income four-year olds in the state. The Family and Social Service Administration (FSSA) administers CCDF under the Office of Early Childhood and Out of School Learning (OECOSL). The Family and Social Service Administration (FSSA) Office of Early Childhood and Out of School Learning (OECOSL) administers the program.

Early Head Start (EHS): A federally funded program that provides low-income pregnant women and families with children birth to three (3) years of age with family-centered services that facilitate child development, support parental roles, and promote self-sufficiency.

Early Intervention: Efforts to support children at risk for, or in the early stages of, an identified disability and/or developmental delay, usually targeted at early childhood, sometimes including prenatal care.

Early Learning Challenge (ELC): Used to describe Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge federal grants.

Elementary Education: Enrollment in primary school (typically kindergarten through fifth or sixth grade), excluding those students being home-schooled or participating in distance learning.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): A U.S. law passed in December 2015 that governs K–12 public education policy. The law replaced the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). ESSA added provisions regarding preschool.

Evidence-Based Practice: An informed decision-making process that integrates the best available research evidence and professional expertise. For example, the decision to use a certain method of teaching because evidence has repeatedly shown that the method has demonstrated positive results.

Experiential Learning: Acquisition of knowledge and skills through work, play, and other life experiences outside of the traditional classroom environment; learning-by-doing.



Family: A basic social unit typically consisting of one or more adults together with the children they care for. The definition of “family” varies across cultures and according to social norms.

Family Child Care: An early care and education program option in which services to children are delivered in the homes of permitted or licensed family child care providers licensed by the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA), Office of Early Childhood and Out of School Learning (OECOSL).

Family Engagement Framework²: Family engagement is defined as:

- Families actively supporting their children’s learning and development, and sharing the responsibility with early care and education providers who are committed to engaging with families in meaningful, culturally respectful ways;
- Continuous across a child’s life, beginning in infancy and extending through college and career preparation programs;
- Occurring across the various early care and learning settings where children play and grow.

2. A framework that was developed and approved by the Early Learning Advisory Committee (ELAC) for the state of Indiana in the Fall of 2014.

Family Literacy Services: Services that are of sufficient intensity and duration to make sustainable changes in a family, and that integrate all of the following activities: Interactive literacy activities between parents and their children; training for parents regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children; parent literacy training that leads to economic self-sufficiency and financial literacy; and an age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences.

Family Partnership Agreements: This agreement offers opportunities for parents to expand their knowledge about community services and resources, and develop networks and relationships with families, service providers, community agencies, and school systems.

Federal Poverty Guidelines: Guidelines issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that consider the number in the family unit and income level to determine whether a person or family is financially eligible for assistance or services under a particular Federal program. These guidelines are based on poverty thresholds used by the Bureau of Census to prepare its statistical estimates of the number of persons/families in poverty. The poverty guidelines are adjusted each year to account for the last calendar year's increase in prices as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Formal Care: Program-based care, that is licensed, registered, certified, or otherwise recognized by the State of Indiana. For examples of formal care, see Licensed Care or Unlicensed Registered Child Care Ministry.

Formative Assessment: An assessment specifically designed to monitor children's progress to guide and improve instructional practice (as opposed to Summative Assessment).

Foundations to the Indiana Academic Standards for Young Children from Birth to Age Five (5): The Foundations are Indiana's Early Learning and Development guidelines for children ages birth to five (5). They cover all domains of a child's development.

Full-day/Full-year Programs: Programs in which a child is enrolled for five hours or more each day for a period of 12 months.



Head Start: A federally funded program that provides comprehensive early childhood education, health, nutrition, and parent involvement services to low-income children, birth to five (5) years of age, and their families. Head Start programs must adhere to a federally defined set of minimum criteria for each component in the program called the Head Start Program Performance Standards.

Healthy Families Indiana (HFI): A voluntary home visitation program designed to promote healthy families and healthy children through a variety of services, including child development, access to health care, and parent education, that is managed by the Department of Child Services (DCS). Indiana's HFI is a multi-site affiliate of Healthy Families America.

Help Me Grow (HMG): A comprehensive system to identify children at-risk for developmental delays and connect them to needed services. HMG is a public-private initiative with a national center and state affiliates.

High-Quality Preschool Program: In Indiana, High-Quality Preschool is defined as a program that is Level 3 or Level 4 in Paths to QUALITY™ (PTQ) or nationally accredited by a state approved accrediting body.

