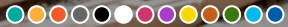


STATE OF ILLINOIS

# Transforming Early Childhood Education

SESSION THREE SHAREOUT



# Agenda

# 1

Project Process:  
Engagement  
Activities

# 2

Equity Scenario:  
**Creating  
Equitable  
and  
Compassionate  
Digital  
Experiences**

# 3

Equity Scenario:  
**Early  
Childhood  
Center  
Evaluation  
Reimagined**

# 4

Equity Scenario:  
**Anti-Racist  
Early Childcare  
Center**

# 5

Next  
Steps



TRANSFORMING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

# Project Process: Engagement Activities



SESSION ONE  
**Understanding the System**



SESSION TWO  
**Future Framing**



SESSION THREE  
**Prototyping**



TRANSFORMING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

# Project Process: Engagement Activities



SESSION ONE  
Understanding the System



SESSION TWO  
Future Framing



SESSION THREE  
**Prototyping**



# Session Three: Prototyping

With an understanding of the desired outcomes from co-designers and how they envision the new agency to serve families and providers, co-designers prototype policies, activities, and programming the state, providers, and adjacent system actors can use to support all families. To do so, our process included:

## ANALYSIS & SYNTHESIS

ChiByDesign reviewed the activities and the ideas that emerged from the second session to then craft insights and determine overarching themes.

## WORKSHOP PLANNING & DELIVERY

ChiByDesign designed and facilitated a **2.5 hour workshop with 20 co-designers** (returning and new) using those insights and overarching themes from the second co-design session.

## RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

ChiByDesign convened parents, providers, intermediaries, state personnel, and other key stakeholders to build relationships as we continued our approach.



# Creating Equity Scenarios

A critical (and very active) component to co-design is prototyping—creating opportunities for co-designers to transform their ideas by making and building. We crafted three scenarios centered around challenges and barriers experienced by families and providers that surfaced in our secondary research and the first two sessions. We sought to center racial equity and target specific pain points in the early childhood ecosystem.



## DIGITAL PLATFORM

Creating Equitable and  
Compassionate Digital Experiences



## PROCESS OR EXPERIENCE

Early Childhood Center  
Evaluation Reimagined



## PHYSICAL OR BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Anti-Racist  
Early Childcare Center



EQUITY SCENARIO (COMPLETE)



# Creating Equitable and Compassionate Digital Experiences

Tanya, a 17-year-old is months away from her high school graduation. She has a one-year-old, Jayden that was cared for by her aunt, Diane, while Tanya attends school; however, Diane is unable to do so anymore due to a recent illness. Tanya must now prioritize finding care for Jayden, which has been an added stress to her completing final assignments and waiting on college acceptances. Her aunt finds out about the perfect center from a neighbor that is close to their house but the only way to pay for Jayden's spot is through applying for government financial assistance on the state website. Tanya takes a day off of school to complete the government applications, but is bounced back and forth between different government sites. To her dismay, this requires completing another set of similarly detailed forms for a different department. The lack of cross-departmental collaboration

results in Tanya repeatedly explaining her situation, submitting identical documents, and navigating separate systems that don't communicate with one another. Tanya spends the entire day trying to navigate the different sites and forms to enroll Jayden, but by the time she cracks the code the library has to close for the evening.

Tanya returns home to finish the remaining sections, but due to living in a urban internet desert, her connection is spotty. By the time Tanya finishes the applications and is approved for the financial assistance she misses out on the last slot at the center for Jayden. She is added to the waitlist which is a year out. Unfortunately, Tanya has to enroll Jayden into another center in the next town and because of its location, the distance adds four hours to her commute.



EQUITY SCENARIO (SUMMARY)

# Creating Equitable and Compassionate Digital Experiences

Tanya, a 17-year-old nearing high school graduation, faces the challenge of finding care for her one-year-old son, Jayden, after her aunt Diane becomes unable to help due to illness. Despite finding a suitable center for Jayden, Tanya struggles with a convoluted process to secure government financial assistance, which ultimately causes her to miss out on the last spot at the center. Consequently, she has to enroll Jayden in a different center further away, significantly increasing her daily commute by four hours.

