**Summary of External Feedback Provided to the ECEC Funding Commission**

\*Note: this was put together quickly and likely includes typos. Also, as this is a summary and synthesis, this lacks full detail. For more information, refer to the full memos and reports sent to the Commission.

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| **General Support for the Work** | |
| General Support, Importance of ECE, Fix the System | * Fight Crime * Mission Readiness * Ready Nation |
| **FAMILIES** | |
| Access | * Any definition of ‘access’ should include accessibility and awareness among families (Expert Panel) * Ensure families can navigate the system; provide supports (Expert Panel) ; There is no central place for families to go to understand their options (web survey) * Free services funded through the ECBG do not meet demand (web survey) * Not enough high-quality services; waiting lists, especially in rural areas (web survey; CCAU) * Not enough before and after care for working families (web survey) * Address barriers to access and equity (EC Funding Coalition) * Provide educational and informational materials to families (CUE) |
| Affordability | * Like max 7% for families w/low incomes. Could set higher cap for wealthier families (Expert Panel) * ECE services are not affordable, even for some w/subsidized care (web survey; CCAU) * Eligibility for subsidized services should be expanded; families can’t afford care (web survey; CCAU) * Some communities have lots of programs, but they are not affordable for families with low/middle incomes (web survey) |
| Co-Pays And Eligibility | * Reduce co-pay to $1 for those under 185% and graduated co-pay under 400% (CCAU) * Families need more than 30days to find work if they lose their job to stay eligible for subsidy * Immigrant families have difficulty verifying employment and wages (paid in cash, self-employed) (Gads Hill) * Reduce copays generally (Voices) |
| Family, Friend, And Neighbor Care (FFN) | * Benefits and Why FFN: Parents choose FFN b/c someone they know and trust; Used in great numbers by African American families; Often preferred for infants/toddlers (IAFC); Needed to support racial equity; Allows for non-standard hours, flexible services and schedules, etc. (IAFC) |
| Children And Family Choice And Outcomes | * Focus on child outcomes and equitable outcomes in report (Expert Panel) * Ensure system is child focused/ child centric (Expert Panel, Voices) * Use a strengths based narrative (Expert Panel) * Allow for innovative models to better meet parent needs (Start Early) * Allow for parent choice and mixed delivery system (CCAU, Start Early, IAFC, Voices) |
| Engaging, Including Families | * Parents and families must be at the table during design, planning, and implementation in order to understand what they need/want. (Expert Panel) * Consider paying for families and providers to share their voice and be at the table (Expert Panel) |
| Quality | * Need to ensure shared definition of quality (Expert Panel) * Difficult to provide quality when programs cannot adequately compensate staff (impacting recruitment, retention, workforce development, etc.) (Expert Panel, web survey |
| Income Thresholds/ Eligibility | * Rates are insufficient and income thresholds are too low in high-cost areas (CCAU) * Increase eligibility to 400% now (CCAU) |
| Supporting Families | * Set aside funds for educational resources for families |
| **Providers** | |
| Provider Stability | * Need systems and processes that ensure provider stability and sustainability (Expert Panel) * Challenging to maintain business, stability challenges, etc. (CCAU, Gads Hill) |
| Provider Accountability And Oversight | * Need a strong, thoughtful system of accountability and oversight (Expert Panel) * Align reporting and program requirements (Expert Panel) |
| Engagement During Design And Implementation | * Providers need to be engaged throughout the design, planning, and implementation process (Expert Panel) |
| Level The Playing Field, Ensure Access | * Community based providers should be given funding to offer the same level of care and quality as schools (web survey) * Address barriers to participating in the system (EC Funding Coalition; CCAU) * Support providers to participate in the system (CCAU) |
| Engagement During Design And Implementation | * Consider paying for families and providers to share their voice and be at the table (Expert Panel) * Engage providers in the decision making process (CCAU) |
| Compensation | * Compensation is inadequate and doesn’t match professional expectations and requirements(web survey; CCAU, TeachPlus) * Compensation impacts recruitment and retention, teachers decisions to stay in place of employment (websurvey; TeachPlus, CCAU) |
| Workforce Shortage | * Difficult to find qualified staff, especially with the compensation we are able to pay (web survey) * Challenging to recruit and retain staff (web survey; CCAU) |
| Training And TA, PD, | * Ensure training and TA to providers, including home visiting providers (CCAU, Start Early) * Coordinate training and TA (Start Early) * Use intermediaries to extend state capacity and distribute ‘resources’ efficiently, leverage private dollars (Start Early |
| Rates | Increase provider rates (CCAU)  Examine and increase rates to ensure quality (Voices)  Ensure homevisiting rates are also increased, alongside child care (Start Early) |
| Quality | * Support providers to get to quality; provide more incentives (CCAU) * Adopt common/shared quality standards and outcomes indicators (Start early) |
