

Professional Learning  
Network



Champions for Early Learning



## OUR MISSION

**Start Early advances quality early learning for families with children, before birth through their earliest years, to close the opportunity gap.**

## OUR VISION

**Every child has equitable opportunity to reach their full potential to thrive in school and in life.**



## THE CURRENT STATE

Inequality starts at birth and the impact lasts a lifetime. A child's brain develops faster from birth to age 5 than at any other time.

Yet, this critical development is in jeopardy for many children whose families lack access to quality early learning and care services, especially those living in communities that are left under-resourced. The “opportunity gap” is created by the arbitrary circumstances into which babies are born — such as race, ethnicity, ZIP code and socioeconomic status. The impacts of this gap are measurable as early as 9 months.

**Change the first five years and you change everything.**

5M+

Number of children under age 5 living in under-resourced communities in the United States



1M+

Number of children that enter kindergarten unprepared to learn each year

A close-up portrait of a young girl with a warm, joyful expression. She is wearing a pink and white hooded garment. Her eyes are dark and bright, and her smile shows her teeth. The background is dark and out of focus.

## WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

Decades of research have proven that quality early learning programs have a high return on investment. Early childhood programs help address the long-standing injustices in our communities and can break the cycle of intergenerational poverty.

Parents do better. Children do better. And when those children become adults, their children also do better.

4X

Children are four times more likely to complete a bachelor's degree or higher after attending early learning and care programs.

## QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS WORK



### For children...

- 25% more likely to **graduate** high school
- 4x more likely to have completed a **bachelor's degree** or higher
- Up to 25% more in earned **wages** as an adult



### For communities...

- Better **education** outcomes and economic **productivity**
- Improved **health** and reduced **health care** costs
- Reduced **crime**

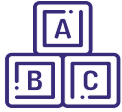
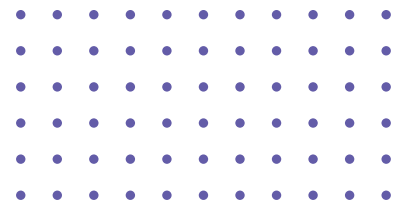
## WE ENVISION A FUTURE WHERE...



- Every **child** has opportunities to thrive.
- Every **parent** is supported and empowered.
- Every **program leader** and all program staff consistently deliver quality services.
- Every **system** at local, state and federal levels prioritizes and equitably supports children and families.
- Every **community** demonstrates improved outcomes for its youngest children.



## WHAT WE DO



We provide **QUALITY EARLY LEARNING AND CARE** to children and families on-the-ground in Chicago and in rural Illinois, and we partner with others to bring our lessons learned to children and families nationwide.



Our **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFERINGS** help ensure early childhood professionals build practices that transform teaching and learning and deliver stronger outcomes for children.



We conduct **RESEARCH AND EVALUATION** to optimize and inform every aspect of our work, from the classroom to policy recommendations and training programs.



We promote **WIDE-RANGING POLICIES AND PROGRAMS** that put families first by helping policymakers understand the benefits of and the science behind early childhood development.



We foster **COLLABORATION TO ACCELERATE LEARNING AND IMPACT**, emphasizing the value and power of partnerships and recognizing we are stronger when we share and learn from one another.



A close-up photograph of a woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing glasses and a dark top. She is looking down at a young child with dark hair, who is wearing a maroon and white striped shirt. The child is looking directly at the camera with a curious expression. The background is softly blurred, showing what appears to be a window with natural light.

## OUR APPROACH

Start Early is leading the way. Since 1982, we have worked to close the opportunity gap by providing and championing early learning experiences for children and families from before birth through the first five years of life.

Our comprehensive approach to early learning and care applies our deep expertise in program, policy and research so that children, families and educators can thrive.

## Welcome Packet

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### Purpose

This welcome packet is to serve as a comprehensive resource, fostering support and guidance for both new and existing programs in Illinois. It is designed with a commitment to excellence and continuous quality improvement. This packet aims to empower programs, technical assistance providers, funders, and Start Early staff by providing essential information, key contacts, and valuable insights into the vast landscape of work in the Professional Learning Network of Illinois.

To stay informed of PLN News, [click here to sign up for our newsletter](#).

## The Professional Learning Network of Illinois at Start Early

For over 41 years, Start Early has provided statewide professional learning in Illinois to support professional growth that is essential for high-quality programs to achieve effective child and parent/caregiver outcomes. Our Professional Learning Network currently designs and provides professional learning services and program supports—through training, technical assistance (TA) and coaching—for more than 350 home visiting and center-based programs across the state of Illinois from multiple evidence-based models and multiple funders.

The Professional Learning Network is the official Illinois state office for the Parents as Teachers model and is the sole source entity in Illinois for model core and curriculum training for both Parents as Teachers and Healthy Families America.

In collaboration with our public partners, such as the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Department of Human Services-Department of Early Childhood, the Professional Learning Network has created a series of classroom, webinar, and online courses that explore the content areas that are of greatest relevancy to professionals working with young children and their families through doula, home visiting and center-based services. These courses, when combined with individualized program technical assistant and coaching, provide a continuity of scaffolded learning that promotes the integration of knowledge into skills and practice.

Our Professional Learning Network's offerings are:

- Competency-based
- Informed by best practices in the field
- Designed from an early childhood development perspective
- Focused on the parent/caregiver-child relationship
- Supportive of multidisciplinary systems that promote early childhood development
- Grounded in reflective practice – essential for professional growth
- Based on continuous learning processes
- Developed and offered through a diversity, inclusivity and inclusion lens
- Gateways Registry approved
- Relationship Oriented
- Available in English and Spanish

**Mission:** Support Early Childhood Education professionals in building powerful practices that transforms teaching and learning

**Vision:** Build practice and strong teams that transform early childhood education and learning for all children with our portfolio of training programs.

## Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging

Start Early's Professional Learning Network (PLN) is committed to cultivating a professional learning environment where all participants feel welcomed, respected, and supported. We aim to create spaces that encourage open dialogue, mutual respect, and collaboration among trainers, technical assistance specialists, operations staff, consultants, and participants. Our goal is to foster a culture where everyone, whether providing or receiving training and support, feels their contributions are acknowledged and valued. We recognize the importance of varied perspectives and experiences in strengthening the quality of professional learning.

As you participate in PLN conferences, trainings, and technical assistance opportunities, we invite you to join us in these shared commitments:

- To bring a mindset of continuous learning and curiosity
- To fully participate and actively engage in learning events
- To treat peers and presenters with professionalism and respect
- To remain open to different viewpoints and approaches
- To communicate with care, clarity, and intention
- To engage in constructive dialogue, even when conversations are challenging
- To focus on growth and shared learning rather than perfection
- To take responsibility for how our actions affect others and respond with integrity

Together, we strive to maintain a supportive learning environment that promotes excellence in professional practice.

As always, PLN is proud to continue this DIB journey in partnership with you. Reach out to us at [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org) with your thoughts and concerns. We in PLN benefit and learn from feedback.

## Training, Technical Assistance, and Coaching

### We Consider You Our Partner in Learning

Our courses are designed with adult learning theories in mind! Together with us, you'll have the opportunity to:

Emphasize integration of skills in practice, rather than just the mastery of concepts.

Share your experiences and collaborate with colleagues to solve the problems you face right now.

Connect with a network of peer support, which along with your supervisor, will help guide you through your growth as a professional.

Training begins with the foundations of your practice, shifts to program development and advanced practice, and then caps off with courses geared to supervisors and advanced learning groups.

Technical Assistance Specialists – Home visiting and center-based programs funded by one or more of the funders listed under Partners and Funders receive technical assistance directly from PLN or Baby TALK.

Every Technical Assistant Specialist partners with home visiting staff to advance the quality of the work through direct service and in support of Illinois' most vulnerable families with children prenatal to five.

## PLN Core Competency Areas

- Dynamics of Family Relationships
- Early Child and Adolescent Development
- Family and Community Relationships
- Family Support and Parenting Education
- Health and Safety
- Learning Environments
- Professional Development

Technical Assistance Resource: [Click here to watch a video and learn more information about Training & Technical Assistance](#)

Training Resource: [Click here to watch a video and learn more information about our Start Early Learning Hub](#)

## Connect with Us

### **Professional Learning Network's General Enquiry and Customer Support**

Contact PLN at [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org)

### **Center-Based & Family Center Child Care Homes**

Contact Sr. Program Manager Ariel Chaidez at [achaidez@startearly.org](mailto:achaidez@startearly.org)

### **Doula**

Contact Sr. TA and Training Specialist Doula and Home Visiting Bridget Lally at [blally@startearly.org](mailto:blally@startearly.org)

### **Healthy Families America/Illinois**

Contact Sr. Program Manager Dara Williamson at [dwilliamson@startearly.org](mailto:dwilliamson@startearly.org)

### **Parents As Teachers**

Contact [PATIL@startearly.org](mailto:PATIL@startearly.org) or visit <https://patillinois.org/>

### **Essentials of Home Visiting**

Contact the Essentials of Home Visiting at [professionaldevelopment@startearly.org](mailto:professionaldevelopment@startearly.org)

### **Head Start**

Contact TA and Training Specialist, Chevon Townsend-King [ctownsend@startearly.org](mailto:ctownsend@startearly.org)

### **Nurse Family Partnership**

Contact TA and Training Specialist, Karen Williams [kwilliams@startearly.org](mailto:kwilliams@startearly.org)

## **PROFESSIONAL LEARNING POLICIES**

### Continuous Quality Improvement Plan (CQIP)

Each professional learning event will include an evaluation to determine satisfaction with the course content, facilitator competence, and intended applications of learned knowledge and skills to practice.

Learning objectives describe the desired outcomes of a learning experience by specifying the expected results. They must be specific and measurable, based on available prior learning data, and aligned to professional development standards, as well as any school and early childhood program priorities. Assessment of the learner's mastery of the objectives thus provides a measure of the effectiveness of a course. Evaluation strategies are also incorporated into a learning experience so that both trainers and participants know if the learning objectives have been met. As the course is designed, the PLN team incorporates a variety of learning evaluation techniques into the course content to determine if the learner retains the information being shared in the class. Some of these evaluation techniques include content reviews conducted through large and small group discussion, pre- and post- tests, role play and verbal reports. In addition to these types of integrated strategies, Start Early has created a post-training mentoring and evaluation process for many skills-based trainings in which follow up for accuracy and accountability is necessary. This system includes the use of mentoring and technical assistance follow up with both the learner and the learner's supervisor.

In collaboration with Start Early's Research Department, technical assistance provided to programs by PLN and Baby TALK technical assistance providers (TAs) is monitored for quality and effectiveness. This is done through a process of collecting data on the progress programs leveled at Basic, Targeted and Intensive are making towards completion of the goals they developed in collaboration with their TA. This information is reviewed, analyzed and discussed in monthly Research to Practice meetings facilitated by Start Early Research with TAs and supervisors from the PLN and Baby TALK.

