

PAASSS

Region 24: Early Childhood Education and Care Landscape



JANUARY 2, 2023

Early Childcare Landscape Findings

Overview

Part One

Background

Part Two

Demographic & Socioeconomic Characteristics

Part Three

Childcare & Services

Part Four

Kindergarten Readiness

Part One

Background

Research Partnership

Since October 2024, the Plano Area Alliance Supporting Student Success (PAASSS) leadership team has been working with EduDream to gather key evidence and data on the early childhood education and care (ECEC) landscape in Region 24.

Facilitated by Illinois Action for Children (IACF), this partnership aims to inform PAASSS' strategic and programming decisions as well as to develop valuable insights for partners and local leaders in the community.

PAASSS will use this information to set the collaboration's goals for the next three years.



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Our Mission & Vision

Mission

EduDream's mission is to disrupt systemic inequities in education by leading equity-centered research and strategy.

Vision

Our vision is to rewrite the educational opportunities and learning experiences of racially and economically diverse students to realize a more just and equitable education system.



What We Value

Equity + Justice

Results + Impact

Hope + Opportunity

Human-Centered Intentionality

Collaborative Leadership



Our Services



Actionable Research

Research that considers systems, culture, and context to inform strategic decisions, investment strategies, and organizational practices.

Program Evaluation

Evaluations that assess program impact and uplift diverse stakeholder perspectives to inform continuous improvement, strategic planning, and investment decisions.

Needs Assessments

Asset-based assessments that identify community strengths, resource gaps, and opportunities to inform investments, programs, and strategies that drive positive outcomes.

Data Strategy

A collaborative process to transform data use by clarifying outcomes, understanding data processes, and co-creating tools and practices that measure impact and inform decision-making.

Research Questions

Demographic & Socioeconomic Characteristics

1. What are the current demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of children birth to 5 in the priority communities in the Grundy and Kendall counties in Illinois?
 - a. What shifts have occurred in these communities in the last 5 years?

Childcare & Services

2. What childcare services are currently available from birth to 5 for families in the priority communities?
 - a. What shifts have occurred in the availability, accessibility, and quality of early childhood education and care services in these communities in the last 5 years?

Future Projections

3. What is the projected future demand for childcare services in the Grundy and Kendall counties in Illinois in the next 5 years?
 - a. How does projected future demand vary by the age range of children served (birth-2 years and 3-5 years)?

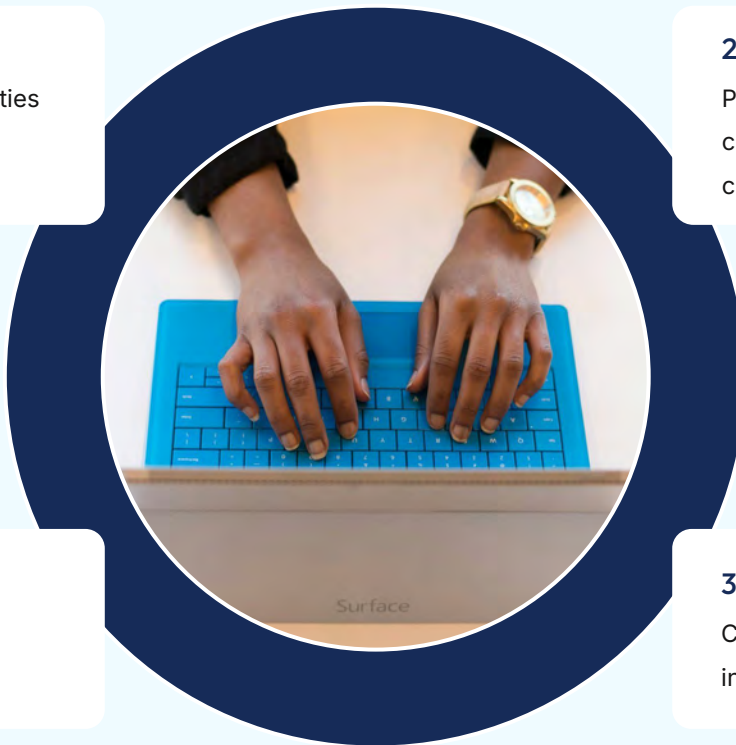
Methodology: Overview

1. Identify Priority Communities

An initial review process of 29 communities was conducted to identify 8 priority communities for thorough review.

2. Collect & Clean Data

Publicly available data for the 8 priority communities was identified, collected, and cleaned.



4. Develop Learnings

Data insights and visualizations were leveraged to synthesize findings, and cumulated in a learning slide deck.

3. Analyze Trend Data

Collected data was analyzed to develop data insights and visualizations.

