FY2008, Issue 1

Have you ever wanted to find out how many Preschool for All sites are funded in your legislative district? Or how many Head Start classrooms?

Have you needed to know how many family child care homes or child care centers who care for infants and toddlers are in your county?

Thanks to the Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map [../../index.html] (IECAM) you can now find answers to these and many other data questions about how early childhood services relate to the population of young children in Illinois online.

IECAM [../../index.html] was developed by the University of Illinois Early Childhood and Parenting Collaborative and Chicago Metropolis 2020 in response to the Illinois Early Learning Council's request for a publicly accessible interactive tool that could support “transparent” decision making about how early childhood services are planned and funded. This new Web-based tool brings together data on early care and education from state agencies (birth to 5), Head Start, and the private sector. IECAM also includes community demographic information that can be used by federal, state, and local government agencies to inform resource allocation processes in Illinois. The goal is to help public agencies and community planners understand how they can use resources as efficiently as possible while creating a comprehensive early childhood system for the state.

The IECAM data collection is searchable in several ways:

- **Interactive Queries.** Interact with a map of Illinois using a Geographic Information System (GIS). Users can identify early childhood service sites (for Head Start, licensed- and license-exempt child care, licensed family child care, and Preschool for All/Pre-K), view individual sites, and explore the demographic characteristics of counties, townships, and legislative districts. Search results are presented in both tables and maps. A User Guide is available (click on HELP) to assist in formulating questions.

- **Tabular Data.** Search the IECAM data collection using a variety of parameters and indicators and display the results in a table. Data tables can be exported for closer examination.


Developed in 2006, IECAM is located in the Early Childhood and Parenting Collaborative (ECAP) at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. IECAM is currently funded by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS).

Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map (IECAM)
http://iecam.illinois.edu

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You can use the tools on the IECAM Web site to zoom in on a specific location to learn what kinds of early childhood services exist in a county, township, or legislative district. The location of each child care center, licensed family child care home, state-funded PreK or Preschool for All classroom, and Head Start classroom will appear as a point on the map. These current locations of early care and education programs can then be superimposed on "thematic maps" that show the following information:

- Population of children up to the age of 5 (in one-year cohorts)
- Median family income
- Latino population
- African American population
- Unemployment rates

You can compare a demographic theme (such as median family income) with the locations of early care and education sites (such as PreK/PFA). For detailed instructions on this process, see the Help page on Viewing Demographic Theme Maps. The following graphic shows one such use of IECAM's Demographic Theme feature in the Peoria area.

This map shows the distribution of Median Family Income across "census blocks." The legend on the left (under Map Contents) explains which colors refer to which median family income ranges in the "census blocks" on the map. In this map, several early care and education site locations are plotted on top of the median family income map: ISBE PreK/PFA sites, Head Start sites, and licensed and license-exempt child care centers.

By “turning on” different sites and demographic themes in the Map Contents box, different combinations of plots of site locations onto demographic themes can be produced. Please note that this feature gives you a general idea of early care and education service in an area. It does not give specific numbers nor predict need for care. It is a starting point for studying service availability in a given community.


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Individuals from across the state of Illinois have been using IECAM. Several share their thoughts below as they explore the capabilities of the Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map [../../index.html] (IECAM).

“This year I wrote an ISBE Prevention Initiative Grant. After attending the IECAM training, I was able to acquire most of the data I needed to prepare the needs assessment section of my grant. IECAM proved to be a time-saving and efficient way to obtain statistics and pertinent information, and all early childhood providers need ways to help save time.” — Jill Andrews, Ph.D., Southern Illinois Early Childhood Action Team

“The Illinois Early Learning Council and its committees have used information from IECAM to ground their discussions – and decisions – in data. IECAM representatives have been very helpful in preparing data reports and information sessions for participants in the committees so that they can more effectively access the data that exists on early learning programs for children from birth to 5.” — Deanna Durica, Ounce of Prevention Fund

“IECAM pulls together a wealth of important early childhood program and demographic information — the kind of numbers sought by children's advocates and policymakers alike. This significant new data tool will help us to get a better grasp on the real, ground-level implications of statewide policy decisions regarding early education, as well as assist in improving those decisions. Its micro-level focus will greatly benefit macro-level policy approaches to — for example — matching the needs of kids and families with the availability of different kinds of early learning programs.” — Sean Noble, Voices for Illinois Children

Are you using IECAM? Let us know your thoughts…

We encourage you to visit our home page and explore the Web site at http://iecam.illinois.edu [../../index.html]! We depend on your feedback to make the Web site as user friendly as possible. Any suggestions for improvements to the Web site will be welcome.

You will find a User Survey on the IECAM home page under “News” or follow this link to go directly to the survey: https://illinois.edu/sb/sec/3423151 [https://illinois.edu/sb/sec/3423151]

We hope you will have time to complete the survey and let us know which features were most useful to you, the level of difficulty you experienced in finding what you needed, and any additional features that you would like to see available on IECAM.


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IECAM has a new look! Check it out at http://iecam.illinois.edu!


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NEW DATA AVAILABLE ON IECAM

- Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) PreK and Preschool for All Sites for FY08 may be searched in tabular format or by using the map.
- Head Start data for FY08 are also available for queries in the IECAM database.
- Child care data from FY07 are accessible to IECAM users.

IECAMNEWS-L is a periodic newsletter that announces new developments on the Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map (IECAM) Web site. Developed in 2006, IECAM is located in the Early Childhood and Parenting Collaborative (ECAP) at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. IECAM is currently funded by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS).

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