

**Illinois Department of Early Childhood (IDEC)  
Advisory Planning Workgroup**

**Meeting Minutes  
March 2, 2026 4:00 – 5:30 p.m. CT**

Link: <https://illinois.webex.com/illinois/j.php?MTID=m3abd4232c1e7bd2633269de8982179bc>  
Meeting Number (access code): 2869 711 1886

**Workgroup Attendees:**

Trish Rooney - IDEC  
Paige Greenwood – IDEC  
Rachel Oppenheimer – IDEC  
Elliot Regenstein – Facilitator

Katie Cobb  
Angela Farwig  
Evan Krauss  
Alli Lowe-Fotos  
Lori Orr  
David Quiroz  
Brynn Seibert  
Tionia Williams

**Public Attendees:**

Erin Arango-Escalante  
Jennifer Brown  
Andrea Cammilleri  
Jean Davis  
Donna Emmons  
Dan Harris  
Kesha Harris  
LaKeesha James-Smith  
Sanna Jesse  
Rachel Mika  
Lauri Morrison-Frichtl  
Sean Noble  
Gerson Ramirez  
Crystal Salas  
Beata Skorusa  
Destiny Snow  
Bob Spatz  
Karen Yarbrough  
Josie Yanguas

**Next Steps:**

- Participants are encouraged to share with Elliot ([elliot.regenstein@flpadvisors.com](mailto:elliot.regenstein@flpadvisors.com)) any resources they have relating to the work of the Advisory Group.
- IDEC and FLP will continue to circulate meeting materials for upcoming meetings.

**Agenda:**

- I. Introductions
- II. Meeting Norms
- III. Family Engagement Framework
- IV. Early Learning Council Legislation
- V. Next Steps
- VI. Public Comment

## **I. Introductions**

Elliot Regenstein welcomed the workgroup participants to the ninth meeting of the Advisory Workgroup and each participant introduced themselves. Elliot then reviewed the agenda and plan for discussion. The agenda includes discussions of the Family Engagement Framework and legislation impacting the Early Learning Council. Elliot then reviewed the virtual meeting protocols.

## **II. Meeting Norms**

Elliot reviewed the proposed workgroup meeting norms, which were discussed at all previous workgroup meetings. These include the following:

- Process is part of the solution
- Step Up, Step Back
- Questions seek to understand, be curious
- Prioritize parent experience and provider experience
- Act with courage and vulnerability
- Recognize the difference between intent and impact; I might not intend to hurt or offend but the impact may be to hurt or offend

## **III. Building Recommendations**

Elliot reviewed how the group has built recommendations for a desired end state, that are now being shared with other groups. At the next meeting, the Advisory Workgroup will review feedback from the other work groups. Elliot is currently working on a summary of the feedback that he will share in preparation for the next meeting, on March 30. Elliot reviewed the current state and identified the Councils this group has learned about (Birth to Five, Head Start Family Council, Early Learning Council). In May the workgroup will begin to organize views about the current state and discuss how to get from the current state to the desired end state, including by identifying immediate next steps and the ongoing processes for IDEC as the advisory function evolves.

## **IV. Family Engagement Framework**

Paige Greenwood introduced the Family Engagement Framework, explaining the group will hear a brief overview of this framework today.

Erin Arango-Escalante discussed proposed community agreements, which have been used as the framework has been developed, and which include the following:

- Stay engaged
- Speak your truth in a safe space
- Take space, make space
- Allow time for interpretation
- Experience discomfort and name it – while being open to new ideas
- Show empathy and respect
- Expect and accept lack of closure
- Come prepared to actively participate in meetings
- Avoid the use of acronyms and describe as everyone understands
- Be flexible

- Assume positive intent

Erin encouraged the group to keep these in mind as the work continues today.

The advisory workgroup is the first group to see this framework – while nothing will be finalized today, the work is flexible. The goal today is to review the draft Family Engagement Framework and discuss the seven principles, which include both policy guidance and practice guidance. Erin encouraged feedback from all participants on these principles and the information being shared today.

Erin posed the following question to the group, as these had been asked of parents through the development of the framework: “What do you hope will be accomplished if parents are included at decision making tables.”