| Infant/Toddler Care | * Provide more incentives to provide infant and toddler care (CCAU) * Set aside funding annual for infant toddler care (Start Early) |
| Relationships With Providers | * Improve relationships between the state and providers; these are often adversarial and lack trust. This should be addressed both by leadership and policies and practices (CCAU); * Improve relationships w/FFN; partnering rather than policing approach (IAFC) |
| Shared Services | * Provide opportunities for providers to pool resources and have shared services, including access to specialists and consultants (CCAU) * Health care pooling (CCAU) |
| FFN | * Support to buy health and safety equipment, training/CPR, consultants, etc (IAFC) * Access to specialists, like infant toddler, mental health consultants, (IAFC) * Access to quality grants, scholarships, training/TA to support to increase quality and become licensed (if they choose) (IAFC) * Compensation/incentives to those who expand skillset and build quality (IAFC) |
| **SYSTEM INFRASTRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE, AND COLLABORATION** | |
| System Accountability | * Need a system of accountability for the state to ensure goals are met and resources are equitably distributed (Expert Panel) |
| System Infrastructure | * Infrastructure should be more clearly defined and thought given for how it’s resourced. (Expert Panel) |
| Centralize/ Coordinate | * Coordinate at the state level so it’s easier to streamline funding and services at the local level   Differing program requirements are an administrative burden and make it challenging to provide quality care. |
| Head Start and Head Start Collab Office | * How will the system work with Head Start and what will the role of the Collab office be? |
| Community Partnerships and Regional Entities  \*See Community collabs memo for much more detailed info | * Community partnerships needed to support community leadership, equity, coordinated and comprehensive services, parent/family choice (Expert Panel; Voices) * Regional entities needed to support providers, including FFN (IAFC) * Community systems key to address disparities and inequitable distribution of funding in current system (Community Collabs) * Need resources allocated to build infrastructure across the state, and funding to maintain (community collabs) * Regional and local infrastructure and Collabs should/can use data to make decisions, ensure community driven planning for services, support enrollment and staffing, engage families, build capacity, support providers to apply for RFPs, advise on funding decisions, provide feedback loops to state, ensure equity in access and outcomes, provide workforce support and development, etc. (Community Collabs, Voices) * More attention in the report for community systems development (Start Early) * Support data capacity at local level. (CUE) |
| Connection to Broader System and Services | * Ensure connections to broader system. (Expert Panel) * Internal system of coordination across other agencies and programs (Expert Panel) * Transition between programs and into kindergarten; between community based services and schools (Expert, LPF, * How will new agency collaborate with other agencies (IFT; LPF) * Ensure collaboration with higher ed to increase workforce (Voices) |
| Centralize into a Single Agency & Benefits | * Applaud decision to centralize into a single state agency (Expert Panel) * Elevate ECE (LPF, IFT) * Comprehensive and aligned data on the system (LPF) * Support consolidating (IFT, LPF) |
| Oppose New Agency | * Oppose new agency until questions are addressed (IFT)   + How will new agency impact existing agencies? Will they lose funding? How will this impact staff at current agencies?   + How will responsibilities be transitioned?   + Who will be responsible for early childhood educator licensure?   + What is the governance structure? How will it interact with other agencies?   + How will new agency impact districts? * Centralize at ISBE (IFT) |
| Need More Information About Implementation | * Need more information about how the new/centralized agency will be implemented before supporting (IFT, LPF) |
| New Agency Structure | * Include a department dedicated to FFN care (IAFC); * Include a department dedicated to home visiting (Start Early) * Ensure sufficient staffing (Start Early) * Integrate systems and structures (Start Early) * Ensure robust administrative systems (Start Early) * Create an accountability office in the new agency (CUE) |
| Private Intermediaries | * Partner with private intermediaries to support the home vising system (Start Early) * Report should have more explicit references to private intermediaries and their role in the current and future system (Start Early) * Many functions should happen at the state level, through private partners (Start Early) |
| Central Application | * Develop a central application for services and align requirements (CCAU) |
| Quality, Standards, Excelerate | * Align quality standards across providers, programs, models (CCAU, Start Early) * Align ExceleRate and Licensing across provider types (schools, CBOs) (CCAU) * Include cultural and linguistic diversity in ExceleRate (LPF) |
| Needs Assessment | * Conduct needs assessments to address gaps, ensure adequate and equitable funding (Community Collabs, Start Early) |
| PD/Workforce Development | * Ensure strong and aligned systems for workforce development, PD, career pathways; ensure adequately funded (Start Early) |
| Culture | * Be intentional about building culture in the new agency (Expert Panel) |