Annually, the Professional Learning Network will develop and distribute a Needs Assessment/Satisfaction Survey to programs engaged in Basic, Targeted and Intensive technical assistance. The Annual Needs Assessment/Satisfaction survey is developed in collaboration with Start Early's Research Division with the aim of collecting and analyzing data directly from the field regarding overall satisfaction with the professional learning

opportunities and technical assistance offered by PLN. The survey also collects data on unmet needs for training and technical assistance which is used to inform the course revision and development process, as well as to inform potential areas of need for increased focus through the provision of technical assistance.

## Enrolling in the Start Early Learning Hub

The first step towards engaging in PLN's professional learning offerings is to enroll with the Professional Learning Network through our Start Early Learning Hub.

To get started, learners are encouraged to follow the steps below:

- 1) Enroll here [Start Early Learning Hub](#)
- 2) Log in
- 3) Register

If you need assistance, Spanish supports, or have questions, our highly skilled Operations Team is here to serve you. Please contact us at [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org).

## Event Registration Policy (onsite events)

Learning events often require the completion of course materials before and after the events. All participants are required to register as early as possible, but no later than 72 hours prior to the event. Registration not only guarantees your participation but also ensures our dedicated staff can provide you with the best support and resources tailored for you.

Please see [www.startearly.org/pln](http://www.startearly.org/pln) for more information and guidance on the specific event.

### ADDITIONAL CONTEXT:

Registration 72 hours prior is important for the following reasons.

- You will receive pre & post-event emails with pertinent course information. If you are not registered, you may limit the time available for completing or reviewing important course materials, and we may miss out on your valuable evaluation feedback.
- Evaluation emails are sent directly at the time the event closes and are only sent to pre-registered participants.
- For in-person courses, it's helpful for seating, printing resources, etc. If a trainee isn't registered, they could miss out on resources.
- To avoid delays and disruptions in learning, we require registration prior to events at [www.startearly.org/pln](http://www.startearly.org/pln).

For any questions, please contact [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org) and our team will be happy to assist you.

## Event Registration Policy (virtual events)

Learning events often require the completion of course materials before and after the events. All participants are required to register as early as possible, but no later than 24 hours prior to the event. Registration not only guarantees your participation but also ensures our dedicated staff can provide you with the best support and resources tailored for you.

Please see [www.startearly.org/pln](http://www.startearly.org/pln) for more information and guidance on the specific event.

### ADDITIONAL CONTEXT:

Registration 24 hours prior is important for the following reasons.

- You will receive pre & post event emails with pertinent course information. If you are not registered, you may limit the time available for completing or reviewing important course materials, and we may miss out on your valuable evaluation feedback.
- Evaluation emails are sent directly at the time the event closes and are only sent to pre-registered participants.
- To avoid delays and disruptions in learning, we require registration prior to events at [www.startearly.org/pln](http://www.startearly.org/pln).

For any questions, please contact [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org) and our team will be happy to assist you.

## Event Cancellation Policy

If a training session has fewer than six registered attendees five days prior to the session date, or if registration drops below six less than five days prior to the session date, PLN will assess whether to cancel the event. In the event of a cancellation, all registered attendees and their supervisors will be contacted via email.

### ADDITIONAL CONTEXT:

Please review our [event registration policies](#).

## Attendance & Registration Policy

Success in a learning event is dependent on active participation and engagement by the attendee throughout the course. Attendees must be registered to attend and participate in session activities, discussions, and be on time. Attendees will not be admitted into a session if they are not registered. Participation is defined as greater than 90% attendance of the scheduled virtual session time as outlined below.

The Professional Learning Network has implemented attendance requirements to obtain credit for attending virtual sessions:

- 1 hour session (6-minute grace period)
- 1.5 hour session (9-minute grace period)
- 2 hour session (12-minute grace period)
- 2.5 hour session (15-minute grace period)
- 3+ hour session (18-minute grace period)

Attendees joining after the allotted grace period will not be admitted into the session.

The Professional Learning Network supports individuals in obtaining access to professional learning opportunities efficiently and effectively. Participants must be enrolled in the [Start Early Learning Hub](#) before registering or attending sessions.

Participants must be on time for live and in-person professional learning opportunities. We encourage participants to follow the [Add to Calendar](#) steps to support timely attendance. Participants will not be allowed into the live session after a certain amount of time has passed.

We understand situations arise, if you know that you will not be able to join on time, please reach out to [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org) and consider scheduling yourself for another session through the [Start Early Learning Hub](#).

Contact [PLNSupport@StartEarly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@StartEarly.org) if you have any questions.

## Non-registered Participants (Virtual events)

The Professional Learning Network (PLN) at Start Early requires registration at least 24 hours prior to all events to ensure smooth admittance and avoid additional delays post event. See our [Event Cancellation Policy](#) for more information.

PLN's virtual events are held on Zoom. All participants are added to a waiting room prior to the event start time and will be admitted upon registration confirmation.

The facilitator(s) or PLN Support staff will verify that you are registered for the event prior to moving you out of the waiting room and into the learning environment. Registration not only guarantees your participation but also ensures our dedicated staff can provide you with the best support and resources tailored for you.

If an error in registration takes place or there are zoom link issues, PLN will follow these steps:

- Upon verification of registration, PLN Support staff will confirm if you are eligible to attend the training and ensure you are an active user of our Start Early Learning Hub.
- Once confirmed, PLN Support staff will determine if you are eligible to attend the training.
  - For example, some events are for supervisors only. For admittance, your user profile must indicate a supervisory role.
- Once your account has been verified and you are eligible to attend, your information will be added to the sign in sheet.

#### ADDITIONAL CONTEXT:

- To avoid delays and disruptions in learning, register for events at [www.startearly.org/pln](http://www.startearly.org/pln).
- If you are not enrolled, you will be registered for the next available session and an enrollment form will be sent to you for completion.
  - Enrollment forms are processed within 2-3 business days.

For any questions, please contact [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org) and our team will be happy to assist you.

## Participation Cancellation Policy

The Professional Learning Network is committed to providing and supporting all our trainees with quality professional development opportunities for both home visitors and center-based program staff.

When a participant cancels without giving enough notice, it prevents other participants from coming off the waitlist, registering, and/or attending. Please see our [Event Cancellation Policy](#) for further implications and information.

Please cancel your registration **no later than 14 days before** your scheduled session. To notify us of any changes or cancellations contact us at [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org).

To cancel a session that falls on a Monday, please email [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org) by 2:00 p.m. the Friday before. If prior notification is not given, you will be marked as a "no-show".

## Evaluations

Evaluations are a core component of our professional learning events. They are a pivotal role in the continuous quality improvement of our professional learning events. These assessments provide a structured framework for gauging the effectiveness, relevance, and impact of the learning experiences we offer. By soliciting feedback from participants, we

gain valuable insights into the strengths and areas for improvement in our training initiatives. Evaluations not only measure the attainment of learning objectives but also allow us to tailor future events to the specific needs and preferences of our audience. Additionally, they serve as a mechanism for assessing the efficacy of our instructional methods, facilitators, and content, fostering a culture of accountability, inclusivity, and responsiveness. Ultimately, the data derived from these evaluations contribute to the enhancement of our professional learning events, ensuring they remain dynamic, engaging, and aligned with the evolving needs of our participants and recommendations from our funders.

The Professional Learning Network (PLN) at Start Early began utilizing Qualtrics in FY24. Qualtrics is web-based software that enables the Professional Learning Network to gather data by way of surveys, feedback and polls using a variety of distribution means. PLN evaluates data provided by learners to support the Continuous Quality improvement process and inform future professional learning opportunities. Data is also collected post events and through an annual Needs Assessment and Satisfaction Survey.

- Trainees are strongly encouraged to complete an event evaluation post training event.
- If you did not receive an evaluation link or have questions, please contact [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org) and our team will be happy to assist you.

## Supports for Breastfeeding Parents (onsite events)

The Professional Learning Network of Illinois acknowledges your privacy and encourages you to reach out to [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org) prior to your scheduled onsite event in Chicago or Springfield.

A Professional Learning Network Team Member will reach out to you regarding private lactation space onsite.

## Video Library & Family Stipend Payments

The Professional Learning Network supports families contributing to our video library or training content. Participating families are eligible to receive compensation from The Professional Learning Network (PLN).

- Eligibility is determined internally between Start Early staff program supervisors.

The Professional Learning Network will manage communication between sites and families as part of the collection process, as follows:

- The program and family associated with the video collection will receive an email from a PLN Operations team member with stipend and media release forms. We request:

- Your PayPal email address
  - Full name
  - Request for forms to be completed and returned
- Once the Operations team member receives your PayPal email confirmation and form documentation, payment will be sent.
- An email will be sent confirming receipt of the payment.

#### ADDITIONAL CONTEXT:

- PayPal is our preferred method of payment.
- Program staff are not eligible to receive stipends.

For any questions, please contact [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org) and our team will be happy to assist you.

## Safety Guidelines (Onsite events)

Start Early is committed to the health and well-being of our employees, their families, and members of our community. Start Early has reviewed recommendations from organizations such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, and state and local health officials, and determined masks are optional for all Start Early and non-Start Early employees. In accordance with our duty to provide and maintain a safe and healthy workplace, all trainees will have access to masks and hand sanitizer, as needed.

We look forward to seeing you at upcoming in-person events at Start Early. If you have any questions, please reach out to [PLNSupport@Startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@Startearly.org).

#### ADDITIONAL CONTEXT:

In the event of a potential outbreak, the Professional Learning Network will utilize the training roster to email all attendees who may have been in contact with the persons testing positive with COVID-19. Please see our [Event Registration Policy\(s\)](#) for important information.

## Walk-In Participants (Onsite events)

The Professional Learning Network (PLN) at Start Early requires registration at least 72 hours prior to all events.

If an error in registration occurs, PLN will follow these steps:

- An Operations team member will verify that you are enrolled in our Start Early Learning Hub.

- Upon verification in enrollment, the Operations team member will determine if you are eligible to attend the training.
  - For example, some events are for supervisors only. For admittance, your user profile must indicate a supervisory role.
- Once your account has been verified and you are eligible to attend, your information will be added to the sign in sheet.
- If you are not enrolled, you will be required to complete an online registration form.
  - The enrollment form will be processed within 2-3 business days.

#### ADDITIONAL CONTEXT:

- To avoid delays and disruptions in learning, we require registration prior to events at [www.startearly.org/pln](http://www.startearly.org/pln).
- For any questions, please contact [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org) and our team will be happy to assist you.

## USER GUIDE & HOW-TO'S

### About this section

This section serves as a comprehensive resource. It contains detailed procedures that are intended to guide you through various operational processes. Use these procedures as a reference to support your work whether you are navigating routine tasks or handling unique situations, this section provides the necessary tools and information to assist you.

Start Early uses Cornerstone OnDemand as our Learning Management System, which we refer to as the Start Early Learning Hub. The Start Early Learning Hub serves as a centralized platform for learners to access professional development opportunities, training materials, course resources, and learning records. Through this system, we are able to support consistent training delivery, streamline enrollment and completion tracking, and provide learners with an organized and accessible learning experience.

