Below are combined questions from Townhalls to Date (12.10 and 12.16)

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| Parent Choice, Parent/Family Needs | * How can we best ensure the recommendations, and implementation, reflect the needs & experience of parents/families? * Full Day Options: In our area, families really need full day options, but day cares are full with waiting lists, and PFA preschools are half day sessions, leaving parents without care for the other half of the day. * Rural Communities: Need more options in rural communities |  |
| Settings | * Where will slots be expanded, in schools or homes? * The pandemic has highlighted how much the State relies on community based providers as part of the economic engine of the state - we allow people to go to work, especially in light of many public schools operating remotely. Will the commission look to leve the playing field between public schools and community organizations? |  |
| New Agency, State Infrastructure, Regional/Local, Intermediaries | * Centralize/New Agency * Is there a separate new agency that is being proposed? * You mentioned centralizing into one agency. Which agency? How did you decide? * Will middle men agencies like healthy start and DFSS still exist? (2) * Is this a separate new government agency being proposed to govern childcare? |  |
| What Programs are Impacted or Considered? | * Where do family child care providers fit in? * Which programs does this effect? * How does a fully funded system impact private child care? * Where does Head Start fit into this plan? There needs to be collaboration with Head Start to ensure low income families are served. Head Start has postive evidence based outcomes for kindergarten readiness and family outcomes. * Would this affect preschool for all? * Are crisis nurseries included so that we can help families get services? Currently, crisis nurseries are a vital 24/7 resource in the state for families of young children ages birth to six. . Will they also be included in this early childhood funding environment so we can help with access to the variety of services that families need? * How do you visualize a fully funded system impacting private pay childcare? * How will you determine if providers have the capacity to administer a PFA program? |  |
| Relationships with Providers | * Will the new agency work towards building better relationships with providers? Instead of a partnership between providers and agencies that supports children and families, the relationship oftentimes is adversarial and mistrusting. How providers are treated and the responsiveness of the funding and monitoring agencies are the result of not only state and local policies and implementation practices, but also the agencies' leadership. * With all the communication breakdowns now how will this be handled? CCAP is not responding to emails, texts, showing up to scheduled phone calls. Children that are to be paid full time are not getting paid for me. * From groups we've joined, trainings we've attended, and past experience, a lot of Centers, Home providers feel that their relationship with dcfs is adverserial. how will this be addressed * Also – 2 comments about good relationships w/DCFS monitors (Jill Andrews +1) |  |
| ExceleRate, Quality, Program Standards | * Will DCFS licensing standards change? * Will Excelerate be restructured? * Will Circles of Quality be considered when distributing or determining funding for centers? * The ExceleRate Pilot Program is a gamechanger! * The state of Illinois has some of the strictest DCFS rules in the country which has led to a huge staffing crisis. * Will DCFS licensing standards change? That is a direct correlation to quality (i.e. group size and ratio)? * With these new recommendations being submitted, will there be a mandated educational expectations of all providers to be in compliance with these new recommendations? If so, will there be adequate time and funding for these changes |  |
| Workforce Compensation | * Did the Commission consider increasing compensation for those who work in centers and homes? We are struggling to find teachers for our programs. They can be paid more to work elsewhere. * Increased compensation for our workforce is so important! * Does anyone know if the Commission has taken into account the Unifying Framework that was developed for the Early Childhood Profession by NAEYC and 15 National Organizations coming together. * What are the Commission strategies to increase ECE wages from aspirational to implementation among all ECE providers including for profit, not for profit, community based, home providers? * How can we have enough staff when staffing requirements are so difficult? One has to have even enough funds just to become head teacher qualified. * The state of Illinois has some of the strictest DCFS rules in the country which has led to a huge staffing crisis. * Is there any consideration about direct compensation to childcare staff especially those that have worked through peak pandemic for essential workers. Childcare will never be considered an honorable position if they are not compensated accordingly. * Workforce development may be the greatest issue in Chicago, across Illinois, and across the country. Our teachers are the backbone of the system. Will the funding commission make any recommendations for funding a system that develops current teachers and attracts new people to the field (in addition to education/credentialing, again, this question is about pay parity between public schools and community based organizations)? |  |
