

School Readiness Unit – Office of Child Well Being

Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)

OVERVIEW
<p>DCFS policy stipulates that all children for whom the DCFS is legally responsible should be enrolled in an early childhood education program. Caseworkers should facilitate the enrollment of children of wards and children in intact families aged 3-5 in Head Start, Preschool for All, or accredited/Gold Circle of Quality child care program.</p> <p>http://www.state.il.us/dcf/docs/ocfp/procedure/Procedures_314.pdf</p>
WHO IS SERVED?
<p><i>Population(s)/Age Group:</i></p>
<p>Children age 3-5 under DCFS guardianship (meaning there is a legal relationship between the child and DCFS). DCFS School Readiness Unit begins tracking children at age 2.5 to ensure enrollment at age 3. Children with open Intact Family Services cases or whose parent is in the Teen Parent Services Network are strongly encouraged to participate.</p>
<p><i>Eligibility Criteria and Screening Tools:</i></p>
<p>All children under DCFS guardianship are eligible for enrollment in Early Childhood Education programs (Preschool for All, Head Start/Early Head Start)</p>
HOW ARE SERVICES DELIVERED?
<p><i>Local Service System:</i></p>
<p>DCFS and POS caseworkers ¹ are responsible for ensuring appropriate placements.</p>
<p><i>Referrals into Program:</i></p>
<p>Caseworker refers family to an early childhood education program. School Readiness track the enrollment status, assists caseworker with education options and works to reduce or eliminate barriers to enrollment.</p>
<p><i>Data Systems Used:</i></p>
<p>SACWIS (State Automated Child Welfare Information System) and the SPDB (Statewide Provider Data Base)</p>
STATE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR OR CONTACT
<p>Mary Beth Corrigan, Public Service Administrator IDCFS – Office of Education and Transition Services Division of Well Being (312) 814-5509 Mary.Corrigan@illinois.gov</p>

¹ POS is "point of service". The majority of open DCFS cases are managed by private child welfare agencies through contractual arrangements.