Click on the logo to [learn more](#) about our Start Early Learning Hub



To stay informed of PLN News, [click here to sign up for our newsletter](#).

For any questions, please contact [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org) and our team will be happy to assist you.

## Enrollment Process

New users are required to enroll in the Start Early Learning Hub 1 week prior to attending their first scheduled session using this form:

- [PLN Enrollment Form](#) OR the Start Early Learning Hub: [www.startearly.org/PLN](http://www.startearly.org/PLN)
- New users will be reviewed to determine appropriate funding and to obtain verification from their supervisor before their enrollment form is processed.
- Once the enrollment is confirmed and approved, the new hire will receive an email containing personal account login information.
- The participant will be able to register for professional learning opportunities via their account.
- Enrollments are processed every 3 business days.

The enrollment process consists of the following steps:

- Submit an enrollment form.
- The enrollment form is reviewed by Start Early staff depending on funding/program model.
- If approval is required from your supervisor, your supervisor will be contacted via email for review and approval of your enrollment.
- Upon receipt of approval from your supervisor, the PLN Support staff will process your enrollment form.
- A confirmation email will be sent to you via email notifying you that your account is ready.

### ADDITIONAL CONTEXT:

Approval and confirmation times may vary depending on supervisors' response times, your program's funder, and observed holidays and staff capacity.

**Please Note:** If you previously had an account with the Professional Learning Network, either at another agency, you have a name change, please [click here](#) or contact [PLNSupport@StartEarly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@StartEarly.org) to update your pre-existing account.

## How to Register for Sessions

Below are steps on how to register for a session via the Catalog:

- Log into your [Start Early Learning Hub](#) account.
- Go to the Professional Development tab.
- Scroll down to Browse Training Catalog and click.
- Events are listed in alphabetical order.

- Scroll down and click on the title of the training.
- Click "Select a Session".
- Click "View Details".
- Click "Request".

Please Note: If a session's not available there is a 'Notify me of new session' option located in the drop-down menu under "Select a Session".

For any questions, please contact [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org) and our team will be happy to assist you.

En español

A continuación se muestran los pasos para registrarse en una sesión a través del Catálogo:

- Inicia sesión en tu cuenta de ([Start Early Learning Hub](#)).
- Dirígete a la pestaña de Desarrollo Profesional.
- Desplázate hacia abajo hasta encontrar el Catálogo de Capacitación y haz clic en él.
- Los eventos están listados en orden alfabético.
  - Desplázate hacia abajo y haz clic en el título de la capacitación.
- Haz clic en "Seleccionar una sesión".
- Haz clic en "Ver detalles".
- Haz clic en "Solicitar".

Ten en cuenta: Si una sesión no está disponible, hay una opción de 'Notificarme nuevas sesiones' ubicada en el menú desplegable bajo "Seleccionar una sesión".

Para cualquier pregunta, por favor contacta a [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org) y nuestro equipo estará encantado de ayudarte.

## Set up Event Alerts

Participants can sign up to get an alert when a new session is posted.

Follow these steps to set an alert for a new session via the PLN Catalog:

- Log into the Start Early Learning Hub: [www.startearly.org/PLN](http://www.startearly.org/PLN).
- Go to the Professional Development tab, scroll, and click on "Browse Training Catalog".
- Events are listed in alphabetical order, scroll to find the title of the training.
- Click on the down arrow located on the "Select a Session" button.
- Click on the "Notify Me of New Sessions" link.

- Select your location or check the 'Notify me when sessions are scheduled at any location' box and click submit.

For any questions, please contact [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org) and our team will be happy to assist you.

## Add Events to a Calendar

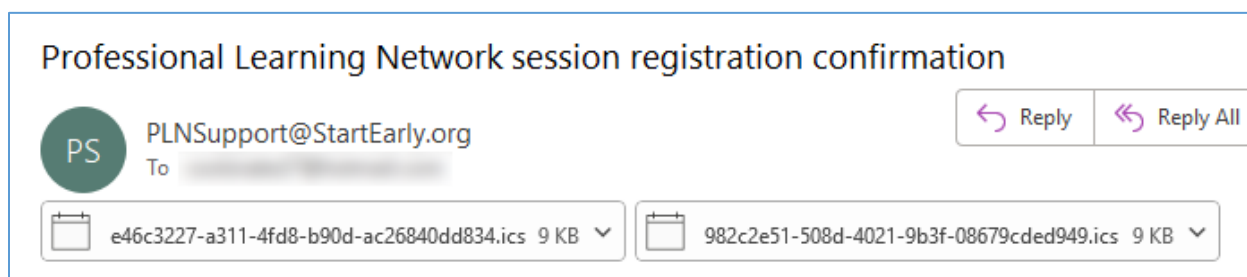
After registering for a PLN professional learning event, you will receive an e-mail confirming your registration. In addition to information about the event, the e-mail will also have attachments that will allow you to easily add the scheduled session(s) to your calendar.

The following information will guide you on how to add the attachments to your Outlook or Google calendar.

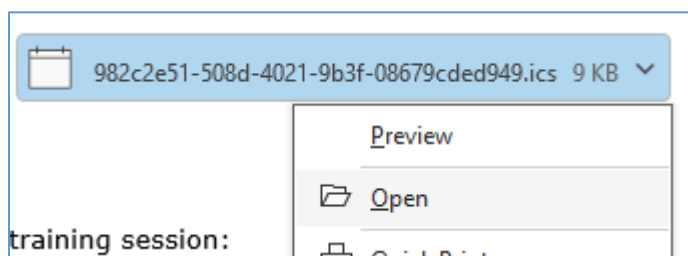
**NOTE:** To add the attachments to other electronic calendars please consult your calendar documentation or your IT professional.

### OUTLOOK CALENDAR WITH OUTLOOK E-MAIL

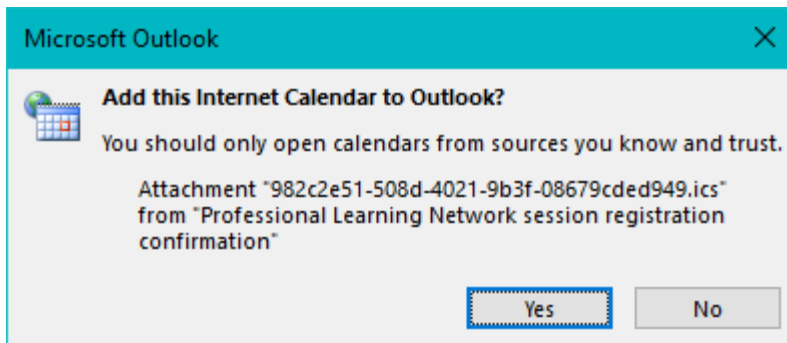
- At the top of the e-mail locate the .ics files. *There will be one .ics file for each scheduled session of the event.*



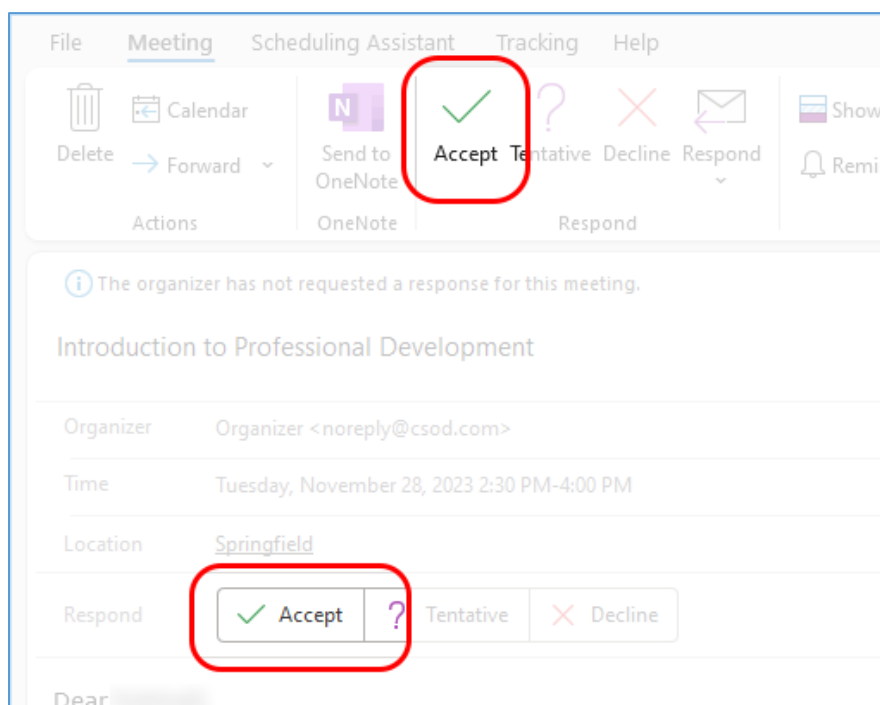
- Click on the down arrow to the right of the attachment and select Open.



- In the prompt that appears, click on the 'Yes' button to add it to Outlook.



- A new window will appear with the event details. Press either of the 'Accept' buttons to add the session to your calendar.



If the event has multiple sessions, you will need to repeat this process for each of the .ics attachments to add all of the event's sessions to your calendar.

### G-MAIL CALENDAR WITH G-MAIL E-MAIL

- At the top of the e-mail, locate the 'Events in this message' area and click the 'Add to Google Calendar' button.

## Professional Learning Network session registration confirmation



PLNSupport@startearly.org

to me ▼

### 31 Events in this message

Introduction to Professional Development Mon Nov 27, 2023 2pm – 3:30pm (CST)

Introduction to Professional Development Tue Nov 28, 2023 2:30pm – 4pm (CST)

[Add to Google Calendar](#)

All of the sessions for the event will be added to your Google Calendar.

### 31 Events in this message

[Introduction to Professional Development](#)

[Introduction to Professional Development](#)

These events have been added to your calendar.

## OTHER E-MAIL AND CALENDAR PROGRAMS

You may be using other programs or combinations of programs for e-mail and electronic calendaring, such as 'Yahoo! Mail' and 'iCloud Calendar'. For these programs the process will likely be like the steps previously detailed, but may involve a different set of steps, such as saving any/all .ics files to your computer first and then opening/adding them to your calendar application.

For any questions, please contact [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org) and our team will be happy to assist you.

## Registration Verification

The Professional Learning Network supports individuals wanting to verify what they have registered for.

To review the status of an upcoming session on the Start Early: Start Early Learning Hub, follow the steps below:

- Log into your account on the [Start Early Learning Hub](#).
- Hover over the *My Professional Development* in the purple ribbon, scroll down to *My transcript*, and click.

- You will be taken to your *My Professional Development* (PD) page.
- You will be on the Active part of your PD page; these are all the active sessions.
- Your status for the event sessions will be displayed under the title.
- To view the details of an event session, click on the title.
- Once you have clicked on the title and are viewing the session detail you can retrieve a map for the location of the session by locating the *view map* link located under the *Location* column.

