One of the most common measures of poverty in the United States is the **poverty threshold** set by the U.S. government. IECAM presents data at various percents of the **federal poverty level** (FPL), based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau on individuals living in families at those percents of FPL. To put this in context, a family of four earning $23,850 lives at 100% of the federal poverty level. Children under 5 living in this family would be eligible for the Early Head Start or Head Start programs. Another family of four earning approximately $44,123 lives at 185% FPL, making them eligible for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) in Illinois. [1]

Research has consistently shown that poverty has significant and lasting impact on a child’s development. Poor children are more hungry, are read to less often, and are less likely to have health insurance and receive needed care. Poor children are more likely to start school behind more affluent peers and have a greater chance of not graduating from high school. [2] Impacts such as these cost our nation hundreds of billions of dollars every year. [3] Although poverty is only one of many risk factors experienced by children in Illinois, the maps below show the percentage of children (5 and younger) in Illinois who live in families with incomes below 100% and 185% FPL by county. [4] For more detailed information, visit the IECAM risk data page at [http://iecam.illinois.edu/riskdata/](http://iecam.illinois.edu/riskdata/).

IECAM provides a comprehensive picture of early care and education services in Illinois by combining demographic data (population, language use, poverty level, risk factors) and early childhood program data (Preschool for All, Head Start, Child Care).

**Spotlight on Stats** is a periodic data resource that will highlight particular demographic data (e.g., languages, risk factors, population characteristics) on the state as a whole.

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[1] Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS, 2014),


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