Home Visiting Programs³: Home visiting describes evidence-based programs that partner with pregnant women and families with children age birth to five (5) to provide voluntary, individualized services. Home visits can be part of many types of programs, however, this definition is limited to evidence-based programs that focus primarily on home visiting. More specifically, this definition focuses on home visiting programs that have research supporting their efficacy in achieving at least one of the following: optimizing health outcomes for mother and child; supporting families in raising physically, socially and emotionally healthy children; preventing child abuse; achieving school readiness; or helping families to build resiliency so they can cope with adverse experiences. Examples of such programs include Nurse Family Partnership, Healthy Families, Early Head Start and Parents as Teachers. Home visiting services take place in a setting that is natural and comfortable for the family, such as the home, child care program or library. Areas of support within home visiting may include: positive parenting, child development, maternal and child health, access to resources and social supports, and family economic self-sufficiency.



Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is the nation's federal special education law that provides services to students with identified special needs. Part B of the law serves children ages 3 - 21 through their local public school; Part C serves younger children birth to three (3) years of age who are experiencing developmental delays and/or have a diagnosed condition. In Indiana, these services are provided through a local network of service providers that are part of the First Steps system.

Informal Assessment: A non-standardized measurement by which an adult gauges what a child is able to do in various content areas. Informal assessment helps the adult tailor instruction and curriculum to meet each child's needs and interests.

Indiana Standards Tool for Alternate Reporting of Kindergarten Readiness (ISTAR-KR): A formative assessment that measures skills in children ages 0-5 in all five developmental domains. It is aligned to the Foundations, Indiana's early learning guidelines.

Individual Education Plan (IEP): An annually revised plan for an exceptional student, detailing present achievement level, goals, and strategies. It is drawn up by teachers, parents, specialists, and when appropriate, the student. It serves as a plan for students receiving services under Part B or Part C of IDEA.

3. A definition that was developed and approved by the Early Learning Advisory Committee (ELAC) for the state of Indiana in February 2016. Program models that meet the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' "evidence-based" criteria are listed in the Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness (HomVEE) Review.

Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP): A plan for special services for young children with developmental delays. An IFSP only applies to children from birth to three (3) years of age (First Steps). Once a child turns three (3) years old, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is put into place (Schools).

Infant Care: Application of developmentally appropriate early childhood education for children, birth to 12 months of age.

Informal Care: Care provided by a relative, friend, or neighbor who is not registered with the state of Indiana.



Kindergarten: A program or class for four to six-year old children that serves as an introduction to school.

Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA): An assessment that is administered to children during the first few months of kindergarten that covers essential domains of school readiness. KEAs are typically used to inform efforts to close the school readiness gap at kindergarten entry, to inform instruction in the early elementary school grades, and to inform parents about their children's status and involve them in decisions about their children's education.

Kindergarten Readiness⁴: In Indiana, we work together so that every child can develop to his or her fullest potential—socially, emotionally, physically, cognitively, and academically. Through growth in all of these domains, the child will become a healthy, capable, competent, and powerful learner.

Kindergarten Retention: Kindergarten retention represents the number of students who repeat Kindergarten from the previous school year (period 1) to the next school year (period 2). ELAC calculates the retention rate by using data from the Indiana Department of Education. Specifically, "Membership Enrollment" from Period 1 is used to compare student test numbers (STN) from year to year. Membership Enrollment is used as the sole source of data to obtain a local education agency's (LEA) average daily membership (ADM). ADM is used to determine the tuition support for an LEA. If a student was counted as a Kindergarten student from the past recent school (e.g., 2014-2015) to current school year (2015-2016), the student was determined to be retained.



Language Development: The developmental domain by which children come to understand and communicate language by expressing thoughts and feeling.

4. A definition that was developed and approved by the Early Learning Advisory Committee (ELAC) for the state of Indiana in the summer of 2014.

Lead Caregiver: Licensed child care homes will each have a designated Lead Caregiver. A licensed child care home Lead Caregiver is the individual who is responsible for day-to-day program implementation and is present on site to oversee and/or participate in the child care program. A Lead Caregiver cannot service more than one site. In some circumstances, the Licensee may be a different person than the Lead Caregiver.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE): As required by the IDEA, school districts must educate students with disabilities in the regular classroom with appropriate aids and supports, to the maximum extent appropriate, with their nondisabled peers in the school they would attend if not disabled, unless a student's IEP requires some other arrangement.

Level (1-4): Position on the scale of criteria used in the Paths to QUALITY™ system, Indiana's voluntary Quality Rating Improvement System for early care and education programs. Each level includes and builds upon the preceding levels with increasing standards.