## Register from Calendar View

The Professional Learning Network supports participants needing to review their transcripts. To access transcripts,

- Log into your account on the [Start Early Learning Hub](#).
- Go to the Professional Development tab, scroll down, and click on Browse Training Catalog
- Events are listed in alphabetical order, scroll down, and click on the title of the training.
- Click on the down arrow located on the Select a Session button and click on the “Notify Me of New Sessions” link.
- Select your location or check the 'Notify me when sessions are scheduled at any location' box and click submit.

For any questions, please contact [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org) and our team will be happy to assist you.

## Approved vs. Registered Steps

The Professional Learning Network supports supervisors in requesting registration for their teams.

To finalize registration, follow the steps below:

- Log into your account on the [Start Early Learning Hub](#).
- Locate the Professional Development tab in the purple ribbon.
- Scroll and click on View Professional Development (PD)
- Locate the “Approved” session on your Professional Development (PD) page.
- Click the “register” button to finalize registration.

- You will receive a registration confirmation email and your status will update to Registered.

For any questions, please contact [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org) and our team will be happy to assist you.

## Gateways & the Professional Learning Network

The Professional Learning Network can verify attendance in the Gateways system for participants who have provided their Gateways Registry Number. Participants can provide their Gateways Registry number in their account profile in the [Start Early Learning Hub](#).

- Gateways Registry: <https://registry.ilgateways.com/>
- Call 800-649-1884 and ask to speak with a professional development advisor.
- Alternatively, you can fill out this form online, and INCCRRA staff will be in touch with you: <https://www.research.net/r/RequestforPDA>.

### Adding Your Gateways Number to Your PLN Profile

To add your Gateways Registry number, follow the steps below:

1. Go to [www.startearly.org/PLN](http://www.startearly.org/PLN) and log in.
2. Hover above the gear icon located in the upper right-hand corner of the screen.
3. Click "My Account."
4. Update information as necessary (in the format N123456) and click Save.
5. Your completed virtual learning will be added to your Gateways transcript by PLN staff.

If you would like to add past completed training to your Gateways transcript, please reach out to [PLNSupport@StartEarly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@StartEarly.org) with the name and date of the completed training.

## Program Transition & Turnover

The Professional Learning Network supports programmatic transitions and turnover. When this occurs at the program, the Supervisor will,

- Communicate the change via email to the program's TA(s) and,
- Complete [this form](#) requesting account update information or deactivation and,
- Email [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org) notifying them of the update and request an update to your "Universal Profile".

For any questions, please contact [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org) and our team will be happy to assist you.

## New Session Alerts

The Professional Learning Network supports participants needing to review their transcripts. To access transcripts,

- Log into your account on the [Start Early Learning Hub](#).
- Go to the Professional Development tab, scroll down, and click on Browse Training Catalog
- Events are listed in alphabetical order, scroll down, and click on the title of the training.
- Click on the down arrow located on the Select a Session button and click on the “Notify Me of New Sessions” link.
- Select your location or check the 'Notify me when sessions are scheduled at any location' box and click submit.

For any questions, please contact [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org) and our team will be happy to assist you.

## Session Links

The Professional Learning Network supports individuals in obtaining links to professional learning opportunities.

Two emails with the Zoom link will be sent to your inbox the day before and the morning of a session participants are registered for.

Participants are encouraged to:

- Add [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org) to their contact list.
- Monitor their inboxes for up to 24 hours before the session start time to ensure they have received their session link. If you did not receive anything, please do the following immediately:
  - Email [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org)
  - Contact the Facilitator(s). To contact the facilitator(s) follow these steps:
    - Log into your account on the [Start Early Learning Hub](#).

- Go to the Professional Development tab, scroll down, and click View Events Calendar.
- Scroll to the month you wish to view and date.
- Click on the date of the session you are registered for.
- Click on the trainer/facilitator's name located in the Session Details.
- Click on the trainer/facilitator's email.

Participants are:

- Required to be registered for the course before the session begins.
- Not permitted to share links with other colleagues.
- Not permitted to join sessions with other colleagues.

For any questions, please contact [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org) and our team will be happy to assist you.

## Enroll New Hires in the Start Early Learning Hub

Follow these links to access the PLN enrollment form, Start Early Learning Hub, and the section in the Learning Hub for new hires to go to.

**Start Early Learning Hub:** [www.startearly.org/PLN](http://www.startearly.org/PLN)

**Enrollment Form:** [Click here to access the Enrollment Form](#)

Once the enrollment is confirmed and approved, your new hire will receive an email containing their account login information. Then they will be able to register for professional learning opportunities via their account.

**Please Note:** If they previously had an account with the Professional Learning Network during their time at another agency or program, please [click here](#) or contact [PLNSupport@StartEarly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@StartEarly.org) to update their pre-existing account.

## General Training Information

This online training requires the following to provide the best experience.

- Use the most current version of web browsers Chrome, Firefox, or Microsoft Edge.
- Use a wired internet connection, when possible.
- Disconnect from any VPNs.
- Disable any pop-up blockers or allow pop-ups on <https://startearly.csod.com>.

- Have JavaScript, cookies, and third-party cookies enabled. (You can verify these settings by visiting [www.whatismybrowser.com](http://www.whatismybrowser.com))
- Use an internet connection that has download speeds of at least 5 Mbps. (You can find out your connection speed by visiting [www.speedtest.net](http://www.speedtest.net) and clicking the Go button.)

Please consult with your IT department for any questions you have regarding your browser, browser settings, or internet connection. Not meeting these requirements can result in online sessions not retaining your progress and/or not correctly identifying when you have completed the training.

For any questions, please contact [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org) and our team will be happy to assist you.

## Waitlists

This online training requires the following to provide the best experience.

Below are the steps on how to transition from the waitlist to register for a session you are waitlisted in. If the spot is no longer available, the purple button will display, “View Training Details” (see as ‘View Training D...’) meaning the spot was taken by someone else. The waitlist is first come, first serve.

These are steps on how to register if you are on the waitlist and a spot becomes available.

- Log into the [Start Early Learning Hub](#) account.
- Locate and hover over the “Professional Development” tab.
- Click on “My transcripts”.
- Locate the session under your “Active” training.
- Click the purple “Register” button located to the right of the title.
  - If the spot is no longer available, the purple button will display “View Training Details”

A confirmation email will be sent to the email on your account and your status for the session will change from ‘waitlisted’ to ‘registered’.

For any questions, please contact [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org) and our team will be happy to assist you.

## Password Changes

The Professional Learning Network supports participants changing passwords as needed.

To make password changes,

- Log into your account on the [Start Early Learning Hub](#).
- Hover above the gear icon in the screen's upper right-hand corner.
- Click "My Account".
- Click the "Options" down arrow button in the Preferences banner.
- Click "Change Password".
- Follow the directions on the screen and click "Save".

For any questions, please contact [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org) and our team will be happy to assist you.

## How to Withdraw from a Session

The Professional Learning Network supports participants who need to withdraw from a session. To withdraw from in-person or virtual sessions,

- Log into your [Start Early Learning Hub](#) account.
- Go to the Professional Development tab.
- Click on "My Transcript"
- You will be on the Active part of your Transcripts
- Look for the title of the training, locate the "View Training D..." button, and click on the arrow to expand the menu.
- Click "Withdraw".

For any questions, please contact [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org) and our team will be happy to assist you.

## Request Evaluation & Evidence of Completion Form

The Professional Learning Network supports individuals who request CPDUs, an Evaluation & Evidence of Completion Form (ISBE 77-21).

To request an Evaluation and Evidence of Completion form (ISBE 77-21) please download, complete, save, and return the [ISBE Evaluation for Workshop, Conference, Seminar, etc. \(77-21A\)](#) form via email to [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org).

Please make sure to complete the form in its entirety. The form must contain correct information. To obtain the information required for the Evidence of Completion Form (ISBE 77-21B), you'll need to access your transcripts. Below are information and steps to locate your transcripts in your Start Early Learning Hub ([www.startearly.org/PLN](http://www.startearly.org/PLN)) account:

#### Evaluation Information Required:

- Title of Professional Development Activity
- Training Date
- Location (Facility, City, State)
- Name of Provider: Start Early: Professional Learning Network

Here are steps on how to access your transcripts:

- Log into your account on the Start Early Learning Hub [www.startearly.org/PLN](http://www.startearly.org/PLN)
- Go to the Professional Development tab and scroll down to *My Transcripts*.
- Locate the Active button on the page and click on the arrow pointing down.
- Change it to Completed.
- Click on the title of the event.

Evaluation Form: [https://www.isbe.net/Documents/77-21A\\_evaluation.pdf](https://www.isbe.net/Documents/77-21A_evaluation.pdf)

Please provide your Illinois Educator Identification Number (IEIN) and your ISBE 77-21A Evaluation form.

Submit the completed evaluation to [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org).

For any questions, please contact [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org) and our team will be happy to assist you.

## Educator Professional Development Credits (CPDUs)

Start Early is also an Illinois state-approved professional development provider authorized to issue professional development credit to Illinois licensed educators (<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/prof-dev-provider-list.pdf>).

- Educators requesting professional development credits from the Professional Learning Network are to complete the [evaluation](#) and email it to [PLNSupport@Startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@Startearly.org).
- The Professional Learning Network will review the Educators transcripts via the Start Early Learning Hub.
- Once the document has been approved, an electronic Evidence of Completion copy will be emailed.
- Participants requesting credits are encouraged to save final copies for your records and follow any additional guidance from <https://isbe.net/>.

For any questions, please contact [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org) and our team will be happy to assist you.

## Certificates of Completion/CEUs

Start Early is an approved provider of Social Work & Nurse CEUs through the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation.

The Professional Learning Network supports participants needing to print certificates and recommends printing and saving a digital copy of your certificate of completion as soon as you complete your session. Participants may need copies if applying for a certification and/or for Continuing Education (CEUs). As an individual, you can print your course completion certificate. To print your certificate, follow these steps.

- Log into your account on the [Start Early Learning Hub](#).
- Go to the “Professional Development” tab and scroll down to “My transcript”.
- Locate the “Active” button under “Filter by Training Status” and change it to “Completed” from the drop-down menu.
- Select the title of the event(s).
- On the right, find the purple “Inactive” button.
- Click the down arrow to expand and “View Certificate”.
- Save and/or print your certificate.

### ADDITIONAL CONTEXT:

If your program recommends you for certification or you need to provide evidence of completion, this will assist in the verification process.

For any questions, please contact [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org) and our team will be happy to assist you.

## Print Transcripts

The Professional Learning Network offers transcripts for individual reporting and record-keeping purposes. You may also need transcripts for certifications. As an individual, you can print your own transcript.

Follow these steps to obtain transcripts:

- Log into your account on the [Start Early Learning Hub](#).
- Go to the “Professional Development” tab and scroll down to “My transcript”.
- Locate the “Active” button under “Filter by Training Status”.
- Change it to “Completed” from the drop-down menu.