## CHALLENGES ADDRESSED

**Digital inequity, scarcity of services, burdensome processes, disconnected agencies, and stress of system navigation.**





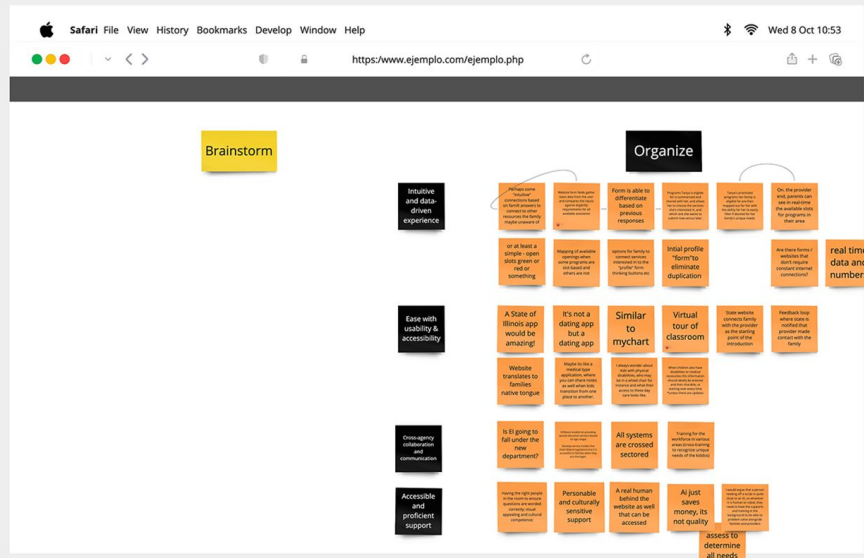
**DESIGN PROMPT**

Design a digital platform that addresses Tanya's challenges and offers a supportive online experience to easily enroll Jayden into an early childhood center.

**Uploading Images in Miro**



**Draw in Miro**



**INTENDED OUTCOMES**

Seamless, tailored experiences and navigation support for families

Fully engaged and informed families and multi-channel communications

**NEW ROLES WITHIN AGENCY**

**Parent advocates** who assist parents and caregivers in navigating the ecosystem and provide localized support

**RACIAL EQUITY FOCUSED INTERVENTIONS**

**Automated translation technology** that enables greater accessibility for non-English speakers

**Culturally responsive website** designed to be inclusive, respectful and considerate of diverse cultural backgrounds and needs

**CROSS-SYSTEM COLLABORATION**

**Cross-agency information sharing** enabling more holistic family support.



EQUITY SCENARIO (COMPLETE)



# Early Childhood Center Evaluation Reimagined

James, a veteran licensing agent with DCFS and long-time resident in a disinvested, high-poverty Black community in Illinois, has grown to hate conducting inspections within his neighborhood. There is a long history of tension between the owners of centers in this community and DCFS. The tension is often driven by licensing agents highlighting the centers' shortcomings and penalizing them for challenges beyond their control (for example, children's exposure to high levels of trauma). Mr. James understands that providers operating in neighborhoods like his face additional challenges created by systemic racism.

Today, James will inspect yet another early childhood education center, Young University, the fifth center at this location in the past

seven years. Young University was flagged for inspection due to an increasing number of behavioral incidents by children in the center.

Kimberly, the owner and director of Young University, seeks to address the community's needs with her center. Young University is in the middle of a food desert, hindering Kimberly's ability to access and provide the children with quality healthy food. As a result, Kimberly has struggled to meet state nutrition and meal service requirements to maintain her license and is apprehensive about engaging with James during his upcoming inspection.

James wants to change the dynamic of the new Illinois Department of Early Childhood's relationship with providers but is still determining where to start.



EQUITY SCENARIO (SUMMARY)

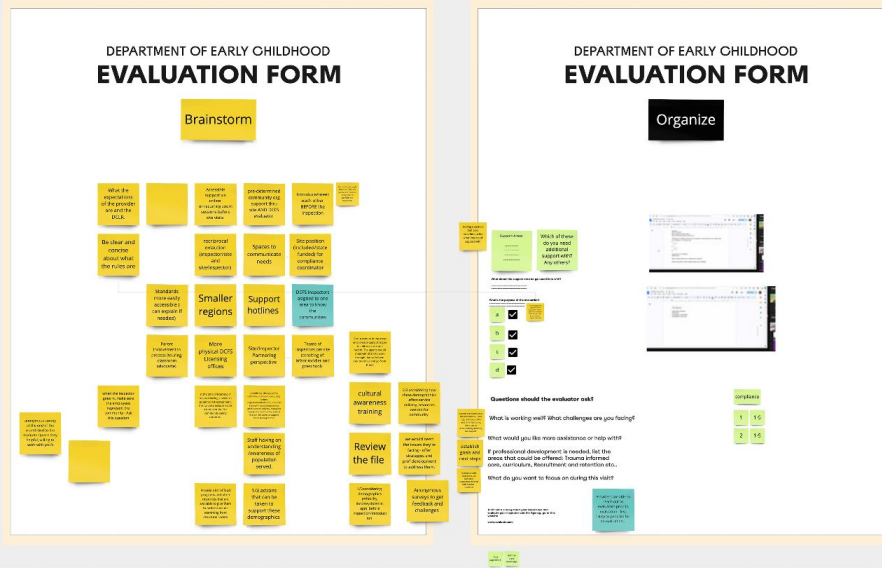
# Early Childhood Center Evaluation Reimagined