Licensed Care: An early childhood education program that meets certain criteria set by the state of Indiana.

Licensed Child Care Centers: A licensed early childhood education program designed to provide care for one or more children in a commercial building. Licensed Child Care Centers must meet specific rules and regulations, including requirements for teacher training and education, staff to child ratios, nutrition, discipline, and the supervision of children. Child capacity in a licensed center is limited by the square footage and bathroom facilities in the facility.

Licensed Child Care Home: A licensed early care and education program operated within a residence. Licensed child care homes must meet specific regulations, including requirements for teacher training and education, staff-to-child ratios, nutrition, discipline, and the supervision of children. Child capacity in a licensed child care home is limited to no more than 16 and depends on the ages of the children and the number of caregivers present.

Licensed Provider: See Licensed Care.

Licensed-Exempt Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Certified Centers: Child care that occurs in a commercial building in which the program meets one of the exemptions to licensure including programs that operate less than four hours a day, are registered as a ministry, operate 90 days or less per year (such as summer camps) or other exemptions under IC12-17.2-2. These programs are not licensed but have been certified to receive public funds through the CCDF voucher program. These unlicensed facilities must meet minimum health and safety standards as defined by the Provider Eligibility Standards (IC12-17.2-3.5).

Licensed-Exempt Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Certified Homes: Child care that occurs in a residential building in which the provider cares for five or fewer unrelated children. The provider is not licensed, but has been certified to receive public funds through the CCDF voucher program. These unlicensed homes must meet minimum health and safety standards as defined by the Provider Eligibility Standards (IC12-17.2-3.5)

Local Education Agency (LEA): A commonly used synonym for a school district or corporation, an entity that operates local public schools.



Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV): A federal grant program to support improvements in health and development outcomes for at-risk children through the provision of evidence-based home visiting programs. In Indiana, MIECHV supports two evidence-based programs: Nurse Family Partnership and Healthy Families Indiana. The Indiana State Department of Health's Maternal and Child Health Services Office administers the program.

Mental Health Services: Assistance for mental and emotional disorders provided by licensed or certified mental health professionals with experience and expertise.

Mixed-Delivery System: A system for delivering early childhood education that allows parents to choose from a variety of program types, such as licensed centers, licensed homes, public or private preschools, and unlicensed registered ministries.

Motor Development: Physical developmental domain that involves “gross motor” and “fine motor” learning. Gross motor involves large movement of limbs, such as crawling, climbing, and walking. Fine motor involves the precise movement of fingers to master skills such as writing, coloring, and cutting with scissors.



Non-Traditional Care: Care provided beyond the traditional times of Monday through Friday, 6:00am to 6:00pm, such as evenings, weekends, and sick child care.



Observation Measurement: Gathering information by systematically watching and documenting what children do or say.

On My Way Pre-K: A state-funded pre-k pilot program the Indiana General Assembly enacted during the 2014 legislative session under the House Enrolled Act (“HEA”) 1004. It provides high-quality pre-k for four-year olds in low-income families in five pilot counties (Allen, Jackson, Lake, Marion and Vanderburgh).



Paths to QUALITY™: A free, voluntary Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) designed to raise the standard of quality in early care and education in Indiana. Paths to QUALITY™ includes four progressively higher levels of standards, with each level including and building upon previous levels. The Family and Social Service Administration (FSSA) Office of Early Childhood and Out of School Learning (OECOSL) administers the program.

Performance-Based Assessment: Discovering what children know and can do from their ability to perform certain tasks, usually tasks as close to real-life challenges as possible.

Post-Secondary Education: Education provided by an institution beyond high school, which may include a credential, two-year degree or higher.

Portfolio Assessment: A process of evaluating child performance based on evidence that a teacher has collected, selected, and compiled in a portfolio e.g. (Notebook, folder, electronic)

Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K): Early care and education for children four (4) years of age, or for the year immediately prior to their enrollment in Kindergarten.

Preschool: Early childhood education for children three (3) to four (4) years of age.

Private Preschool Programs: Early care and education programs located in a non-public school building that typically offer educational enrichment and social interactions for children two (2) to five (5) years of age. These programs usually operate on a part-day basis, two to five days per week, less than five hours per day and may not be required to be regulated or licensed.

Project LAUNCH: A federal grant program to promote the wellness of young children birth to age eight. The Indiana State Department of Health's Maternal and Child Health Services Office administers the program.