- To print your transcripts, click on the “Options” button and select “Print Transcripts”.
- Click “Print”.
- To print proof for a specific training session, click on the title of the training and hit the print button on your internet browser.

**NOTE:** For transcripts prior to March 1, 2014, contact [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org)

### **For Supervisors to access their staff transcripts - Universal Profile: Accessing Transcripts**

To access your staff member's transcripts, follow these steps:

- Log into your account on the [Start Early Learning Hub](#).
- Click the Universal Profile tab.
- On the left, you will see your ID card as well as the ID cards of your direct reports. Click the ID card of the appropriate direct report.
- In the module on the right, select the Profile tab and then click the Transcript sub-link. The active transcript displays by default.
- To change the view, select the Active, Completed, Archived, or Removed radio buttons. These views mirror the available tabs of the user's transcript.
- To see more details, click the title of the learning object. The transcript details page displays.

For any questions, please contact [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org) and our team will be happy to assist you.

## Establish Universal Profile (for Supervisors)

The Professional Learning Network offers “Universal Profile”, a feature allowing supervisors to access all information, development activities, and action items for their staff. Universal Profile is designed to give supervisors greater visibility into all their staff's learning and performance activities, all from a single easy-to-use tab.

Supervisors can view and do the following:

- View Tasks - Assigned Training.
- View Profile - User Profile, Transcript, Certificates.
- View Registration Status for a Session.
- Assign or Register Staff into Training.
- Add External Training to Staff Transcripts.
- Print Transcript/Certificates.
- Print Universal Profile content.

For any questions, please contact [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org) and our team will be happy to assist you.

## Obtain Access to Universal Profile (for Supervisors)

To access the Universal Profile page:

- Log into your account on the [Start Early Learning Hub](#).
- Locate Universal Profile in the purple bar and click.
- Locate the staff member you wish to review on the left-hand side of the screen and click.

For any questions, please contact [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org) and our team will be happy to assist you.

## Access Online Courses from “View Professional Development”

To access your online course(s), follow the instructions below:

- Log into your account on the [Start Early Learning Hub](#).
- Locate Professional Development in the purple ribbon at the top.
- Click on "My Transcript".
- Locate the title of the online course, click on Open Curriculum.
- Click “Launch”.

For any questions, please contact [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org) and our team will be happy to assist you.

## Access Online Courses from “Welcome Page”

To access your online course(s), follow the instructions below:

- Log into your account on the [Start Early Learning Hub](#).
- Go to the Online Training in Progress box on your welcome page.
- Locate the title of the online course and click “Launch”.

For any questions, please contact [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org) and our team will be happy to assist you.

## Gateways & the Professional Learning Network

The Professional Learning Network can verify attendance in the Gateways System for participants who have provided their Gateways Registry Number. Participants can provide their Gateways Registry number in their account profile in the [Start Early Learning Hub](#).

Access Gateways website here: <http://www.ilgateways.com/>

- Gateways Registry: <https://registry.ilgateways.com/>
- 800-649-1884 and ask to speak with a Professional Development Advisor
- You can also fill out this form online and he will be in touch with you  
<https://www.research.net/r/RequestforPDA>

# **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE & COACHING**

## **What is Technical Assistance & Coaching?**

Technical assistance and coaching supports (hereafter listed as TA) from the Professional Learning Network (PLN) at Start Early aims to provide professional development opportunities with home visiting and center-based professionals that build on formal training and practical experiences in model fidelity, reflective practice, family engagement, and supervision. Our Technical Assistance approach is relationship-focused and strength-based. Technical Assistance is voluntary and offered to all center-based, home-based, and doula programs funded by ISBE-PI, IDHS-DEC, and MIECHV. Technical Assistance support is grounded in continuous quality improvement, is offered individually and in group settings, and includes a variety of supports to program supervisors and staff, such as:

- Preparing for funder monitoring and CQIP/CAP process.
- Supporting preparation for and participation in PAT Quality Endorsement, HFA Accreditation, doula accreditation, Classroom Environmental Scales, and/or DCFS Licensure for Centers & Family Child Care Homes.
- Skill building around reflective practice, reflective supervision, family engagement, doula best practices, and home visiting best practices.
- Supporting parent/caregiver-child interactions.
- Strengthening continuous quality improvement process.

We accomplish these activities by fostering relationships with program staff through site visits, observations, phone calls, and other forms of communication. PLN's Technical Assistance Team provides TA that is individualized and culturally responsive to each program, as well as based on mutual trust, collaborative planning, and a consultative stance in working with supervisors and program staff. We believe in the power of parallel processes in adult learning; we strive to create technical assistance experiences in which the program supervisor and staff feel that their growth is nurtured, and, in turn, they are more able to nurture the growth of families and colleagues with whom they work. We value a welcoming learning environment that enables supervisors and staff to feel comfortable discussing their work, posing questions, and sharing their perspectives. Finally, we employ a reflective, process-oriented approach to professional development in both the creation and implementation of our training, technical assistance, coaching, consultation, and group learning experiences.

[Click here to watch a video and learn more information about Training & Technical Assistance](#)

## Voices from the Field

"I had no idea what we were missing because we did not have TA support like we have now. Like it is unreal." - Principal

"I think I was excited to support them. It just felt pretty good from the beginning – like we were a team. I wasn't someone coming in and telling them what they had to do" - TA Provider

"She has equipped us to feel pretty confident in what we're doing. It's a more comfortable, solid, but less frequent relationship. It's like if someone goes to a therapist and it's really intense for a while, and then you're like, okay, I think I'm okay, but can I have you on speed dial just in case?" - Program supervisor

"She's always been very responsive. There's been a couple of times between our monthly scheduled meetings that I had a question, and I'd rather ask her now. I have a document I keep called 'TA Provider questions.' And she always, no matter what, says: is there anything you need help with?" - Program supervisor / Parent educator

"She's that person outside of my agency. Someone you can talk to and get a different perspective. You're living in it – it's nice to see it from somebody else's point of view." - Family support specialist supervisor

"I feel really sad for the programs that wouldn't have this available to them. I also would say the people that have it available to them and they choose not to utilize it — I don't think that's smart." - Program supervisor / parent educator

"There is a lot of like, in my urgency or panic I asked for confirmation. She's always on it, just very calmly. And never, not once, has she said to me, 'you know, you could find that if you looked on such-and-such.' Because that's not the point. It's almost like she gets that this is a 'I just need you to know.'" - Program supervisor

"It would feel like doing this work in isolation. There's no other people out there that are doing this work. She validates what we're doing, or asks have you ever thought about this? Without that, I think I would probably kind of just go inward more – become stagnant." - Family Support specialist supervisor

"If she doesn't know the answer, she 100% has always been like, let me check on this and I'll get back to you. And I don't want to say like a week or two later – she's usually back to me either the same day or within a day or two. She just makes sure that she's not dropping the ball for us." - Program supervisor / parent educator

"She helped me translate the things I do understand, like service work and relationships, and put that into administration and supervision – how those things show up in this other role. That has helped me feel like I do know how to do it." – Program supervisor

"It's nice to hear that it's not just us that's dealing with this. She's always one that you can tell what you're going through and she's going to listen and she's going to validate. And it's just nice to have that separate — even though I feel very supported in my agency, it's still nice to have somebody else to be able to discuss things with. Have you been seeing this? This is what we're experiencing." - Family Support specialist supervisor

"They made the point that it's kind of like how they work with us and the way we work with families – [TA Provider] is the PAT person and [Doula TA Provider] is the doula person, and we are their program. They're happy to work together, but there are things only one can speak to. They weren't going to step on each other's toes." - Program supervisor

"[Principal] and I both really tried to embrace all the things that you guys offer. If we could fit it in our schedule and we felt like it was something useful – which I think basically everything was – we signed up for it, we attended it, and I always felt like we left with good, useful information." - Program supervisor / parent educator

"It's kind of like a support group. You don't always get anything tangible out of it, other than just that person you can speak to. Sometimes just knowing you can speak freely and openly is and of itself helpful." - Family Support Specialist Supervisor

"I always feel like a relationship comes first. I'm happy to put a requirement aside to sit with somebody when something's hard, or to go at their pace with meeting a requirement, even if it means they're not going to meet it this year... holding to what I know is important and required and quality for programs, but also letting the real world exist and letting people be real." - TA Provider

"She came to meet with us and we were both so overwhelmed and we just kept saying, like, I don't think we even know what we're supposed to be doing. We're clearly not doing anything right. And she just kept saying, you are way ahead... what I think she meant is that we had the vision of what we wanted. Yeah, we didn't have everything in place, but we had a vision. We knew what a quality program could look like. And so she just kept saying "way ahead." So I put that sticker up. And we have moved my office a couple times. And I just always keep it where I can see it because it's like her reassuring voice in my head that, you know, things aren't perfect, but we're getting there." - Program supervisor

"You'd be going this work in isolation. There's no other people out there doing this work. So having that is important." - Family Support Specialist Supervisor

## Leveling System for Program Support

Technical assistance support is offered to all home visiting, doula, and center-based programs funded by DHS-DEC, MIECHV, and ISBE-PI. Through partnership and collaboration, the Technical Assistant Specialist and program supervisor/manager work together to identify program strengths and explore opportunities for growth. Technical assistance and coaching are designed to be viewed as an opportunity for programs to receive support and assistance in their work with children and families from culturally responsive, relationship-oriented, and trauma-informed Technical Assistants.

A Technical Assistance leveling system has been designed to be viewed through that lens—an opportunity for programs to receive support in the manner that best aligns with the program's needs and desire for support. **Programs maintain the final decision as to whether they are interested in engaging with their Technical Assistant providers in any of the ways described in the three levels.** The Level System for Program Support described below is model and funder neutral.

### *Universal Technical Assistance:*

100% of all programs are eligible for technical assistance through PLN or subcontractors

- At least 1 Site Visit Annually is offered.
- All programs are invited to the Learning Communities and Communities of Practice.
- Programs receive general information through e-mails and newsletters.
- TAs will respond to email and phone requests from programs as needed.

### *Targeted Technical Assistance - Levels 1 or 2:*

In addition to all the support offered through Universal technical assistance, this level of technical assistance typically focuses on a targeted area of program quality or an area of desired improvement, such as model fidelity. It may closely resemble the current level of support many programs are accustomed to receiving. Technical Assistant specialists will:

- Continue to be available to offer support through site visits, e-mail, and phone.
- Support programs using Zoom when another option is needed.
- Meet with the program on average between 6-12 times per year through a combination of face-to-face and virtual.

### *Intensive Technical Assistance - Level 3 (Coaching):*

The Intensive level will be provided to programs that desire collaboration on systemic areas of focus impacting quality based on several possibilities. These include monitoring results, new program start-ups, or changes in program leadership. The difference between Targeted and Intensive technical assistance is the intensity and frequency of contact. Programs opting for Intensive technical assistance will be provided support at a minimum of twice monthly for the entire program year through face-to-face, or virtual.