Methodology: Identify Priority Communities

The research team initially identified 29 communities in Region 24. From these, **8 were selected for a thorough review:**

Grundy County	Braceville*	Coal City	Diamond	Gardner	Minooka*
Kendall County	Plano	Yorkville	Newark		

Priority community selection was based on an assessment of key indicators crucial to early childhood development and learning, including:

- Population
- Poverty Rates and Economic Opportunity
- Kindergarten Readiness
- Childcare Availability
- High-Quality Childcare Access

Methodology: Data Collection



EduDream identified 25 indicators related to early childhood development and learning for analysis across the 8 priority communities.

These indicators fell into the following broad categories:

- Demographics (e.g., race/ethnicity, language)
- Economic Opportunity
- Childcare availability, quality & funded care
- Kindergarten readiness & academic/school performance

Detailed Data Sources

Source	U.S. Census & American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates	Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map (IECAM)*	Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning	Child Find Project	IL Department of Public Health	Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)
Year(s)	2017 - 2022	2019 - 2022	2022 - 2024	2019 - 2023	2030	2023
Geography	County & Municipality	County & Municipality	Municipality	Zip Code	County	County
Key Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Population Characteristics Income & Poverty Rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of Sites by Provider Type Number of Sites and Capacity by ExceleRate tier Total Capacity by Provider Type and Age Group Total Funded Capacity Children Characteristics Number Of Children Served Through Home Visiting And Other Support Programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Need Cohort 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantity of Developmental Screenings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Population Projections by County and Age 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kindergarten Readiness

Methodology: 2030 Projections

Population Projections for Children Ages 0-4

These projections are based on estimates developed by IDPH, using data from the U.S. Census Bureau, which uses a demographic cohort-component projection model that considers multiple components that can impact population growth, such as:

- Current population size, along with mortality and fertility trends
- Migration trends

Childcare Supply Estimates

Childcare estimates are based on historic childcare availability data, applying the average annual growth rate forward to 2030. These predictions should be used cautiously.

Note:

Childcare supply estimates are for children 0-5, while the IDPH projections are for ages 0-4—this means that population projections are not all inclusive of children who may need childcare.



Research Limitations

Data Availability

- The most recent publicly available childcare provider data at the time of data collection was through FY 2022.
 - IECAM has since updated their childcare data for FY2023 with limited data for 2024.
- The U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS) is a sample-based dataset. Thus, data highlighted in these findings are estimates. The most recent ACS data is publicly available through 2022.
- Publicly available developmental screening data was limited and did not yield meaningful insights.
- COVID-19 impacted the accuracy and availability of data across organizations for the affected years.

Pause & Reflect

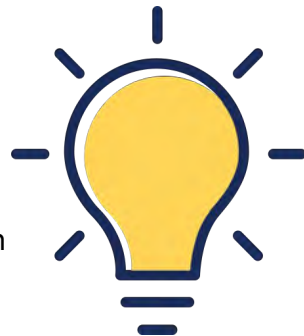
Pause and Reflect Guide

Throughout the learning session you will have opportunities to stop and reflect on the Region 24 early childcare landscape findings.

To prepare for these reflections, please feel free to take notes as the session progresses.

To help your reflection, consider the following **guiding questions**:

1. What has stood out to you so far?
 - a. How do these ideas connect to your work or experience (*what you have seen or heard*)?
2. What questions do you still have?



Part Two

Demographic & Socioeconomic Characteristics



Region 24 experienced modest population growth

While both counties populations grew from 2017 to 2022, Kendall County's population remained more than twice the size of Grundy's.

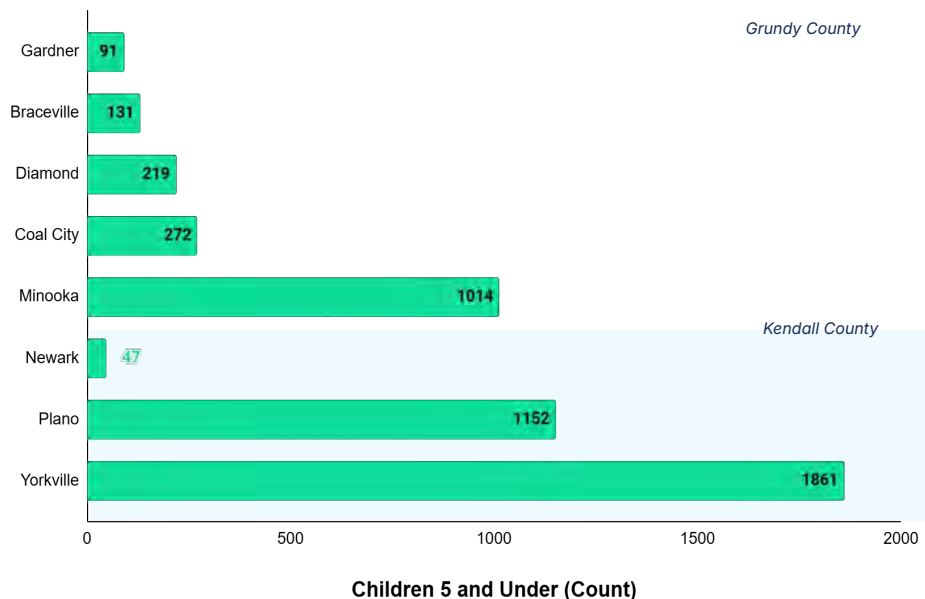
Total Population, Change From 2017-22

County	2017	2022	Population Change	Percent Change
Grundy	50,333	52,624	+2,291	+4.55%
Kendall	122,933	132,796	+9,863	+8.02%

SOURCE: U.S. Census American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, Demographic and Housing Estimates.