Public Preschool Program: Early Care and Education programs located in a public school building that typically offer educational enrichment and social interactions for children two (2) to five (5) years of age. These programs may operate on a part-day basis, two to five days per week, less than five hours per day and may not be required to be regulated or licensed.



Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS): A systemic approach to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early and school-age care and education programs.



Rating Scale: Measures the degree of mastery of child skills based on predetermined skills or standards to compare to. ISTAR KR is criterion-referenced rating scale including specific level (cut off) of performance per age in months per standard.

Reach Out and Read: A parenting support system and early literacy program embedded in pediatric preventive care visits for children birth through five (5). Reach Out and Read is a national model program that individual pediatric practices can implement.

Retention: When a student is held back from advancing to the next grade level.



School-Age (Based on Type of Facility):

- Center and Unlicensed Registered Ministry: A child attending first grade or above.
- Home: A child who is attending first grade or above.

School-Age Care: Care provided to school-age children (Kindergarten -12th grade) before and /or after school.

School Personnel Number (SPN): The SPN is an eight digit number that is assigned by the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE), Office of Data Collection and Reporting, that is used to accurately identify a single school employee throughout his/her career within the state of Indiana

School Readiness: See Kindergarten Readiness.

Secondary Education: Enrollment in middle, junior or senior high school program, excluding those students being home schooled or participating in distance learning.

Self-Help / Adaptive Development: This domain refers to the skills used for daily living, such as dressing, eating, toileting and washing.

Social/Emotional Development: A young child's growing capacity to experience, express, and regulate emotions, engage in positive relationships with others, and as a result, learn and develop in the context of family, culture, and community.

Social-Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (SEFEL): A framework for teaching social and emotional skills to children that is also known as the Pyramid Model. The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) is a national resource center supported by the Administration for Children and Families for disseminating research and evidence-based practices to early childhood programs.

Special Education Preschool (SPED): A program authorized by Part B of IDEA and administered by IDOE that serves eligible children three (3) to five (5) years of age, who need additional academic and behavioral support to succeed in a general education environment. Part B of IDEA serves children ages 3-21 through their local public school preschool.

Standardized Assessment: Measures that can be quantified with proven validity and reliability from which scores are interpreted against a set of norms, such as state, national, or international norms.

State Licensing Boards: Agencies that authorize the practice of a profession or operation of a business in a state after determining that established standards and requirements have been met.

State Preschool Program: A preschool program predominately supported with State funds that provides services to children three to four years of age. Can be provided in a private or public early care and education setting.

Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS): A State's longitudinal education data system that collects and maintains detailed, high-quality, student- and staff-level data that are linked across state agencies and that over time provide a complete academic and performance history for each student from Pre-K through post-secondary education/career.

Student Testing Number (STN): The STN is an eight digit number that is assigned by the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE), Office of Data Collection and Reporting, that is used to accurately identify a single student throughout his/her public school experience.

Summative Assessment: An assessment used to evaluate student learning at the end of an instructional unit or period by comparing it against some standard or benchmark (as opposed to Formative Assessment).



Teacher: See Early Care and Education Professional.

Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H Early Childhood® Indiana): T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Indiana Project offers educational scholarship opportunities for early childhood teachers, directors, and family child care providers who are working in legally exempt or regulated early childhood programs. The T.E.A.C.H. Project is made possible through funding received from FSSA Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning via Child Care and Development Funds. It is administered by the Indiana Association for the Education of Young Children.

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF): A federally funded program given to states to provide benefits and services, including child care to needy families with specific requirements. TANF is administered in Indiana by FSSA.

Toddler: Early care and education for children from twelve (12) months of age through thirty-six (36) months of age.



Unlicensed Registered Child Care Ministry: An Early Care and Education Program operated by a faith-based organization exempt from federal income taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Unlicensed Registered Ministries are required to meet basic fire, safety, and sanitation regulations but are not required to meet the same requirements as licensed providers. Unlicensed Registered Child Care ministries are not required to be licensed in Indiana.



Voluntary Certification Program (VCP): A voluntary, quality enhancement program administered for unlicensed registered ministries to meet the equivalent program standards as licensed providers. The program is administered by the FSSA Office of Early Childhood and Out of School Learning.

Voluntary Certification Registered Ministry (VCP Ministry): When an Unlicensed Registered Child Care Ministry has voluntarily agreed to meet the program standards for the Voluntary Certification Program (VCP). A Voluntary Certified Registered Ministry is not required to be licensed.