## Technical Assistance Guidance

It is the intention and priority of the Technical Assistance team to offer technical assistance support in a manner that allows for, and prioritizes, program staff choice and safety in TA interactions. With this in mind, and as plans for technical assistance in FY23 were being discussed, it was decided to seek input from program supervisors and Technical Assistance Specialists about what activities would be preferred to be in person if it was available. This input has contributed to this guidance.

### **GUIDANCE**

- Virtual technical assistance will be the primary mode of technical assistant support.
- Programs are not required to meet in person with their Technical Assistant.
- The Program Supervisor and Technical Assistance Specialist will decide together the frequency and mode of technical assistant visits based on the program's identified needs, established program goals, and the Technical Assistant's capacity. When needed PLN Leadership will be consulted to support the decision-making process.
  - The following information can be used as a determinant to assist the technical assistant and Supervisor in making decisions about the mode of technical assistance visit. Recent survey responses indicate that the most preferred in-person topics are:
    - Whole team in-service around a focused topic
    - Home visiting model quality endorsement or accreditation process.
    - Preparing for the monitoring process
- Health and safety:
  - It is the responsibility of the Technical Assistance Specialist and Program Supervisor/staff to check in with each other before an in-person visit to assess health and safety measures.
  - When the Technical Assistance Specialist is meeting program staff at their agency, the Technical Assistance Specialist will follow the agency's health and safety protocols.
  - If anyone who is planning on being a part of the technical assistance visit is feeling ill, the visit will be rescheduled or changed to a virtual visit.

## Connect with a Technical Assistant Provider

If you have questions about Technical Assistance, please reach out to the Quality & Systems Manager Jessica Wilkin at [jwilkin@startearly.org](mailto:jwilkin@startearly.org).

## **CENTER-BASED & FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES**

Start Early supports and partners with center-based agencies and Family Child Care Homes across Illinois to promote the development and well-being of children and families.

### Center-Based Mission and Philosophies

The Start Early Center-Based Team provides technical assistance (TA) to Center-Based programs funded by the Illinois State Board of Education. We work alongside center leaders, supervisors, family support specialists, and center-based & family child care home staff with the support of funders, consultants, and other stakeholders to support best practices in family engagement. We accomplish these activities by fostering relationships with program staff through individualized on-site/virtual connections and learning groups. We believe in the power of parallel processes in adult learning. We strive to create technical assistance experiences in which the Center-based and Family Child Care Homes leaders and staff feel that their growth is nurtured. In turn, they are more able to nurture the growth of families and colleagues with whom they work. Technical Assistance Specialists accompany center-based leaders in their efforts to support the implementation of quality programming.

### What is a center-based professional?

A center-based professional provides families and children with a range of high-quality services within Centers and Family Child Care Homes. Each center-based program uses an evidence-based family-centered curriculum, such as Parents as Teachers or Baby TALK to support home visits, parent meetings, workshops, and parent groups. In addition, center-based programs implement a research-based, classroom-child-centered curriculum, foster a positive classroom environment, and support the home-school connection. Through strengthened engagement, center-based professionals also partner with families to collect pertinent information regarding enrollment, health, engagement, attendance, and discharge from the program. Center-based professionals implement a research-based assessment to determine the educational strengths and areas of opportunity for each child/family.

Center-based services must adhere to the requirements of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) licensure.

### Connect with the center-based team

For more information on center-based or Family Child Care Homes please contact [achaidez@startearly.org](mailto:achaidez@startearly.org)

## DOULA & HOME VISITING

Start Early supports and partners with community agencies across Illinois to deliver home visiting and doula services to children and their families.

Rooted in the belief that a child's earliest experiences and relationships lay the foundation for future success in school and life. The goal of home visiting and doula services is to improve developmental trajectories and ensure children can reach their full potential by supporting parent/caregiver-child relationships as early as possible. [Learn more about what doulas and home visitors do.](#)

Each home visiting program uses an evidence-based model, such as: Healthy Families America, Parents as Teachers, Baby TALK, or Nurse-Family Partnership. There is a substantial body of research on these models demonstrating their effectiveness in improving outcomes for children and parents/caregivers. We focus on providing technical assistance that is individualized, and culturally sensitive to each program and based on mutual trust, collaborative planning, and a consultative stance in working with directors, supervisors, and program staff to support programs implementing the models correctly and effectively. Start Early Technical Assistance is designed to be reflective, interactive, and ongoing to support programs and their monitoring results to ensure growing opportunities to build a working knowledge of the required elements to provide the best support for families.

### What is a Doula?

A doula is a trained non-medical professional who provides continuous support before, during, and after childbirth. The goal of a doula is for the birthing person to feel safe, empowered, informed, respected, and heard throughout their pregnancy, labor, and delivery.

A doula educates families about the different medical interventions, comfort measures, patient rights, and other topics related to childbirth and post-partum education. Through relationship building and understanding of the family's needs and wants, a doula can provide both emotional and physical support.

Studies have found that the impact of continuous support from doulas included decreased incidence of adverse maternal health outcomes, cesarean, premature labor, and low birth weight along with an increase in overall birth satisfaction.

### What is a home visitor?

A home visitor helps parents/caregivers continue to build a strong relationship with their baby, create a safe and stimulating home environment, develop healthy eating routines for the family, and connect families to health care resources. Parents and caregivers learn activities and habits that will stimulate their child's brain development to help them thrive.

## Connect with the Professional Learning Network of Illinois

### **Professional Learning Network's General Enquiry and Customer Support**

Contact PLN at [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org)

### **Center-Based**

Contact Sr. Program Manager Ariel Chaidez at [achaidez@startearly.org](mailto:achaidez@startearly.org)

### **Doula**

Contact Sr. TA and Training Specialist Doula and Home Visiting Bridget Lally at [blally@startearly.org](mailto:blally@startearly.org)

### **Healthy Families America/Illinois**

Contact Sr. Program Manager Dara Williamson at [dwilliamson@startearly.org](mailto:dwilliamson@startearly.org)

### **Parents As Teachers**

Contact [PATIL@startearly.org](mailto:PATIL@startearly.org) or visit <https://patillinois.org/>

### **Technical Assistance**

Contact Jessica Wilkin at [jwilkin@startearly.org](mailto:jwilkin@startearly.org)

## **ESSENTIALS OF HOME VISITING**

### What is the Essentials of Home Visiting?

Home visitors, doulas and family support professionals are an essential part of family wellbeing and strong program outcomes. That's why Start Early launched The Essentials of Home Visiting (EHV), a high-quality, online training platform designed to create confident, competent home visitors and supervisors within any home visiting model.

The Essentials of Home Visiting closes the gap in home visitor education with relevant topics and a flexible, accredited training experience. Learners earn early childhood CEUs that support the acquisition and maintenance of professional credentials across multiple fields and state and professional registries.

EHV's comprehensive catalog of self-paced courses and live webinars is competency-based and rooted in decades of home visiting expertise from Start Early. Programs in Illinois receiving funding through IDHS-DEC, MIECHV, and ISBE-PI can access EHV courses at no cost through the Professional Learning Network of Illinois.

### What does the Essentials of Home Visiting Include?

The Essentials of Home Visiting offers research-based learning experiences that can be mixed and matched to create custom training solutions for family professionals. This includes:

- Self-paced Online Courses
- Live Webinars

### Connect with Essentials of Home Visiting (EHV)

For more information on Essentials of Home Visiting contact [professionaldevelopment@startearly.org](mailto:professionaldevelopment@startearly.org)

## Suggested EHV Sequencing for New Home Visitors

| THE ESSENTIALS OF HOME VISITING COURSES BY CONTENT AREA                      | First 6 mos. | 6-12 mos. | 12-24 mos. |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-----------|------------|
| <b>Foundations of Practice for Home Visitors</b>                             |              |           |            |
| Basics of Home Visiting                                                      | X            |           |            |
| Being Present with Families ( <i>English and Spanish</i> )                   | X            |           |            |
| Home Visiting Boundaries                                                     | X            |           |            |
| Home Visiting Safety                                                         | X            |           |            |
| Promoting Effective Parenting with Motivational Interviewing                 | X            |           |            |
| Ages and Stages Questionnaire – 3(ASQ™) Overview and Best Practices          | X            |           |            |
| Building Engaging and Collaborative Relationships with Families              | X            |           |            |
| Observing the Parent-Child Relationship: What You See, Feel & Think          | X            |           |            |
| The Cultural Iceberg: A Deeper Dive into What's Below the Surface            | X            |           |            |
| <b>Infant Mental Health in Home Visiting</b>                                 |              |           |            |
| Foundations of Infant Mental Health Practice in Home Visiting                |              | X         |            |
| Exploring Values and Beliefs Around Parenting ( <i>English and Spanish</i> ) |              | X         |            |
| Matching Family Needs to Resources                                           |              | X         |            |
| <b>Home Visiting: Trauma-Informed Practice</b>                               |              |           |            |
| The Impact of Trauma in Home Visiting                                        |              | X         |            |
| Trauma in Families and Communities                                           |              | X         |            |

|                                                         |  |   |   |
|---------------------------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| <b>Foundations of Practice for Home Visitors</b>        |  |   |   |
| <b>Domestic Violence in Home Visiting</b>               |  |   |   |
| Domestic Violence in Home Visiting                      |  | X |   |
| Domestic Violence: Safety Planning                      |  | X |   |
| The Impact of Domestic Violence on Children             |  | X |   |
| <b>Prenatal Families</b>                                |  |   |   |
| Home Visiting with Families During Pregnancy            |  |   | X |
| <b>Substance Abuse in Home Visiting</b>                 |  |   |   |
| Challenges in Home Visiting: Substance Abuse            |  |   | X |
| Understanding Substance Abuse through the Family's Lens |  |   | X |
| Partnering for Change: Having the Conversation          |  |   | X |

KEY: Self-Paced Course Webinar

3/2022

# **PARENTS AS TEACHERS**

## PAT Illinois State Office

The Parents as Teachers (PAT) Illinois State Office at Start Early provides support to about 100 PAT affiliate programs throughout Illinois. These affiliate programs use the Parents as Teachers evidence-based home visiting model providing comprehensive home visiting and parent education services to families from before birth through kindergarten. Affiliate programs follow the essential requirements of the model, which provide minimum expectations for program design, infrastructure, and service delivery. The role of the PAT Illinois State Office at Start Early is to provide support for affiliates in Illinois to meet those requirements as well as additional quality standards that represent best practices in the field.

The PAT Illinois State Office also supports 500+ curriculum subscribers and curriculum partners that use the PAT curriculum in their direct service with families.

## Parents As Teachers Affiliate Performance Report (APR)

Each year, affiliates are required to report their service delivery and program implementation data through the Affiliate Performance Report (APR). This report, covering the period from July 1 to June 30, must be submitted to the Parents As Teachers National Center (PATNC) by August 15 each year using the web-based reporting system.