Using a QR Code, Paige asked participants to answer this statement: “Family engagement works best when there is \_\_\_\_\_.” Answers from participants included accessibility, honesty, transparency, trust, ownership, participation, access, communication, consensus, curiosity for lived experiences, discussion, shared power, meaningful opportunity, and listening to be heard, among others.

Erin shared padlet links, including padlet links for public comment and padlet links for comments by members of the workgroup.

- Padlet for workgroup members: [https://padlet.com/erin674/Advisory\\_WorkgroupMembers](https://padlet.com/erin674/Advisory_WorkgroupMembers)
- Padlet for the public: [https://padlet.com/erin674/Advisory\\_WorkgroupPublic](https://padlet.com/erin674/Advisory_WorkgroupPublic)

Erin discussed the many parents that IDEC has engaged with through workgroups and discovery. Analyzing the engagement there are some gaps in racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, geographic, and other factors in participation. These gaps will be strategically addressed in the framework. Parents have identified barriers to accessing services, system navigation and coordination issues, the need for more culturally diverse staff, and others.

The draft framework establishes a shared vision and provides both policy guidance – including formal commitments, articulating values and principles – and practice guidance, which focuses on how to truly implement the framework to engage parents with flexible strategies and continuous quality improvement.

The draft Family Engagement Framework guiding principles include:

- Center parent/caregiver voices by respecting and honoring their lived experience and expertise in early childhood.
- Staff and facilitators are trained in equity and cultural competency principles to engage with parent/caregivers across Illinois to build stronger relationships and establish mutual trust.
- Embed parent/caregivers into programmatic leadership and governance processes to ensure they are at decision making tables.
- Resources and communication modalities are family friendly, use strength-based language, and are accessible in multiple language to engage families across Illinois.
- Implement equitable strategies for continuous quality improvement to center parent/caregiver voice and improve feedback loops.

- Design programs and cultivate community partnerships that are informed by the needs of children and families.
- Provide compensation for parent/caregivers' participation, feedback, and contribution to workstreams and beyond as available.

The group then went into breakout rooms to discuss the Family Engagement Framework guiding principles in further detail. When the group returned, each provided a summary of what was discussed, particularly focused on these three guiding questions:

1. What resonates, remains unclear, or is missing from the draft Family Engagement Guiding Principles?
2. If these draft principles were fully implemented, what would change for parents? What would parents experience differently?
3. Are there considerations that should be included in the Family Engagement Guiding Principles?

*Breakout Room 1:* A participant explained that the discussion in breakout room 1 focused on the strengths of Principle 1 and the importance of developing mutual trust and gaining parent's voices, as well as identifying where gaps exist. Parents need to be seen as equal partners in the process of developing new rules and guidance. An important question raised in this room focused on how data is being collected, particularly in underserved communities – what is the process and how is data gathered and interpreted for the wider audience. There must be different ways families can participate in the process, as parents have varying schedules, priorities, household and work responsibilities, and other barriers to participation.

*Breakout Room 2:* The discussion in breakout room 2 focused on Principles 3 and 4. This group discussed how strategies need to be developed on how to get family voices at the table, making the table more welcoming, encouraging participants to speak, ensuring parents can confidently speak on their thoughts. Parents cannot just be a figure head with a symbolic seat – they must be in the conversation and not just giving feedback after the fact. For Principle 4, the group focused on ensuring resources and communication are accessible -- including for those who speak another language, and also for those who are hard of hearing. The group also discussed the importance of ensuring parents have time to read and digest agendas and materials before being asked to speak on it in a group.

*Breakout Room 3:* Participants in breakout room 3 discussed Principles 5 and 6, with a positive response to both principles, and particular focus on the need to define roles. The group would also like to see some standardization, including through the use of community assessments.

*Breakout Room 4:* The discussion in breakout room 4 focused on families getting paid for being engaged, and the participants were generally in favor of this. There were some useful specific issues that were raised that will need to be addressed, including how payments are made.

Participants were asked to use a QR Code to identify which family engagement principle matters the most to them personally, with participants focusing mainly on Principles 1, 5, and 6.