As of 2022, Kendall has a significantly larger and more concentrated child population than Grundy

Children 5 and Under, By Priority Community, 2022



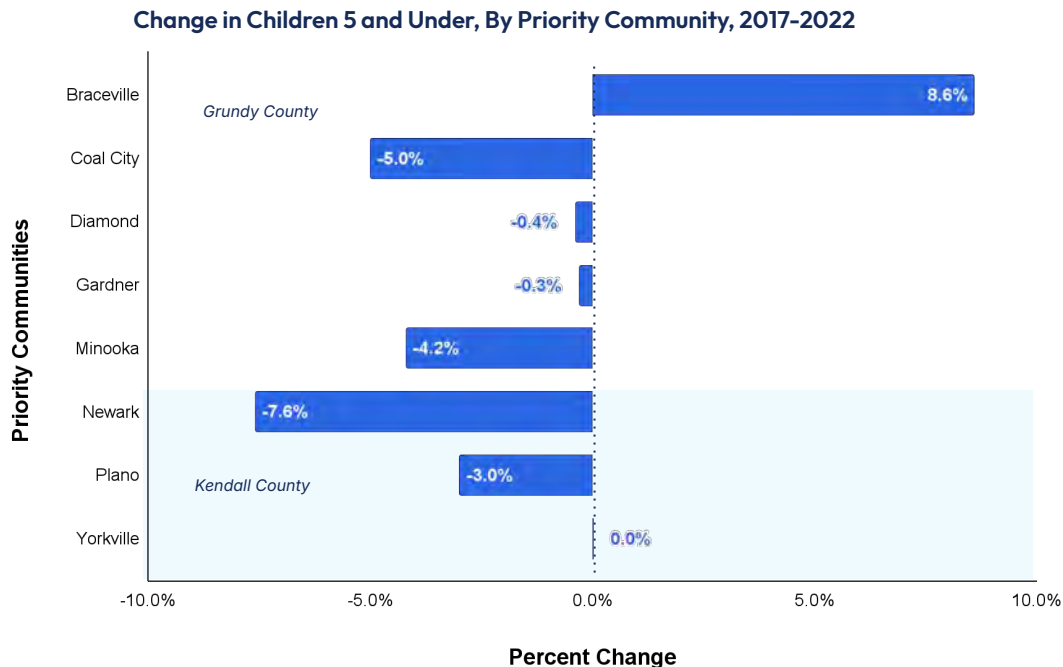
The population of children 5 and under reflected overall population size, with Kendall having about three times as many young children (9,835) as Grundy (3,659).

- Kendall's young child population is more concentrated, primarily in Plano and Yorkville.
- In contrast, Grundy's population is more rural, with most children dispersed across other smaller communities.

SOURCE: U.S. Census American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, Demographic and Housing Estimates.

From 2017 to 2022, the number of children 5 and under decreased

- The population of children 5 and under in Grundy and Kendall Counties decreased by less than 2% from 2017 to 2022.
- All priority communities experienced declines, with the exception of Braceville (+8.6%) and Yorkville (+0.02%).



2030 predictions show an increase in children aged 0-4 for Region 24

More recent data from 2023 shows growth in the child population (ages 0-4) in Grundy and Kendall Counties, reversing previous declines.

- These trends align with census projections for Region 24 which forecast continued growth in the child population.
- Unlike Region 24, statewide trends predict a slight decline in the 0-4 population by 2030.