Upon submission, affiliates receive two key reports: the Error Check Report and the Performance Measures Report. The Error Check Report is designed to help identify any potential mistakes in the APR data, allowing affiliates to correct errors before final approval. Affiliates must review this report promptly to address any discrepancies.

The Performance Measures Report evaluates whether the affiliate meets the Essential Requirements and assesses model fidelity based on the APR data. This report provides an overview of the affiliate's compliance and performance levels. After reviewing reports and making corrections, the affiliate should click "Ready for Review." T/TA Specialists will then check the data for remaining errors. If additional corrections are needed, the APR will be returned to the affiliate for revisions. Once the data is verified as accurate, the Implementation Support Specialist will approve the APR.

Following approval, affiliates can access their Essential Requirement Review Notification Letter through the APR portal. If this letter indicates that the affiliate is not meeting one or more Essential Requirements, a Success Plan must be developed with the assistance of the Implementation Support Specialist. The Essential Requirements Success Plan Worksheet, which guides this process, is available in the APR portal under "Helpful Documents."

Both the Error Check Report and Performance Measures Report, as well as the Essential Requirements Success Plan Worksheet, can be found in the "Reports" section of the APR portal.

## Connect with PAT Illinois

For more information on Parents as Teachers and training registration, please reach out to [PATIL@startearly.org](mailto:PATIL@startearly.org) or visit our PAT IL State Office website: <https://patillinois.org/>

## OPERATIONS AND QUALITY & SYSTEMS

### Operations Mission and Philosophies

In PLN, our Operations and Quality & Systems Teams are the heartbeat of collaboration, excellence, and quality. We pride ourselves on fostering a culture that not only values individual contributions but thrives on the synergy created through effective collaboration.

**Collaborative Excellence:** We believe that the power of collaboration is unparalleled. Our team members actively seek out opportunities to work together, leveraging diverse skills and perspectives to achieve common goals. We celebrate the strength in unity, knowing that our collective efforts far surpass individual accomplishments.

**Quality-Driven Results:** Quality is not just a goal; it's our commitment. The team is dedicated to delivering results that not only meet but exceed expectations. We understand that our work reflects the high standards of our organization, and we take pride in consistently delivering excellence in every task we undertake.

**Partnership with PLN:** We recognize that true success is a team effort. The team places a premium on building strong partnerships with colleagues across PLN and HV&DN. By fostering open communication, mutual respect, and a shared sense of purpose, we ensure that our work seamlessly aligns with the broader objectives of the organization.

**Continuous Quality Improvement Mindset:** We embrace change as an opportunity to grow and evolve. The team is committed to a continuous quality improvement mindset, constantly seeking ways to enhance processes, streamline workflows, and adapt to the dynamic needs of our organization, partners, and programs.

**Empowered and Inclusive Environment:** We believe that every team member has unique strengths that contribute to our collective success. Our culture is built on inclusivity and empowerment, ensuring that each individual feels valued, heard, and encouraged to bring their authentic selves to the workplace.

## Connect with PLN Operations

### Professional Learning Network's General Enquiry and Customer Support

Contact PLN at [PLNSupport@startearly.org](mailto:PLNSupport@startearly.org)

## DOULAS OF NORTH AMERICA (DONA)

### Accessing DONA 3-Day Workshop Training

New doulas and doula supervisors must work with their assigned PLN Technical Assistance Provider (TA) or HV&DN Program Advisor (PA) to identify an approved DONA 3-Day Workshop training.

- DONA training must be approved by your TA/PA **before** you register.
- Once your training is approved, you may register.
- If Start Early is funding your DONA 3-Day Workshop:
  - Start Early covers the DONA-approved 3-Day Workshop only.
  - Start Early does not cover add-ons or additional coursework, such as Childbirth Education or Breastfeeding courses. These remain your program's responsibility.
  - Approved DONA training costs generally range from \$550–\$850. Any amount over \$850 is your program's responsibility unless otherwise approved by Start Early.

### Submitting your paperwork

Send all the following to your assigned TA/PA:

- **Anticipated training dates** — before the training takes place and before any payment is requested
- **Related invoices**
- **Completion certificate** — immediately after the training ends and before payment is submitted

Your TA/PA handles everything from there, including internal tracking and payment approval. You do not need to contact anyone else.

### DONA Memberships

- HV&DN-funded doula programs are responsible for maintaining active DONA memberships using approved contract funds.
- Doulas and programs obtain and renew memberships directly through DONA International.
- If membership costs weren't included in your program budget, talk to your TA/PA about using available underspending or submitting a Quality Improvement Request (QIR).
- Your TA/PA shares membership information with PLN Operations staff for tracking.

Reach out to your TA/PA with questions about membership requirements, renewal timelines, funding, or allowable contract expenses.

### **Who to contact**

Your assigned PLN Technical Assistance Provider or HV&DN Program Advisor is your first point of contact for all DONA training, funding, membership, and payment questions.

- Bridget Lally — [blally@startearly.org](mailto:blally@startearly.org)
- Elaine Duensing — [eduensing@startearly.org](mailto:eduensing@startearly.org)
- Iris Gonzalez — [igonzalez@startearly.org](mailto:igonzalez@startearly.org)
- Mary Towers — [mtowers@startearly.org](mailto:mtowers@startearly.org)

### **ADDITIONAL CONTEXT**

Established DONA 3-Day Workshop Trainers:

- Pam Love — [peacefulbirthprac@gmail.com](mailto:peacefulbirthprac@gmail.com)
- Lisa Upham — [lisa@ababynaturally.com](mailto:lisa@ababynaturally.com)
- Rachel Dolan-Wickersham — [jiandra@aol.com](mailto:jiandra@aol.com)
- Ann Grauer — [annidoula@gmail.com](mailto:annidoula@gmail.com)
- Robin Elise Weiss — [robin.e.weiss@gmail.com](mailto:robin.e.weiss@gmail.com)

Approved providers may change. Check with your TA/PA for the current list and available training dates.

## **ANNUAL ASSESSMENTS**

The Professional Learning Network of Illinois collects program needs and satisfaction data that is useful, intentional, and can clearly aid in improving program's implementation of its professional learning opportunities. Two surveys are sent annually to programs, once in the Winter and again in the Summer.

### **Needs Assessment**

The purpose of PLN's Needs Assessment is to gather data, on an annual basis, that helps providers inform their practice, meet program's stated needs, plan budget and logistics, and understand program and community context/goals/priorities. This survey allows PLN's current assessment to be iterated on in a participatory manner, to ensure that survey items and the data they collect can be intentionally used and providers find the data meaningful to improve their implementation and ultimately outcomes for programs.

### **End of Year Satisfaction Survey**

The purpose of PLN's End of Year Satisfaction Survey is to collect high-level satisfaction data from programs and professionals to inform internal continuous quality improvement (CQI). This survey also serves as an important link to help ladder up PLN's divisional impact with the rest of Start Early's professional learning portfolio. Importantly, this survey asks the programs and professionals PLN serves to reflect on their experience, share if and how they saw equitable implementation from the trainers and TA providers they engaged with, and allows PLN staff to iterate and refine their own practice.

## **START EARLY PARTNERS & COLLABORATIONS**

### Start Early's Core Values

Our Core Values lay the foundation for our identity and the way we do our work. They reflect our ongoing commitment to instilling a culture that supports Start Early's role as a catalyst for change.

- Empowerment
- Appreciation & Respect
- Learning
- Communication
- Diversity
- Excellence

Applying an inclusive and diverse lens to our work is critical to ensuring we deliver on our mission and live out our core values.

[Sign up to receive Start Early news](#), helpful tools and learn about how you can help our youngest learners.

### Standards and Guidelines Alignment

The Professional Learning Network aligns courses to competencies developed for home visitors, doulas, family support workers, and their supervisors, as well as the following standards and guidelines:

**Illinois Early Learning Guidelines:**  
<https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/>

**Illinois Birth to Five Program Standards:**

<https://www.isbe.net/documents/0-5-program-stds.pdf>

**Standards for Professional Learning:**

<https://standards.learningforward.org/standards-for-professional-learning/>

**Gateways Levels of Learning:**

[https://registry.ilgateways.com/images/documents/trainingresources/022818\\_Levels\\_of\\_Learning.pdf](https://registry.ilgateways.com/images/documents/trainingresources/022818_Levels_of_Learning.pdf)

## Gateways to Opportunity

Gateways to Opportunity (Gateways) is a statewide organization that utilizes a registry system to track professional development events. Start Early partners with Gateways, a division of the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA). The Professional Learning Network is an Authorized Entity, meaning all its professional development events are Registry-Approved. Registry-Approved professional development events meet or exceed a strict set of criteria for quality learning experiences.

**The Professional Learning Network strongly recommends setting up your Gateways account prior to enrolling in the Start Early Learning Hub so that you can enter your Gateways number when you enroll.** The registry is easy to join and a great way to keep a record of all your professional development experiences in one place. Another benefit of the registry is that some events can help you earn points towards a Gateways credential. The current credentials are listed below, and more are in development:

- Early Childhood Education Levels 1-5
- Illinois Director
- Infant Toddler Levels 2-5
- School-Age and Youth Development Levels 1-5
- Family Child Care (FCC) Credential Levels 2-5
- Family Specialist Credential (FSC) Levels 2-5

To learn more about Gateways, visit [www.ilgateways.com](http://www.ilgateways.com).

## IACET

The International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET) developed the original Continuing Education Unit (CEU) and today ensures that providers of continuing education and training provide high quality instruction following a rigorous accreditation process. Start Early applied for and was awarded the honor of becoming an IACET-Accredited Provider in 2020.

The Start Early Learning Hub is responsible for ensuring that we comply with the IACET standards and requirements so we can continue to produce high-quality professional learning experiences that offer credits for our learners.

The Professional Learning Network will continue partnering with the Start Early Learning Hub as part of our Professional Learning Strategic Objective to ensure all courses meet IACET's requirements and provide continuing education units aligned to credentials.

## National Models

**Baby TALK** (Teaching Activities for Learning and Knowledge) is a community family support model which provides the framework to guide parent educators, teachers, social workers, family support specialists, nurses, physicians, librarians and city leaders in nurturing school readiness and optimal child development by supporting infants and toddlers and their parents/caregivers. Baby TALK maintains a professional organization of practitioners who meet periodically throughout the year for informative professional development conferences. Baby TALK has also developed an intricate child development curriculum which uses activities taken from multiple perspectives; parent/caregiver, child and family worker.

**Early Head Start (EHS)** programs serve infants and toddlers under the age of 3, and pregnant women. EHS programs provide intensive comprehensive child development and family support services to low-income infants and toddlers and their families, and to pregnant women and their families. EHS programs are designed to nurture healthy attachments between parent/caregiver and child (and child and caregiver). Services encompass the full range of a family's needs from pregnancy through a child's third birthday.