A link to a feedback survey was provided here:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=nwgia7qOPEaE9TFxIQ-QBVBjHouOqudPljrmGkcl4z5URVRSU0ZGMjNjM01KOTQ4OTVZOFE4R0paTy4u>

A revised Family Engagement Framework will be shared with the group on April 30, 2026.

## VII. Early Learning Council Legislation

The group then discussed [Senate Bill 2984](#) – this legislation makes IDEC the Co-Chair and the agency responsible to staff the Early Learning Council and explicitly adds parents and caregivers of children 5 and under to the Council. Additionally, this Senate Bill amends the Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity Act and provides that IDEC must appoint specified members to the advisory committee. The bill was heard last week in the Senate Education Committee, and it has now moved out of the Committee.

Ultimately, the bill makes administrative changes to bring the Early Learning Council under the oversight of the Department of Early Childhood, which is consistent with conversations that this group has had in the past. The conflict of interest provision seems to be the most confusing and concerning provision for stakeholders. This group has particularly had an interest in the practical impact of the conflict of interest provision, what is permitted and not permitted, and whether this may impact conversations – for example, if parents are getting paid to participate in the Early Learning Council, will they lose their ability to vote on the Council?

Gerson Ramirez from IDEC joined the meeting to discuss this bill in further detail and answer any questions the group may have. Gerson noted that the conflict of interest language in the bill is modeled after a similar provision in the Illinois Interagency Council on Early Intervention statute (325 ILCS 20/4), which has been in effect since 2013 and whose membership includes parents and grantees. Those parents and grantees are able to serve on that Council without a risk of funding loss because of the protection provided by the conflict of interest language. Gerson noted it is not the intent of the legislation to silence any organization – engagement will continue. Procedurally, because IDEC is taking over and is a co-chair, and IDEC administers grants, ethics provisions must be followed. A participant from the Illinois Interagency Council on Early Intervention confirmed they receive payments for participating on that Council and still have the ability to vote, without triggering a conflict of interest. Gerson explained he will follow up to confirm whether paid parent participation would result in a conflict of interest.

A member asked how the second co-chairperson will be selected – Gerson explained that one co-chair is the Secretary of Early Childhood, or their designee. The other co-chairperson identified in statute is designated by the Governor and must be a nongovernment stakeholder.

Gerson made clear that this legislation is an initial step, but not the final step in the partnership and collaboration. IDEC is still relying on the advisory workgroup to finalize recommendations to strengthen IDEC's engagement and advisory function at the new agency. The advisory workgroup members will still have a meaningful impact on the advisory structure and future statutory changes, as needed.

Some participants expressed concern for the timing of the legislation, as the advisory workgroup has not finished making recommendations. Gerson made clear that the legal change must occur so that there is authority for the advisory workgroup to make recommendations and be heard. Elliot also noted that the work of this group is likely to result in changes that could be made by regulation, rather than legislation, and that these administrative changes will be easier for IDEC if this bill passes. Any needed statutory changes can be requested next year.

In response to a participant's question, Elliot explained that IDEC should provide guidance on who determines if a conflict of interest exists.

A member asked about the language in the bill that adds parents or caregivers of children ages 5 years or younger as a member of the Early Learning Council. Gerson explained that the priority for the agency is to be sure the parent voice is heard, so this was added.

#### **VIII. Next Steps**

Elliot thanked everyone for participation in the discussion today. Elliot confirmed the next meeting will focus on feedback received from other groups about the proposed desired end state and the group may consider how to integrate the Family Engagement Framework into their own framework.

Elliot asked participants to send any additional materials they are aware of that might be relevant, from Illinois or elsewhere.

#### **IX. Public Comment**

Elliot invited public attendees to provide comments. No public comments were made.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 30, 2026 -

# Family Engagement Framework – Guiding Principles

## I. Executive Summary

The Illinois Department of Early Childhood (IDEC) is committed to building an equitable early childhood system that is shaped by the lived experiences, expertise, and leadership of families across Illinois. This Family Engagement Framework establishes a shared vision, principles, and commitments to ensure that parent/caregivers are meaningfully engaged as partners in policy, program design, and systems improvement. This framework is intended to guide IDEC staff, workgroups, partners, parent/ caregiver, and leaders in designing and sustaining engagement practices that are inclusive, accessible, and accountable.