+987

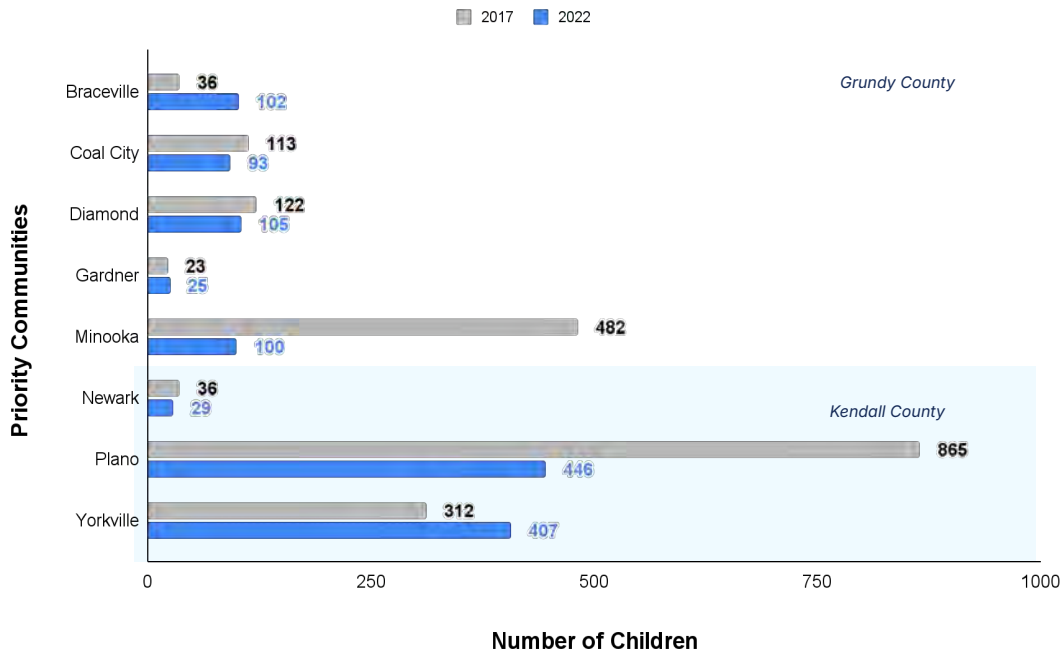
Grundy's 0-4 Population is expected to increase by 2030.

+3,004

Kendall's 0-4 Population is expected to increase by 2030.

The financial standing of children in both counties is improving

Change in Children 5 and Under living 0-200% below the FPL, by Priority Community, 2017-22



From 2017 to 2022, both Grundy and Kendall experienced declines in children living 0-200% below the federal poverty level (FPL).

- In 2022, Grundy had 840 children (23.0%) living below this threshold, compared to 31.5% in 2017.
- Kendall had 2,046 children (21.5%), compared to 20.8% in 2017.

Region 24 is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse

16.9% to 20.4%

From 2017 to 2022, **Grundy** experienced a 20.7% relative increase in children 4 and under who identified as non-white or Hispanic/Latine.

33.1% to 40.6%

From 2017 to 2022, **Kendall** experienced a 22.6% relative increase in children 4 and under who identified as non-white or Hispanic/Latine.

This upward trend in ethnically and racially diverse children is due to both —

- families with racially/ethnically diverse children moving into Region 24,
- and families with white children departing the region.

These demographic changes varied significantly across the priority communities.

Region 24 maintains a small percentage non-English speaking households



Fewer than 2% of households in Grundy and Kendall County* speak a language other than English at home (2022).

- This reflects a slight decline since 2017.
- Statewide, fewer **than 5% of households** on average speak a language other than English at home.
- **Spanish** is the primary language spoken among non-English-speaking households.

*Among priority communities, only **Coal City**, **Plano**, and **Yorkville** had households that reported speaking a language other than English in 2022.

Pause & Reflect



Guiding Questions

1. What has stood out to you so far?
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Part Three

Childcare & Services

Understanding Early Childcare in Region 24

Childcare Availability

This refers to the number of available center- and home-based care slots compared to the number of children in the community.

Childcare Quality

High-quality care includes providers who meet Illinois' ExceleRate *ranked* (Bronze, Silver, or Gold) standards for center- and home-based programs.

Funded Childcare

Programs supported by state and federal funding, such as Early Head Start, Head Start, Preschool for All and its Expansion, and the Prevention Initiative

Screenings and Services

Developmental screenings and home visiting programs help identify families in need of supports and connect them to additional services.



Investing in Children 5 & under is one of the best financial decisions for economic returns

Every dollar spent on high quality ECEC for children from low income families yields a **13.7%** return on investment through reduced health and social spending.

Investing in high quality ECEC for disadvantaged children can:

- Prevent achievement deficits
- Promote better education, health, and socioeconomic outcomes
- Increase lifetime productivity and earning potential
- Reduce later costly remediation and social spending



A group of young children are seen from behind, walking in a line on a grassy field. They are wearing colorful clothing like vests and jackets. The entire image is covered with a semi-transparent blue overlay. The text is positioned in the upper left area.