**Healthy Families America** (HFA) is a nationally recognized, evidence-based home visiting model using an infant mental health approach to support nurturing parent/caregiver-child relationships. The HFA key principles are: relationship and attachment, trauma-informed practice and reflective capacity. These key principles provide the overarching philosophy and engagement method of all components of the model, including relationship building with families, supporting program staff, and collaborating with community partners. Visits occur between a family and Family Support Specialist beginning prenatally or at birth and continuing until the child is 3-5 years old. Using reflective strategies and individualized activities, Family Support Specialists support parents/caregivers as they build a nurturing attachment relationship with their child and grow their family strengths. Reflective practice and supervision are vital in supporting and strengthening Family Support Specialists in their role. Affiliated and Accredited HFA programs follow the HFA Best Practice Standards and participate in the rigorous accreditation process every four years.

**Nurse-Family Partnership** (NFP) helps first-time moms with the support they need to become confident parents and strong women, and ultimately, give their babies the best possible start in life. NFP is staffed by nurses who meet with new parents in their homes, beginning prenatally and continuing for two years. Their focus is on health and safety, and of a high-quality parent/baby relationship. Their founder, Dr. David Olds, oversees a long-standing research project which involves all NFP sites. Training for NFP takes place exclusively in Denver, Colorado.

**Parents as Teachers** (PAT) is a resource organization providing a proven home visiting model for organizations and professionals who meet the evolving needs of families. Their work with the professional community helps young children grow up healthy, safe, and ready to learn. Their internationally recognized network of organizations and professionals supports hundreds of thousands of families in all 50 states as well as many other countries through a proven parent education model featuring intimate, in-home visits with parents/caregivers and children. Parents as Teachers has developed an intimate and relationship-based curriculum that is infused with information on early childhood brain development over the developmental phases.

## Model Enhancements

**Community-based Doulas** are specialized home visitors who provide support to the birthing person in the months before and after the birth of their children, generally from the second or third trimester until the eighth week postnatal. Services provided include prenatal education to promote healthy pregnancies and birth outcomes and to offer a supportive presence throughout the labor and delivery process.

**Infant Mental Health Consultants** are practitioners who specialize in addressing the quality of the parent/caregiver-baby relationship. These practitioners are available to programs for reflective case consultation and collective staff processing regarding difficult and traumatic cases.

## Funders and Partners

The following state agencies provide funding for Professional Learning Network's training, technical assistance, and coaching:

**Illinois Department of Human Services – Department of Early Childhood**  
**Illinois Board of Education - Early Childhood Block Grant Prevention Initiative**  
**Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV)**

The following entities partner with the Professional Learning Network:

## **Health and Home Visiting (HHV) Committee**

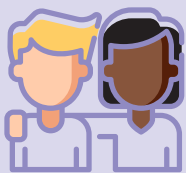
The Health and Home Visiting (HHV) Committee advises on the development of systems that promote health and wellness, advance equitable access to early childhood programs and improve outcomes for families with young children. On a macro level, it facilitates seamless connections between services that offer support to families with children prenatal through kindergarten, such as home visiting, healthcare, mental health, and early education. Serving as the advisory body to the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program, its priorities include enhancing the home visiting workforce, expanding doula services, supporting early care and education programs, and improving access to healthcare and mental health services for children and caregivers.

For more HHV information or to be added to the mailing list contact [Jean.davis@illinois.gov](mailto:Jean.davis@illinois.gov)

## OUR REACH

We work in **nearly every state across the country** to build more equitable early learning and care systems. Taking our programs and services from coast-to-coast allowed us to directly serve **more than 13,000 children** through early learning and care services and reach **300,000 professionals** through our professional development opportunities.

And through intensive policy and advocacy consultation, we supported the building of more equitable early childhood systems for **6.5 million young children**.



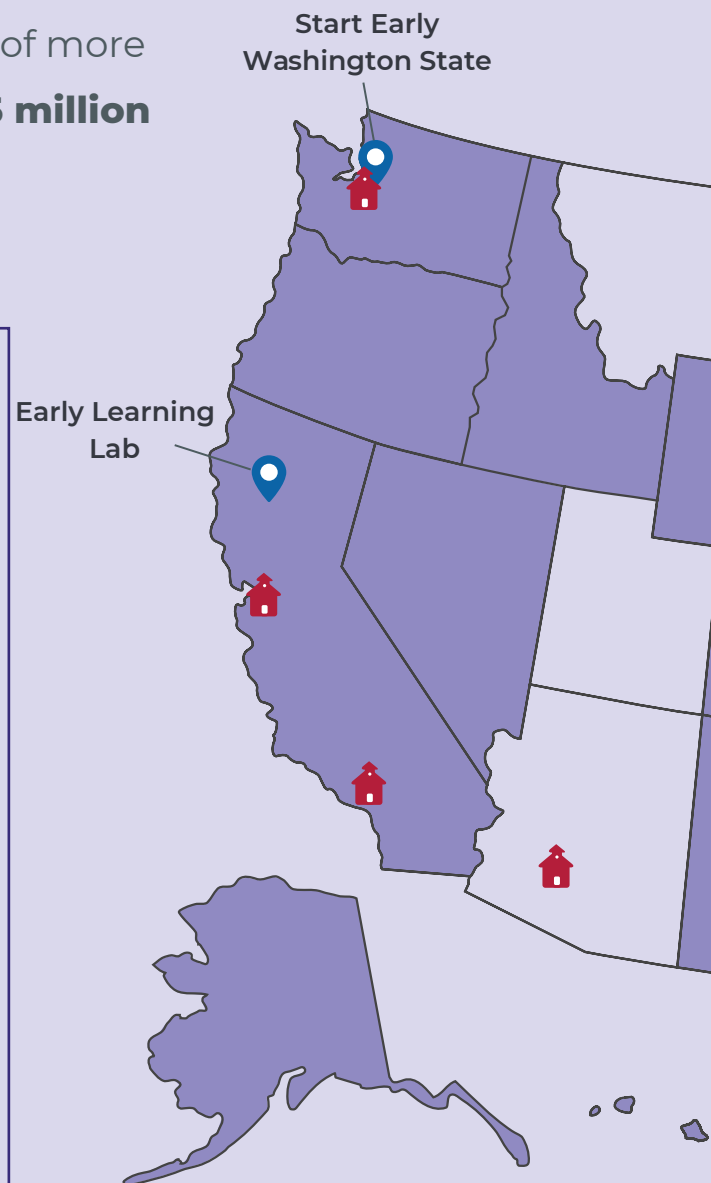
2.3M

Number of children between the ages 0-5 in seven states who have benefitted from more equitable systems due to our intensive policy and advocacy consultation



13%

The annual return on investment that quality early learning programs deliver through better outcomes in education, health, employment and social behavior.



## HOW WE DO IT

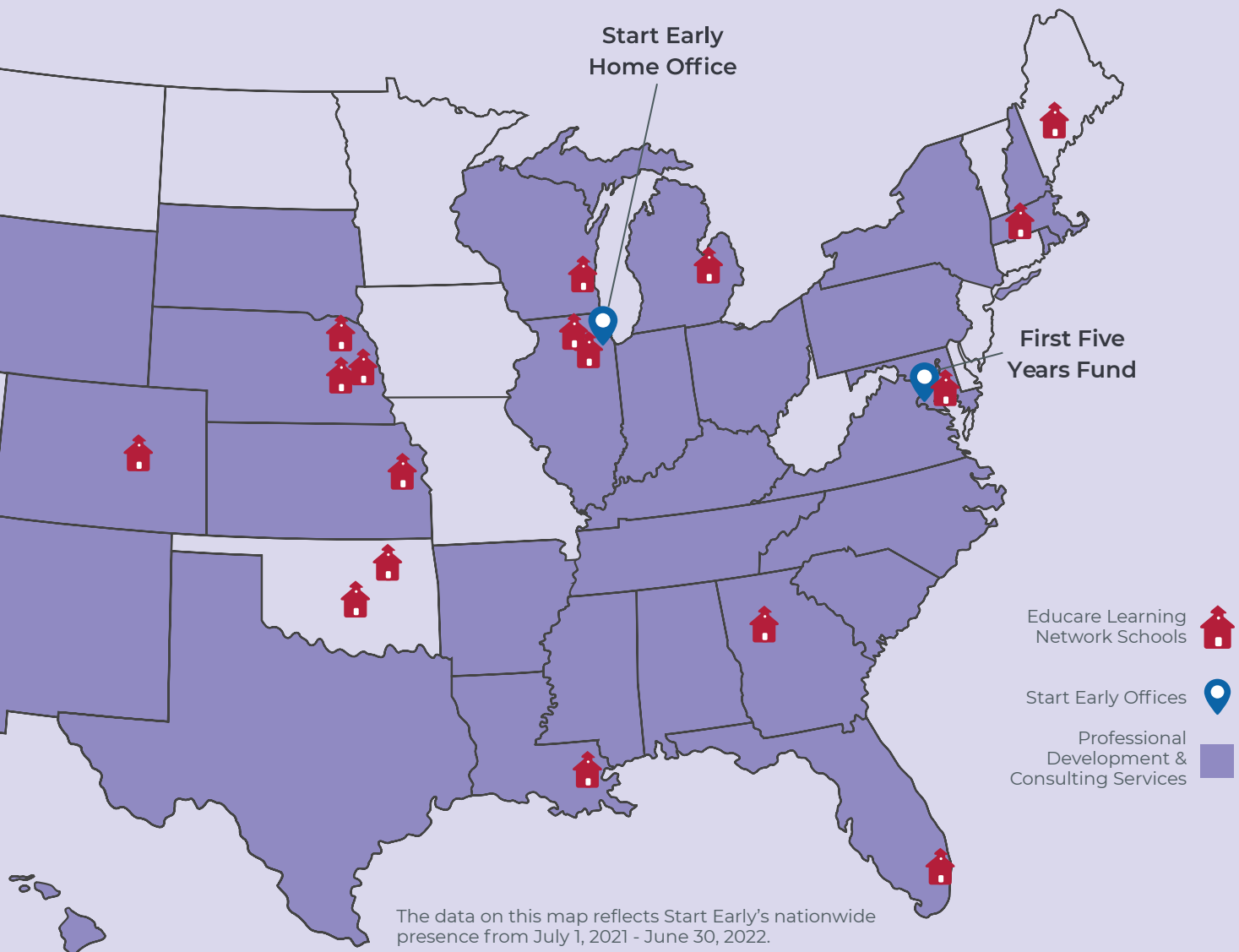
Start Early is a national nonprofit with 40+ years of experience making impact at local, state and federal levels.

No other organization works as deeply across early childhood program, policy and research fields.

We work with communities and experts to scale innovation in program delivery, research and evaluation, professional development and policy.

As a public-private partnership, we use private investment to create positive outcomes for young children, and scale our work with public funding.

Start Early has a track record of steady growth. Our annual revenue totals more than \$70 million.





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1 N. Dearborn  
Suite 700  
Chicago, IL 60602

2800 Montvale Dr.  
Springfield, IL 62704

312-922-3863

**StartEarly.org**