In 2013, children in Illinois were reported speaking 66 languages (including English, “unknown,” and several “other” categories). Data on IECAM are provided for approximately 60–70 languages or language groups. Data are based on responses to the following questions from the American Community Survey (ACS): Does this person speak a language other than English at home? And, what is the language? These questions are designed to be answered for people age 5 and older. For those under age 5, the data are based on the response to this question by the mother, father, or head of household (in order of preference if present in the household). Thus, the data represent the language spoken by the child or likely being learned by the child.

The following maps are developed using 2013 data and are in geographic areas known as PUMAs (Public Use Microdata Areas). [1] The purpose of the maps is to show where specific languages, or language groups, are being spoken by families with young children across the state. While definitive decisions cannot be made using only these maps, they do show where certain languages are prevalent. This becomes an important consideration because these children may be enrolled in Preschool for All and, later, in local school districts. It is well-known that Spanish is spoken by large numbers of families in the state, but the prevalence of other languages spoken in Illinois is less known. Other languages spoken across the state include, but are not limited to, Polish, Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin or Cantonese), Urdu, Korean, French, Hindi, German, and Tagalog.

For more maps, visit the IECAM Risk Data Page at http://iecam.illinois.edu/riskdata/ (see Demographics: Languages).

[1] Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs) are geographic areas for which the Census Bureau provides selected extracts of raw data from a small sample of census records that are screened to protect confidentiality. These extracts are referred to as public use microdata sample (PUMS) files. For the decennial census, each state delineates PUMAs for use in presenting PUMS data. These areas are required to contain at least 100,000 people. For information on PUMAs, see http://iecam.illinois.edu/definitions/regions/region-pumas.html