James, a veteran licensing agent in a high-poverty Black community in Illinois, is frustrated with the inspection process due to systemic racism and the tension between DCFS and local center owners. Today, he inspects Young University, a center struggling with behavioral incidents and unable to meet state nutrition requirements due to its location in a food desert. Owner Kimberly is apprehensive about the inspection, and James wishes to improve DCFS's relationship with local providers but is unsure how to begin.

## CHALLENGES ADDRESSED

**Systemic racism, adversarial relationships between the state and providers, and food insecurity (or compliance).**





## INTENDED OUTCOMES

Trusting and collaborative relationships between providers and the state

Seamless, tailored experiences and navigation support for families

Accessible pathways for economic equity, financial security, and holistic wellbeing

## NEW ROLES WITHIN AGENCY

**Compliance coordinators** who help providers navigate compliance concerns

**Evaluation teams** who administer and assess evaluations rather than individuals

## RACIAL EQUITY FOCUSED INTERVENTIONS

**Early childhood center communities of practice** that co-develop strategies to address structural racism

**Training** that supports evaluators in understanding challenges and racial inequities in communities they serve

## CROSS-SYSTEM COLLABORATION

The early childhood education agency will work with **community-based organizations to support providers** who need resources.



EQUITY SCENARIO (COMPLETE)



# Anti-Racist Early Childcare Center

The Jean-Louis family recently fled their native country of Haiti with their two-year-old daughter, Amara, because of political instability and economic turmoil. They arrived in the United States seeking a better future. However, the family, alongside dozens of other Haitian refugees live in a temporary shelter within a town that's known for its hostility toward immigrants. The family struggles to find stability, security, and a sense of community. Amara's parents work sporadically in low-wage jobs that barely cover basic necessities, limiting their ability to achieve financial stability and support for Amara's early development.

Despite their stressful situation, Amara's parents are determined to give her the best start possible. They enrolled her in Bright Beginnings Academy, an early childhood education center located near the shelter and also near the area of town where most of the anti-immigrant protests take place. Marie, Amara's mother, volunteers at Bright Beginnings 4 to 5 days weekly to translate the lessons into French Creole for the children in the center who do not speak English. Marie volunteers after working the graveyard shift at a local laundry facility, which is the only employment she can find due to her immigration status. She hopes to utilize the experience she gains volunteering to become an educator, support her family, and ensure the development of children like Amara.



EQUITY SCENARIO (SUMMARY)