| PD/WkfcDev/Higher Ed | * Where does INCCRRA fit into this new system? * Will the commission work with higher Ed programs for alternative licensure programs for Level 5 to PEL? The current Public Act ends 2023 * In addition to looking at making salaries equitable, we also need to ensure mentoring and coaching is available. This is another major factor as to why people leave the field |  |
| COVID | * Will child care giver be prioritized in the vaccination process? * Is there any consideration about direct compensation to childcare staff especially those that have worked through peak pandemic for essential workers. Childcare will never be considered an honorable position if they are not compensated accordingly. thanks for your attention! |  |
| Provider Payments | * Why was the decision to recommend contracts and not vouchers? * Will center based providers see and increase in rates? * should center based providers expect another increase soon? |  |
| Funding for 0 – 5 | * Is there any plan to fully subsidize the first five years of education? * Is there a recommendation under these larger topics to change the state statute that dictates how each dollar is distributed? (i.e. 37 cents of every dollar goes to Chicago Public Schools for Universal PreK. How do community based organizations, non-profit or otherwise, reach pay parity under that law? |  |
| Funding the System | * How will co-pays be administered in a new system? * Learning from EBF: The Evidence-Based Funding Formula has gotten school districts to a much better place than they have ever been. What research has been done and lessons have been learned from the first few years of EBF implementation to apply to Birth to 5? |  |
| Cost Factors/ Cost Model | * How did you come up with costs for quality care and early learning? * Can you share more about what’s included in the cost for the system? * Can you speak more to how workforce development- both recruitment of new individuals to the ECE workforce and upskillling of current professionals- was factored into the formula? |  |
| Budget Impact | * How does the budget crisis impact these goals? |  |
| Early Intervention/Special Education | * Being able to have one-on-one aides for children with IEPS in school age after school and summer progrms is imperative. * Is there going to be additional funding set aside for providers to include children with disabilities? For example, a rate increase? In many cases, children with disabilities are excluded from childcare settings with the excuse being made that it is to expensive to provde the accommodations, modifications, or increased staffing needed to care for them. * What types of accountability are going to be in place for childcare providers to create inclusive settings? For example, a certain percentage of slots should be reserved for children with disabilities in ALL childcare settings. |  |
| Commissioners | * Who participated on the Commission? Were there any providers? * It would be great to create a pool for providers which consist of specialists, consultants, infant/toddler specialists, special ed therapists etc.? |  |
| Precedent, Other States | * Have any other states done this |  |
| Timing for Implementation | * Implementation: When do you think these recommendations will be implemented across the state? * What are the next steps? What will happen after the recommendations are given to the Governor? * Will the state implement these recommendations? Providers are struggling and need help. |  |
| Child Outcomes, K Readiness | * What strategies does the commission plan to implement to close this wide spread gap of disparities kindergarteners are facing? |  |
| Cross System Collaboration | * Can someone talk more about the vision of the cross-system collaboration and support would look like? Particularly, is there discussion around how Child Welfare and Early Childhood can better collaborate particulalry for the families that need intensive prevention services such as intact family services? |  |
| Equity, Marginalized and Underresourced Communities | * What safeguards will be put in place to ensure that those communities in the state that have been historically neglected will get the funds needed to level the playing field? The amount of dollars needed in these communities will be substantial. * With a comprehensive Race Equity Analysis of the Early Childhood Care and Education landscape, the state can better determine the inequities in access to services and the obstacles faced. Adding new resources to the existing Early Childhood Care and Education system, without a proper Race Equity Analysis, may end up perpetuating existing disparities. The funding commission did not start with that examination and the state should not move forward in deciding what funding structure to use (whether it is a new calculation for awarding a grant or a long-term contract). How will the commission handle this issue going forward? |  |