**Families are experts in their own lives and communities.** In IDEC’s family engagement efforts, parent/caregivers have identified barriers accessing early childhood programs and services, persistent system navigation and coordination issues, as well as a need for more culturally competent and diverse staff to advance equity across the early childhood system. *Parent/Caregivers consistently report that meaningful engagement requires more than opportunities to provide input, it also requires trust, transparency, and clear evidence that their voices influence decisions.* Our engagement efforts have also identified gaps in racial/ethnic, socioeconomic and geographic representation from parent/caregivers which will be strategically addressed through co-designing the Family Engagement Framework.

As IDEC transitions into a new statewide agency on July 1, 2026, this framework reflects a commitment to ensuring that family voice is not diluted, but rather elevated and embedded across all levels of decision-making.

## II. Guiding Principles – Policy and Practice Guidance

IDEC’s Family Engagement Framework outlines the vision, principles, and structures for engaging parent/caregivers as partners in the early childhood system. It applies across internal IDEC workgroups, advisory bodies, and partnerships, and external statewide programs that serve children and families. The framework will be co-designed with families and key stakeholders to help us build equitable and inclusive family aligned policies and practices.

Throughout the framework, policy guidance can be defined as formal commitments, expectations, and non-negotiable standards for family engagement. Overall, policy guidance defines what IDEC will commit to, articulate values and principles across all programs and workstreams, is consistent and sustainable over time, and applies to IDEC staff, contractors, partners, and programs.

Practice guidance highlights the recommended approaches, tools, and process to implement the policy guidance. It explains how policy commitments are carried out in practice with flexible strategies, supports continuous quality improvement, and may vary by program, region, or engagement type.

## 1. Center parent/caregiver voice by **respecting and honoring their lived experience and expertise in early childhood.**

### a. **Policy Guidance:**

- i. If the policy or program lever doesn't work for parent/caregivers, it's not going to work.
- ii. Make it easy for parent/caregivers to engage in conversation and co-design without being programmatic, operational, or statutory experts.
  1. Redesigning family engagement practices to ensure they are aligned and equitably support parent/caregivers.
  2. Recognition and action to address systemic barriers for families.
  3. Access and opportunity are key for family engagement.
  4. Inclusion and participation of the diverse voices that represent the community.
  5. Accountability and transparency are vital to family engagement.
- iii. Engage parent/caregivers as partners in program design, implementation and evaluation.
- iv. Ensure representation from parent/caregivers that make up the rich diversity of the community's geographic location, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status (SES), religion, immigration status, etc. are included at the table.
- v. Develop strength, asset-based and trauma-informed approaches when engaging parent/caregivers.
  1. Environments promote physical and emotional safety for parent/caregivers.
  2. Build mutual trust with parent/caregivers through consistent communication and practices.
  3. Co-design with parent/caregivers in partnership, and not in isolation.
  4. Always empower, acknowledge, validate and incorporate the lived cultural, linguistic, and societal experiences of parent/caregivers in early childhood systems. Create opportunities for peer-to-peer support for all parent/caregivers.

5. Connect parent/caregivers to opportunities, programs, and services based on their expressed needs.
6. Use asset-based language for engaging and framing.
- vi. Be transparent with parent/caregivers about decision-making.
  1. There are no unilateral decision-makers in early childhood. Program, policy, and budget changes require multiple signoffs including the IDEC Secretary, Governor's Office, and Illinois General Assembly.
  2. Decisions with major policy and budget changes take multiple years.

**b. Practice Guidance:**

- i. Parent/Caregiver engagement activities must be inclusive of the rich cultural, linguistic, racial, geographic, and socioeconomic diversity of the community.
- ii. Ensure representation of parent/caregivers in underserved communities by relying on data collection related to culture, language, racial and ethnic makeup, geography, and socioeconomic status to guide outreach and engagement.
- iii. Lift parents/caregivers as parents/caregivers. Advocates enter as advocates; intermediaries enter as intermediaries.
- iv. Develop mutual trust through a bottom-up approach ensuring that parent/caregiver voices are elevating and informing how well services are being delivered.