# Anti-Racist Early Childcare Center

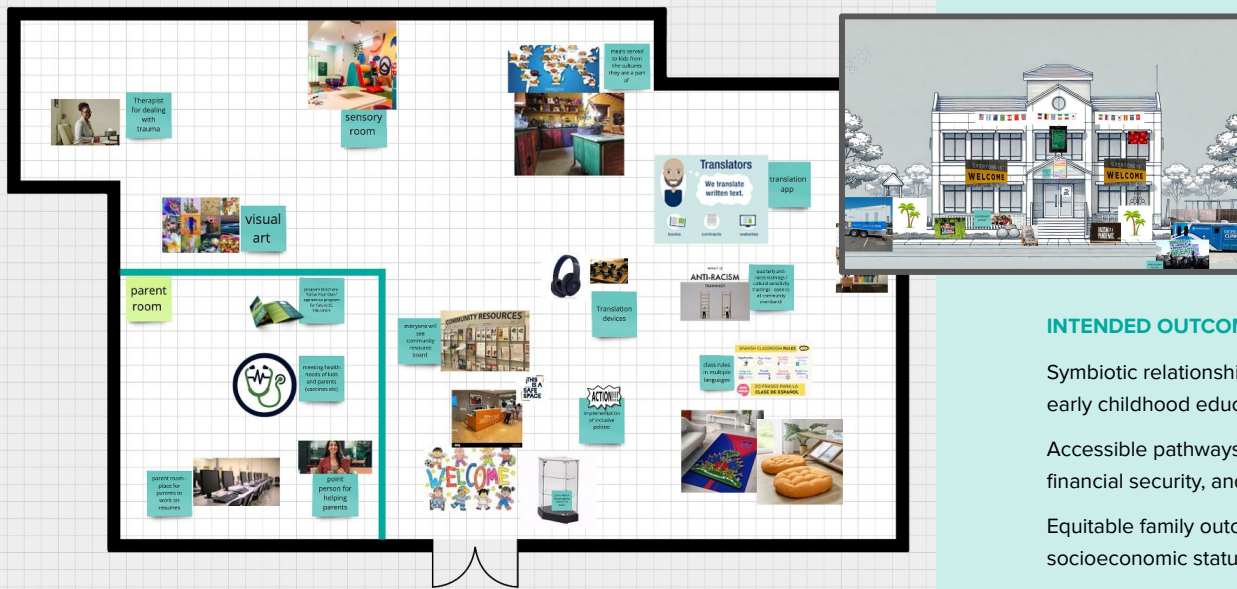
The Jean-Louis family fled Haiti due to political and economic instability, seeking a better future in the U.S. They now live in a hostile town's temporary shelter, struggling with low-wage jobs and instability while trying to support their daughter Amara's early development. Despite these challenges, Marie volunteers at Amara's early childhood center after her graveyard shift, hoping to become an educator and provide Amara with a better future, but the family faces significant obstacles due to financial constraints and anti-immigrant sentiment.

## CHALLENGES ADDRESSED

**Language barriers, immigration, homelessness, financial insecurity, and xenophobia**







## INTENDED OUTCOMES

Symbiotic relationships between parents and early childhood education providers

Accessible pathways for economic equity, financial security, and holistic wellbeing

Equitable family outcomes regardless of socioeconomic status

## NEW ROLES WITHIN AGENCY

**Family service workers** assisting parents navigate the ecosystem

On-site **therapists** who help parents and children navigate and process trauma

**Administrators and instructors for on-site apprenticeship programs** for parents and caregivers

## RACIAL EQUITY FOCUSED INTERVENTIONS

Interior and exterior **expressions of anti-racism**

**Anti-racist assemblies** that promote anti-racism across the community

**Quarterly anti-racist and cultural sensitivity training** open to the entire community

## CROSS-SYSTEM COLLABORATION

Established **partnerships with colleges** to support parent and staff learning



# Desired Outcomes through New Agency

Now in the beginning stages of analysis and synthesis, high level outcomes are emerging that families and providers expect through the new agency. ***Disclaimer: these are initial thoughts and may evolve by the submission of the final report.***

## CONTINUITY OF CARE

Addressing social determinants of health

Identifying and addressing stressors, focusing on work life balance

Expanding the perception and scope of early childhood education (i.e., prenatal care)

## ECONOMIC SECURITY

Pathways to advance early learning careers

Continuous and sustained financial support

## GUARANTEED ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY EARLY LEARNING

Anti-racist policies, practices, and environments

Continuous investment and support for early childhood professionals

360° human support for families

## SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Streamlined, bi-directional communication between stakeholders

Early childhood anchors communities (communal knowledge sharing)





Q + A



TRANSFORMING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

## Session Three Post-Survey Results

83%

felt fully comfortable sharing their thoughts and perspectives with the group

83%

thought that this was a good use of their time



## Session Three Post-Survey Feedback

*“I appreciate the amazing opportunity to be a part of the collaborative effort of creating a more equitable and inclusive future for our children! I would love to be considered for any future endeavors needing any expertise I can provide.”*

— CO-DESIGNER ONE



TRANSFORMING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

# Project Process: Engagement Activities



SESSION ONE  
**Understanding the System**



SESSION TWO  
**Future Framing**



SESSION THREE  
**Prototyping**



# Final Report Submission

To ensure a successful final report submission, these are the next steps for ChiByDesign:

## ANALYSIS & SYNTHESIS

ChiByDesign will comprehensively review all three co-design workshops to finalize insights, overarching themes, desired outcomes, etc.

## FINAL REPORT & SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS CREATION

Based on those insights, overarching themes, etc., ChiByDesign will design and create a final report that comprehensively captures the innovative and insightful ideas that emerged from these sessions and recommendations for implementation.

## FINAL REPORT & SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS DELIVERY

Once the final report and (if applicable) supporting documents and visuals are complete, we will then submit to the state.



# CONNECT WITH US

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