**Section 50.1310 Eligible** **Child Care Program**

To qualify for the Smart Start Workforce Grants, the applicant must meet all of the following requirements:

a) Be a licensed day care home, licensed day care center, or licensed group day care home, as defined in 89 Ill. Adm. Code 406.2, 407.45, and 408.5, hereinafter referred to collectively as "child care programs", as of the month prior to their submission of an application and maintain the applicable license for the duration of the grant;

b) Regularly provide year-round child care (defined as being open and offering at least eight consecutive hours of care per day, five days per week for at least 47 weeks per year);

c) Demonstrate the following enrollment of children paid for by the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) (see 89 Ill. Adm. Code 50), Department of Children and Family Services child care subsidies for foster child care (see 20 ILCS 505/5a), and military child care subsidies paid for by the United States Department of Defense, in at least one month beginning on or after January of the previous calendar year, and prior to the date of application. The minimum enrollments will be:

1) For day care centers, at least 15% of licensed capacity;

2) For day care homes, at least one child;

3) For group day care homes, at least two children.

d) For licensed day care centers, eligibility will be determined at the classroom level. A classroom must meet the following requirements to be eligible to receive an award:

1) Not receive Early Childhood Block Grant, Head Start, or Early Head Start funds;

2) Not serve school-age children as defined in 89 Ill. Adm. Code 407.45;

3) If serving infants and/or toddlers (children under two years of age), care for a minimum of four children;

4) If serving two-year-olds or both two- and three-year-olds, care for a minimum of eight children;

5) If serving three- to five-year-olds, care for a minimum of 12 children.

e) For licensed day care homes and licensed group day care homes, meet the following requirements:

1) Not receive Early Childhood Block Grant, Head Start, or Early Head Start funds; and

2) Enroll a minimum of four children.

f) Licensed day care centers unable to meet the required enrollment minimum for a classroom and licensed day care homes and licensed group day care homes unable to meet the required enrollment minimum may submit a waiver request to the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS/"Department") or to its Qualified Partners (as stated in 89 Ill. Adm. Code 50.1370). Waivers and requests will be in a format determined by the Department or its Qualified Partners, may require additional documentation, and may be subject to restrictions and requirements, such as restrictions to award amounts, or requirements to work with a Child Care Resource and Referral Agency to document additional details, as determined by the Department or its Qualified Partners. The criteria the Department will take into consideration when evaluating a waiver request include, but are not limited to:

1) Licensed capacity of the classroom, day care home, or group day care home, as determined by the Department of Children and Family Services;

2) The required grouping and staffing and number and ages of children served, as stated in 89 Ill. Adm. Code 407.190, 406.13, and 408.65;

3) Prior waivers received by the classroom or child care program.

g) Maintain a current Gateways to Opportunity Registry Director Portal.

(Source: Added at 48 Ill. Reg. 14957, effective October 1, 2024)