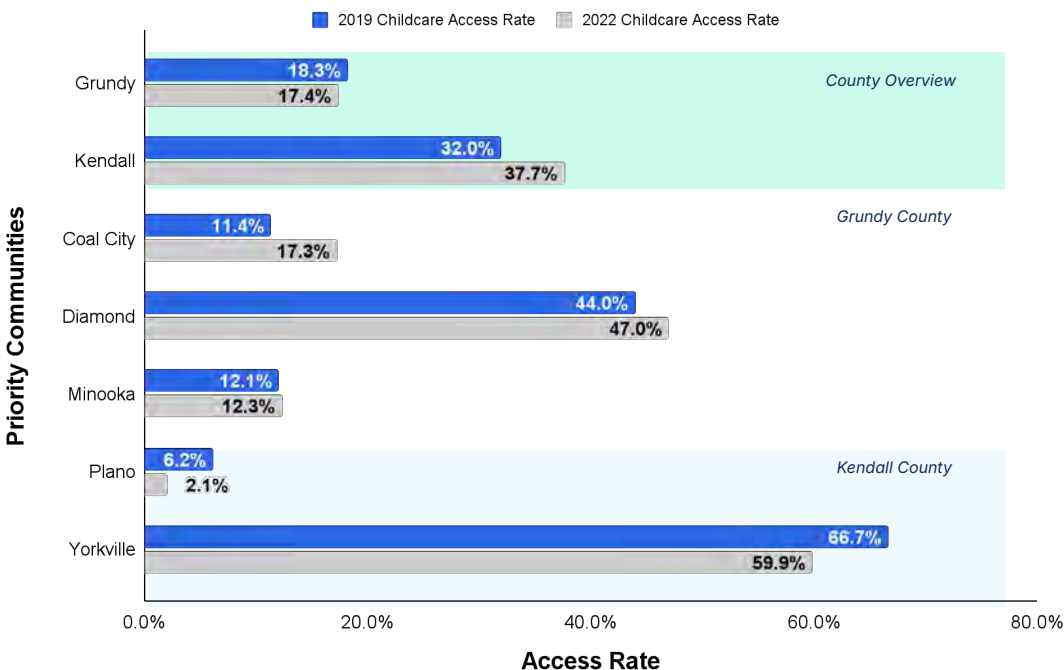
Early Childhood is a **critical** period for **brain development.**

"[early childhood] It's not only the best economic investment, it also reduces crime, homelessness and a myriad of other social ills that continue to plague our society."

- Carol Siemon, Michigan prosecutor and member of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids

From 2019 to 2022, Grundy saw a *decline* in childcare access while Kendall saw an *increase*

Childcare Access, Change 2019-22



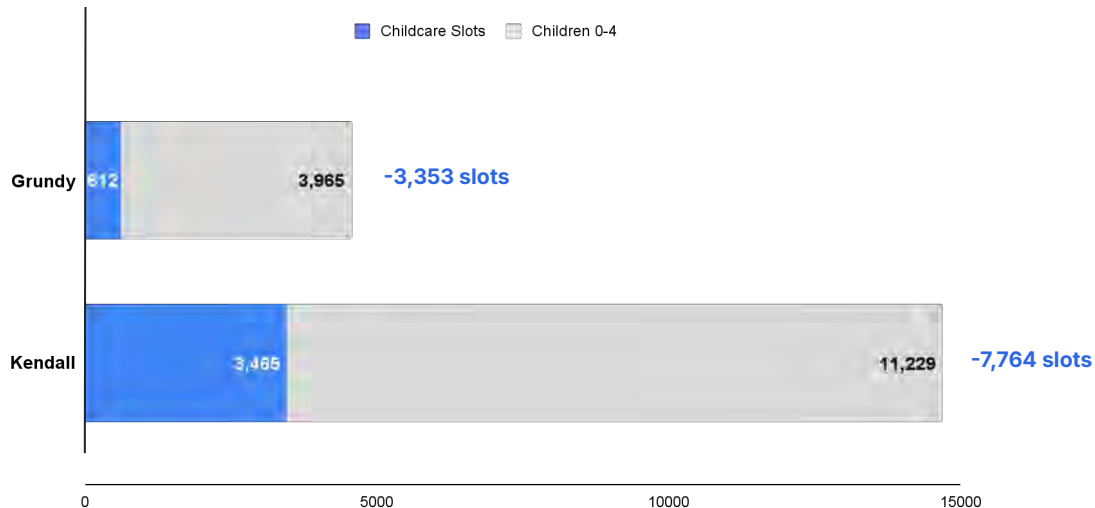
- Access declined in Grundy due to **the closure of two major childcare centers** and **three family childcare homes**.
- Access increased in Kendall due to **existing providers expanding capacity**, even though the total number of providers declined.
- Despite these shifts, both counties continue to face a **significant childcare slot gap**.

Childcare trends show the slot gap continuing in Region 24 through 2030

While historic childcare trends in Grundy County indicate a potential *slight* decrease (-24) in available childcare slots by 2030, Kendall is expected to add about 558 slots.*

- Childcare demand projections only look at the population 0-4, meaning that their is likely even more unmet total potential demand than captured.

Childcare Total Potential Demand (0-4) vs Supply, 2030



Most available childcare in Region 24 is through licensed centers

License exempt providers care for fewer than three children.

