

The Illinois Report 2009

Chapter 7: Child Care Quality in Illinois

Transcript of video interview with author Rachel A. Gordon

“The chapter is all about child care quality in Illinois, and what we see consistently is that Illinois has done better than other states in many aspects of early childhood education and child care, but relative to professional benchmarks, it’s not as high as we’d like it to be to ensure good quality for all children in Illinois.

“The Quality Rating System which is new in Illinois and a focus of this chapter has the potential to improve the child care settings that children are in across the state. What the state will need to do is watch and be sure the standards associated with each of the star levels are achieving their goals for improving quality, and so a slow roll-out, where they’re paying attention to whether child care settings are really achieving what they want at each star level is important.

“[The Quality Rating System is] a good idea, but the states that have used it have found that it’s a great idea, but it’s hard to put into practice.

“There are [other options for child care quality that the chapter addresses]. One of the other major initiatives is toward universal pre-school, and the state has been strong in that area as well. What we’re finding across states, including Illinois is that as we’re expanding coverage of preschool, it’s difficult to ensure that quality of preschool is high as well. And so these kinds of rating systems might also be beneficial in preschool settings. And one of the additional important concerns that’s coming out of this area is being sure that these kind of assurances of quality is consistent across all kinds of settings, not setting child care aside from preschool, but seeing them together.”