| Engagement | * State should create an inclusive process for meaningful and intentional engagement of local communities, providers, families |
| Data and Systems | * Ensure data at state and local level; build shared data systems; (Start Early) * Use data for decision-making. Ensure disaggregated data for accountability * Develop systems for aligned data (Start Early) |
| Accountability | * Must be a system for holding the state accountable for equity, access, and outcomes, including a scorecard, data, etc. that is made public (CUE) |
| **FUNDING MECHANISMS** | |
| Vouchers for Licensed Child Care | * Believe vouchers are best option for parents and providers (CCAU)   + Parent choice   + “Supply response” in the market   + State flexibility to respond to demand   + Allows providers to serve variety of families   + Less barriers for providers to enter the market   + Less ‘unfunded mandates’ and provider autonomy |
| Vouchers for FFN Care | * Maintain voucher system for FFN care (IAFC) |
| Enrollment, Schedules | * Pay based on enrollment, not attendance (CCAU; Gads Hill)   Pay for full-day care, and align eligibility w/full program year (CCAU) |
| Pay in Advance | Pay in advance for services (CCAU) |
| Blending/ Braiding | * Blending and braiding is very challenging (Gads Hill) * Different funding cycles and years; PFA only pays for 10 months (Gads Hill) |
| Work Directly With Providers | * Work directly with providers for site-administered contracts (Gads Hill) * Will intermediary structure still be in place? Can providers work directly with the state? |
| Minimum Funding in Statute | * Put minimum funding targets in statute and a plan that lays out how new dollars will be invested in the system (Start Early) |
| Funding Formula | * Develop/implement funding formula through blending/braiding state and federal funding (Start Early) * Ensure this is flexible enough to account for changing family needs and choice (CUE) |
| Alignment | * Align contract requirements, systems, structures to reduce burden (Start Early) |
| RFPs | * Use RFP process for new providers for home visiting and for smaller demonstration projects (Start Early) |
| **FUNDING/ADEQUACY** | |
| Co-pays and Cost Sharing | * 7% cap was designed for families receiving subsidies. Consider a higher cap for wealthier families, such as 10% (Expert Panel) |
| Cost Model | * Adopt a cost model for funding (Start Early, IAFC) |
| Home Visiting | * Home visiting rates through PI are too low (Gads Hill) * Ensure funding so home visiting for all who request it (Voices) |
| FFN | * FFN care is not adequately calculated in the cost model; need more research, discussion (IAFC) * Rates need to be high enough to by toys and equipment, offer baseline salaries, account for credentials and qualifications (IAFC) * Rates/adequacy estimates need to be developed similarly to family child care (IAFC) * \*See memo for more information about cost estimates (IAFC) * \*Maintain vouchers for FFN care (IAFC) |
| Infant Toddler Funding | * Until reach a fully funded system, allocate a portion of funding each year to infant toddler services (Start Early) * Include in report priority for set aside for infant toddler funding (Start Early) |
| Infrastructure | * More attention needed to costing out infrastructure and what this includes (Expert Panel) * Need to cost out the infrastructure funding to ensure sufficient funds for:   + Parent engagement and education   + Culturally responsive services and PD   + Capacity building at local level and infrastructure needs |
| Crisis Nurseries | Include crisis nurseries in planning and solutions to system issues |
| **INCLUSION** | |
| ECSE and Early Intervention | * Need more alignment across IDEA Part B and Part C (Expert) * Align and consolidate ECSE and EI w/in the new agency and fully fund (CCAU) * Promote continuity as children transition from EI to ECSE (CCAU) |
| Least Restrictive Environment | * Allow /promote for services in least restrictive environment and at community organizations (CCAU) |
| Support Providers to Refer | * Support providers in the referral process and to identify children with special needs (CCAU) |
| Adequate Funding | * Ensure adequate funding for to accommodate children’s needed (CCAU) |
| EI and ECSE Cost Modeling | * Cost modeling for inclusion services in all settings should be prioritized before the Commission work ends. If it’s is not completed, there should be a timeline and process for doing this immediately following. (Start Early) |
| Inclusion Recommendations and Report Emphasis | * Need to be more fully described in the report (Start Early) * Need more emphasis in the report on children with disabilities and developmental delays. |
| **ENGLISH LEARNERS** | |
| State and Federal Requirements | How and when will questions like this be addressed?   * How will state and federal requirements to support English Learners be upheld in a new agency? (bilingual education, etc.) (LPF) * How will services for English Learners be delivered? This needs to be prioritized (LPF, Start Early) |
| Funding | * How will new funding account for funding in EBF? How will this impact usage of Title funding to support ELs? (LPF) |
| Coordination W/ISBE | * How will the new agency coordinate with ISBE around required services for Els and transitions? (LPF) |
| **IMPLEMENTATION** | |
| Momentum, Intentionality, Time | * Choose a path and forge ahead; maintain momentum (Expert Panel) * Be intentional with timeline, planning, building culture, etc. (Expert Panel) * Meaningful change will take time (Expert Panel) |