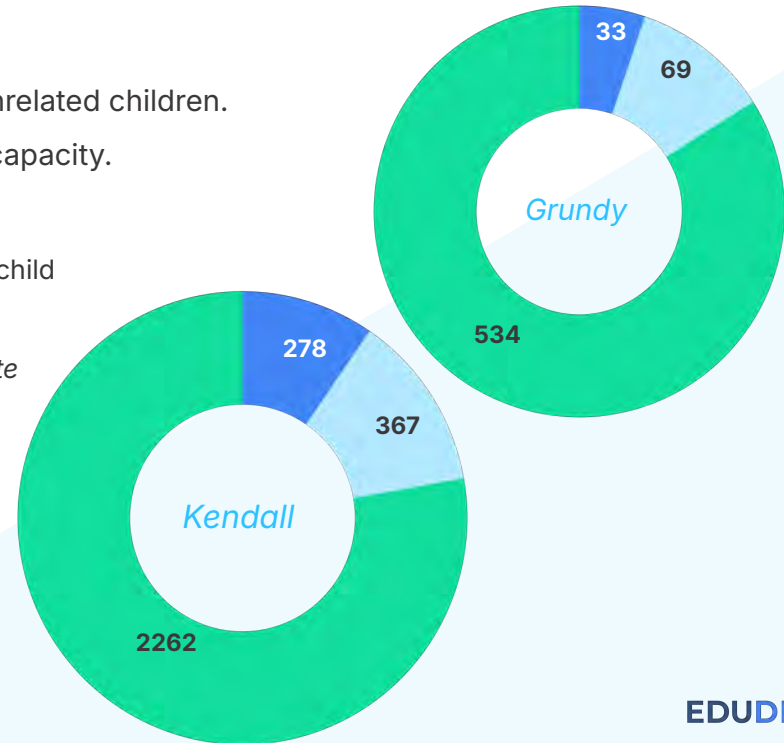
Licensed Family home care providers care for three or more unrelated children.

Licensed childcare centers usually have a significantly larger capacity.

- Licensed providers adhere to standards regarding teacher-to-child ratios, staff qualifications, and safety.
- Licensed providers qualify for participation in Illinois *ExceleRate* quality ranking.

Childcare Slots by Provider Type and County, 2023

● License Exempt Centers ● Family Home Providers ● Licensed Childcare Centers



In 2022, Grundy offers higher quality childcare while Kendall has greater access

Grundy County

- 45.9% of slots are high-quality based on ExceleRate Standards
- 27.9% increase in high-quality slots since 2019, showing a strong investment in quality care

Year	Bronze	Silver	Gold
2019	0	0	252
2022	40	0	252

Kendall County

- 14% of slots are high-quality, based on ExceleRate Standards
- 31% decrease in high-quality slots from 2019, indicating a decline in quality care

Year	Bronze	Silver	Gold
2019	0	390	292
2022	12	360	147

Funded child care in Region 24 comes in multiple forms



Early Head Start & Head Start

Federally-funded programming providing comprehensive services for low-income children and families focusing on school readiness and development.

Preschool For All

State-funded programming to support high-quality preschool experiences; its expansion provides full-day services and more comprehensive supports.

Prevention Initiative

State-funded comprehensive child development and family supports for families with children 2 years and under who are at risk of academic failure.

The funded childcare landscape in Region 24 is changing

Grundy County

21.4% to 59.9%

From 2019 to 2022, access to funded care nearly tripled.

- Grundy experienced an increase driven by the expanded capacity of existing programs
- Grundy also saw additional communities beginning to offer Head Start and Preschool for All.

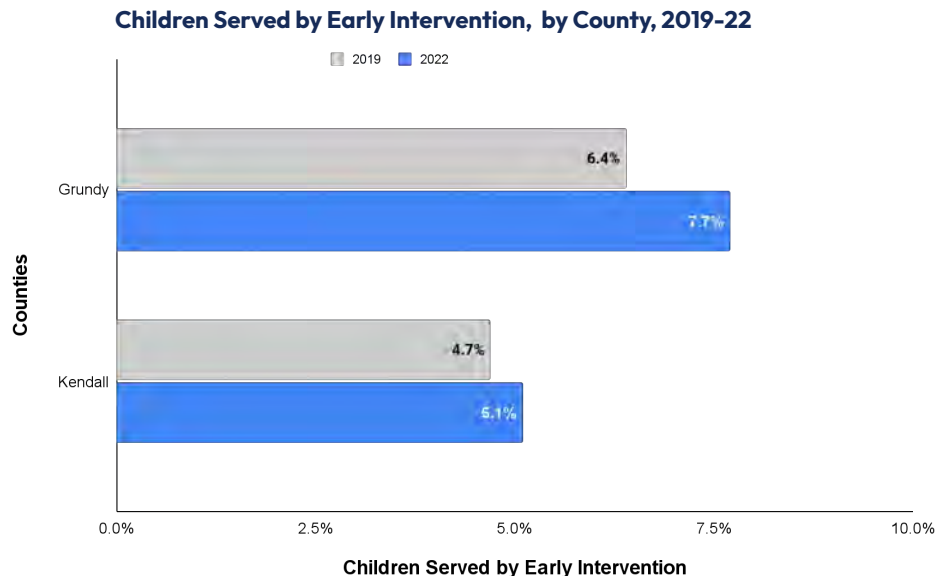
Kendall County

34% to 30%

From 2019 to 2022, access to funded care saw a 11.8% relative decrease

- Kendall experienced a decrease in funded childcare access due to a reduction in the total number of available funded spots.