Key Early Learning Organizations

Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI): ACSI is one of the nationally recognized accrediting bodies, specifically for faith-based early childhood education programs, approved by Indiana's Office of Early Childhood and Out of School Learning (OECOSL).

Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R): Agencies that help families find the child care they need, educate families and the community about child care choices and quality, and support child care providers' improvement in quality through training, technical assistance, and other support services. There are nine regional CCR&Rs across the state. Early Learning Indiana supports the CCR&Rs.

Early Learning Indiana (ELI): ELI's Partnership for Early Learners supports the early care and education industry in the following areas: capacity building, quality improvement, family engagement, workforce development, and innovation.

Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA): FSSA is a health care and social service funding agency established by the Indiana General Assembly in 1991 to consolidate and better integrate the delivery of human services by State government.

First Steps: A program authorized by Part C of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and administered by FSSA Division of Disabilities that serves infants and toddlers (birth to three (3) years of age) who demonstrate a delay in development, or have a diagnosed condition that has a high probability of resulting in developmental delay, and would benefit from additional supports to address their needs in order to enhance the child's development and the family's capacity to care and advocate for their child.

FSSA Division of Mental Health and Addiction (DMHA): Sets care standards for the provision of mental health and addiction services to Hoosiers. The division also certifies all community mental health centers and addiction treatment services providers.

FSSA Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning (OECOSL): An office within FSSA, the Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning oversees early child care, education and, out-of-school-time programs.

IDOE Office of Early Learning and Interventions: Under the Indiana Department of Education, the Office of Early Learning and Intervention oversees all school improvement grants for the state.

IDOE Outreach Division of School Improvements: Under the Indiana Department of Education, the Outreach Division of School Improvements collaborates with the nine educational service centers throughout Indiana to provide levels of support and resources that align with the US Department of Education's Turnaround Principles.

Indiana Association for the Education of Young Children, Inc. (IAEYC): IAEYC promotes and supports the early care and education industry in several ways, including helping programs reach national accreditation, coaching to improve quality, educational scholarships via the TEACH program and many other services.

Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS): The Indiana Department of Child Services protects children from abuse and neglect, and works to ensure their financial support. They also manage the evidence-based home visiting program, Healthy Families Indiana.

Indiana Department of Education (IDOE): IDOE is an educational agency established by the Indiana General Assembly to oversee the educational instruction of children in Indiana.

Indiana Education Roundtable: Indiana's Education Roundtable serves to improve educational opportunity and achievement for all Hoosier students, specifically focusing on K-12 education. It is composed of key leaders from education, business, community, and government.

Indiana Head Start State Collaboration Office: Indiana receive Head Start State Collaboration Grants to support the development of multi-agency and public/private partnerships at the state-level to benefit low-income children from birth to five (5) years of age and their families, as well as pregnant women. Indiana's Head Start State Collaboration Office is located in the Family and Social Services Administration.

Indiana Home Visiting Advisory Board (INHVAB): A board established as part of Indiana's Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program State Plan and convened by the Indiana State Department of Health and Indiana Department of Child Services. Its purpose is to coordinate, promote, and define home visiting efforts in Indiana. The INHVAB uses data to assess need, identify service gaps, maximize resources, and inform policy to improve health and development outcomes for Hoosier families and children. The INHVAB is tasked with developing a strong, sustainable home visiting referral framework to ensure all participants of home visiting services receive comprehensive referrals and follow-up.

Indiana Network of Knowledge (INK): INK is Indiana's State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) that stores education and workforce data. INK responds to requests for data from various groups including, but not limited to state agencies, legislators, and researchers. The 4 primary agencies they collect data from are the Commission for Higher Education, Department of Education, Department of Workforce Development, and the Family Social Services Administration.

Indiana State Board of Education (SBOE): Established by the Indiana General Assembly, the State Board of Education oversees state K-12 education policymaking. The bipartisan board is composed of eleven members, including the Superintendent of Public Instruction who is the chairperson.

Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH): Established by the Indiana General Assembly, the Indiana State Department of Health works to promote and provide essential public health services to create a healthier and safer Indiana. ISDH is also responsible for the administration of the Indiana Veterans' Home and the Soldiers' and Sailors' Children's Home.

ISDH Maternal and Child Health: A department within ISDH that manages Indiana's Title V MCH Federal Block Grant. ISDH MCH also co-administers Indiana's federal Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) grant program with the Department of Child Services.

United Way Agencies: In addition to financial support, United Way agencies also provide "in-kind" support of early education in their local communities through a variety of efforts, including roles in coordinating, convening, training, volunteer placement and recognition of quality.

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