| Details to address before Implementation | * There are many issues that need to be addressed prior to making decisions and implementing systems. How the different funding streams are simplified, allocated and distributed; how does Head Start fit into the new system; what is the infrastructure to manage the funding and tracking data; define ‘access’; define ‘affordability (CCAU) * New Agency: Staffing, structure, licensure of educators, coordinating with other agencies, English Learners and ISBE, ECSE and ISBE, (IFT, LPF) |
| Stakeholder Engagement | * Outline a clear process for broad stakeholder engagement of families, providers, and communities after the Commission work ends (EC Funding Coalition) * Opportunities for public comment and hearings ((EC Funding Coalition) * Eliminate and address barriers to participation (EC Funding Coalition) |
| Clear Implementation Planning Process | * Critical b/c implementation decisions will most impact children, providers, parents (EC Funding Coalition) * Critical for racial equity (EC Funding Coalition) * Implementation decisions will be much more granular than Commission able to address; (EC Funding Coalition) * Based on data (EC Funding Coalition) |
| Public Private Body | * Public private body to advise on implementation and transition process (EC Funding Coalition) * Should be diverse (race, ethnicity, income, language, geography, service type, providers, represent the full system) (EC Funding Coalition) * Support the language in the report around a nimble implementation team and orbiting advisory bodies; recommend more specific mention of ELC and it’s specific role and relationship (Start Early) |
| Implementation Planning and Next Steps | * Establish a taskforce through Executive Order to oversee implementation, with engagement of public and private partners (EC Funding Coalition) * Designate someone to be accountable; designate and fund staffing (EC Funding Coalition) * Ensure funding for racial equity impact assessment and to engage consultants to support process throughout (CUE) * Engage additional legislative leaders (EC Funding Coalition) * Charge agencies with prioritizing implementation (EC Funding Coalition) * Implement recommendations with an inclusive set of stakeholders (CUE, EC Funding Coalition) |
| Racial Equity in Implementation Planning  \*Please see the CUE report for much more detail. | CUE recommended the following during Implementation/Planning for Implementation   * Prioritize services based on needs, priority populations, and rectifying racial inequities * Model cost to get to state of adequate funding, including workforce recruitment and capacity building * Set benchmarks to monitor implementation progress over time * Create racial equity-based criteria for funding eligibility and priority * Prioritize services, geographies, populations, age cohorts with greatest disparities * Invest in infrastructure * Ensure accessibility to RFP * Examine strategies to ‘certify’ providers * Determine role community entities will have in accessing and distributing funds * Examine how recommendations will affect union issues * Identify provider impact of recommendations * Create a framework to evaluate contract performance to ensure quality * Mandate service type based on need * Prioritize mixed delivery system and parent choice * Build capacity of local boards/advisories * Build capacity of state agency staff and build cohesive shared culture * Collaborate with state, regional, local agencies to align services * Demonstrate a commitment to equity in creating new state agency * Focus on evaluating equity throughout implementation process |
| **EQUITY** | |
| Barriers | * Evaluate and address barriers to racial equity (EC Funding Coalition) * Address structural inequities in the new system (EC Funding Coalition) * Must address infrastructure and capacity barriers to accessing funds and providing services (community collabs) |
| Priority Populations | * Ensure structures in place to ensure services to English learners, children with special needs, and priority populations (EC Funding Coalition) |
| Inequitable Distribution of Funding | * Some areas have abundance of resources, while others are deserts (Community Collabs) |
| Address Inequities | * Address inequities in access and outcomes (Voices) * Early Learning system should address racial and ethnic disparities (Voices) |
| Disaggregated Data | * Ensure provision and use of disaggregated data for decision making and to address system inequities including data on children and families, programs and services, workforce, policymaking and advisory bodies (Voices) |
| Racial Equity Lens | * State must make explicit stated commitment to using a racial equity lens moving forward (CUE) * Plan, execute, and evaluate implementation w/a racial equity lens (CUE) |
| Racial Equity Assessments | * Build racial equity and assessments into the process from the beginning. Be intentional about planning for implementation (CUE) * Ensure adequate staffing and funding to ensure racial equity assessments are done well (CUE) |
| Engagement of Diverse Stakeholders | * Engage diverse, representative stakeholders most impacted by recommendations to guide implementation (CUE, EC Funding Coalition) |
| Accountability | * Create an accountability office in the new agency to use qualitative and quantitative data to report on and address equity in access and outcomes (CUE) * Create a performance scorecard for accountability and transparency that disaggregates metrics by race (CUE) |