Early Intervention home visiting has slightly increased in Region 24



- Currently, publicly available home visiting data is only available for the Early Intervention program, which serves children from birth to age 2.
- Between 2019 and 2022, both Grundy and Kendall counties experienced slight increases in the number of children receiving home visiting services

Pause & Reflect



Guiding Questions

1. What has stood out to you so far?
 - a. How do these ideas connect to your work or experience (*what you have seen or heard*)?
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Part Four

Kindergarten Readiness

Illinois evaluates kindergarten readiness in three domains

In Illinois, the Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS) is a state-wide observational assessment tool used to track and measure kindergarten readiness. It's domains are:

Math → foundational math skills such as number sense, knowledge of shapes, and observational skills.

English language Arts (ELA) → foundational early literacy skills such as communication, conversation, and letter and word knowledge.

Social-Emotional Development → children's persistence, curiosity, self-regulation, and ability to develop relationships with adults and peers.

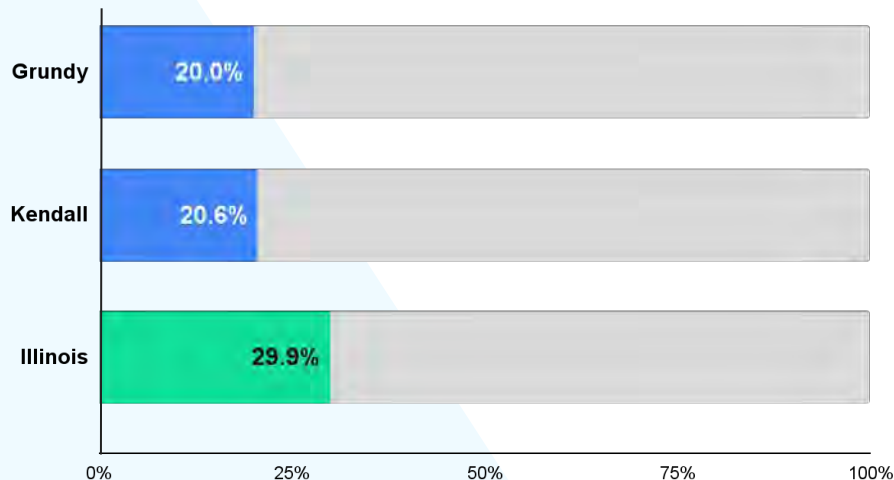


A group of young children are playing hopscotch on a grassy field. They are wearing colorful clothing, and the scene is captured from a low angle, showing their legs and feet as they hop over the numbered squares. The background is slightly blurred, showing more children and trees in the distance.

Children who enter kindergarten school-ready have an **82% chance of mastering basic skills by age 11, compared to only a **45%** chance for children who do not.**

Kindergarten readiness in Region 24 varies across counties and districts

Kindergarten Readiness in Three Domains, SY 2022–2023

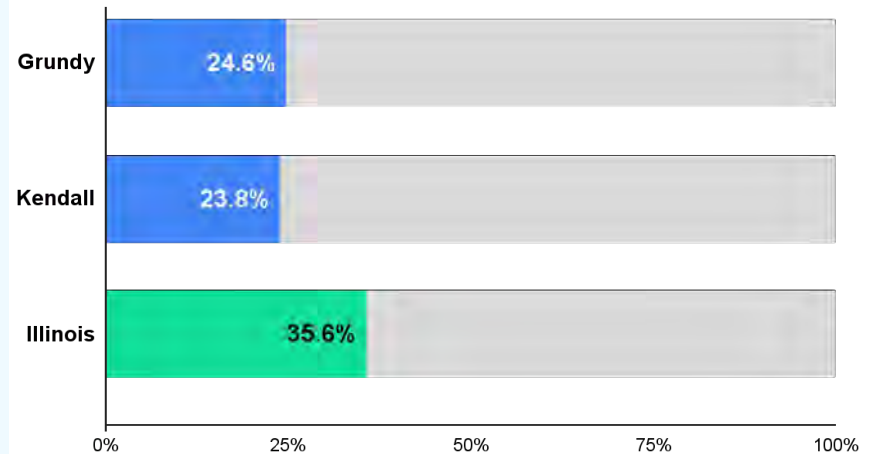


- At the county level, Grundy and Kendall saw **declines** in children kindergarten-ready in all three domains from SY 2019–20 to SY 2022–23.
 - At the district level, readiness trends were mixed—some districts reported modest gains, while others experienced significant declines.
- However, Illinois has shown a slight **increase** in readiness in all three domains—indicating gradual improvements.

Readiness was the lowest in math

- In SY 2022–23, math had the lowest percentage of ready students across the domains for Region 24 school districts.
 - This continues a pre-pandemic trend—math was also the lowest-performing domain in SY 2019–20.
- At the state level, math readiness has also consistently ranked lowest among the domains.
 - While math readiness is **declining** in Region 24, statewide trends show **slight gains**.

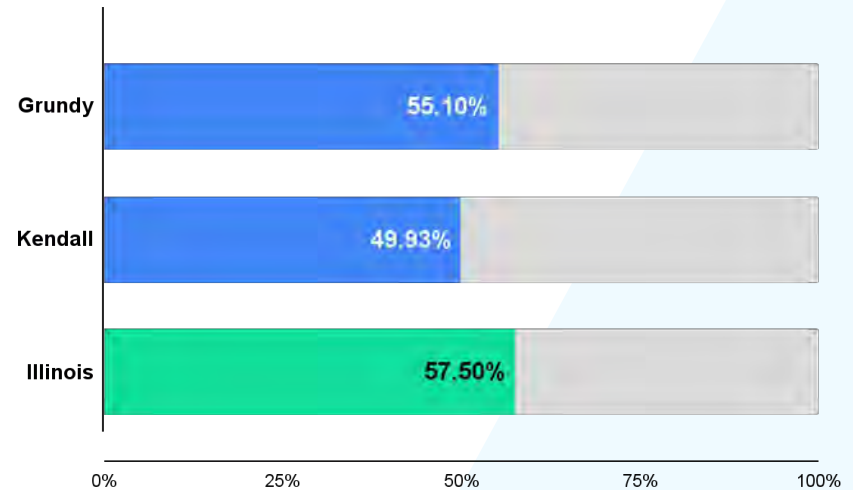
Kindergarten Readiness in Math, SY 2022–2023



Readiness was highest in Social Emotional Development

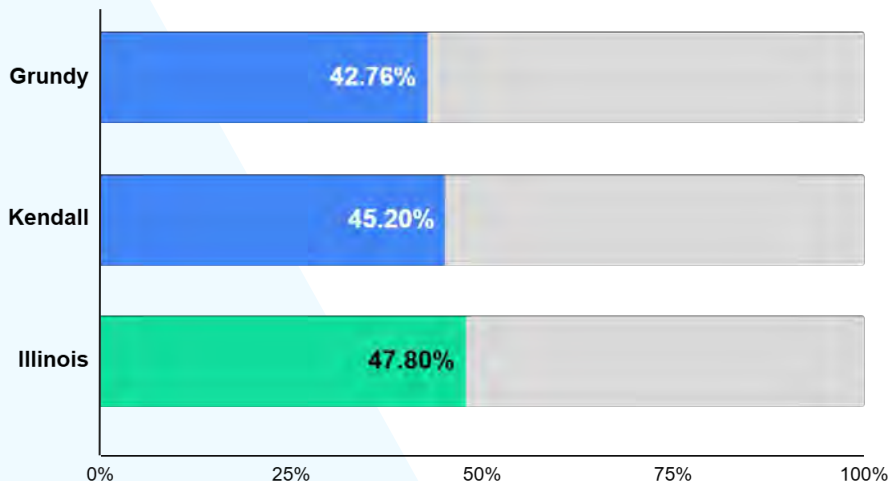
- Social emotional development remains the domain with the highest percentage of children kindergarten-ready in Region 24 despite declines across most district.
- At the state level, social emotional readiness has also consistently ranked highest among the domains.
 - While social emotional readiness is **declining** in Region 24, statewide trends show **slight gains**.

Kindergarten Readiness: Social Emotional, SY 2019-20 to SY 2022-2023



Region 24's readiness in ELA is decreasing

Kindergarten Readiness: ELA, SY 2022-2023



- Historically, Region 24 has done better than statewide trends in the percentage of children kindergarten-ready in ELA, however recent SY 2022-23 data places most districts **behind**.
- Similar to other areas, at the state level, ELA readiness show **slight gains**.

Key Takeaways

Region 24 is ...

- ★ becoming more diverse and has seen socioeconomic improvements for households with young children.
- ★ expected to see an *increase* in the number of children 0-4 by 2030.
 - Childcare availability is *not* expected to meet this increased demand.
- ★ falling behind Illinois rates in all areas of kindergarten readiness as of the 2022-23 school year.

Final Pause & Reflect



Guiding Questions

1. What stood out to you throughout the presentation?
 - a. How do these ideas connect to your work or experience (*what you have seen or heard*)?
2. What questions do you still have?



Thank You

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