*"With the transition I felt like my voice was less valid. I needed more support through that. My son is 4 now and he still has delays." - Caregiver from Cook*

## **2. Staff and facilitators are trained in equity and cultural competency principles to engage with parent/caregivers across Illinois to build stronger relationships and establish mutual trust.**

**a. Policy Guidance:**

- i. Require equity and cultural competency training for staff and facilitators.
- ii. Establish equity competencies ensuring that diversity is reflected in adapting engagement opportunities for the community.

**b. Practice Guidance:**

- i. Develop a Standard operating procedure that informs parent/caregiver engagement best practices including:
  - a. Practices for communicating engagement opportunities.
  - b. Provide translation and interpretation services.

- c. Embed continuous quality improvement best practices for ensuring that engagement activities are equitable and meet the needs of parent/caregivers.
  - i. Involve families as co-designers when defining issues or challenges with family engagement.
  - ii. Defined meaningful metrics for family engagement and implement mixed methods approaches to collect feedback.
    - 1. Parents/caregivers statewide are able to participate and have access through multiple methods of engagement (e.g. listening sessions, surveys, focus groups, workgroups, parent/caregiver forums, etc.)
    - 2. Quality of family engagement approaches are measured using qualitative and quantitative approaches (e.g. Likert scale, "I feel comfortable giving my feedback")
    - 3. Families have an increased understanding of capacity and what programs and services are available to them.
    - 4. Family-centered values are embedded into culture of practice and staff values.
    - 5. Equity is embedded into improvement process to determine who is missing from feedback and engagement.
    - 6. Feedback loops with families are closed in a timely manner (e.g. 1 month maximum).
  - iii. Incorporate daily huddles to make improvements to family engagement practices.
  - iv. Family Engagement SOPs and training are developed and updated as needed.
- ii. Staff will seek training and technical assistance (TTA) on cultural competency and equity principles.
- iii. Embed staff and facilitators that reflect the rich cultural, linguistic, racial, geographic, and socioeconomic diversity to amplify lived experiences.
- iv. Provide annual training and technical assistance for relationship building, time for regular community of practice, on parent/caregiver engagement activities, and accountability in practice to inform training improvements and professional development for staff and facilitators.

*"...to ensure that the agency has language and cultural knowledge brokers on staff at the agency. This goes beyond family liaisons because it's important that agency staff that have relatable lived experiences and can help interpret what is coming from the family communities." - Supporting Multilingual Learners Workgroup*

### 3. Embed parent/caregivers into programmatic **leadership and governance** processes to ensure they are at decision making tables

#### a. **Policy Guidance:**

- i. Develop policy guidance to establish Programmatic Policy Councils that include parent/caregivers in the decision-making process.
  - 1. Head Start Policy Councils require that 51% of representation be parent/caregivers and the remaining 49% are community members.

#### a. **Practice Guidance:**

- i. A program will embed culturally responsive facilitation strategies to engage parents/caregivers, recognize, honor, and identify lived experiences of families, allowing authentic and safe participation without needing to assimilate into dominant norms or systems. This includes:
  - 1. Before engagement:
    - a. Identified preferred languages during recruitment.
    - b. Budget for interpretation and translations.
    - c. Translate all materials (see 5).
    - d. Learn about community context in advance.
    - e. When possible, match facilitators with lived experience, language, and culture of families.
    - f. Partner with interpreters.
  - 2. During engagement:
    - a. Establish safety by naming the purpose, decision-making, and community agreements.
    - b. Speak in plain language, avoid acronyms, and build in extra time for interpretation.
    - c. Allow engagement through speaking, chat, polls, and other channels.
    - d. When possible, co-facilitate discussions with parent/caregivers.
  - 3. After engagement:
    - a. Share minutes/summaries in preferred languages.
    - b. Ask for feedback on engagement (e.g., what could be improved next time, did you feel comfortable participating?)
- ii. Include language access services whether interpretation or translation for parent/caregiver members as needed.
- iii. Budget for parent/caregiver compensation, transportation or meal support as needed for parent/caregiver leaders that they want to engage in their projects.

- iv. Plan to provide orientation and ongoing governance training for parent/caregivers to build leadership skills, learn budget priorities, and inform CQI for the advisory structure.
- v. Document parent/caregiver participation in decision-making processes.
  - 1. Embed into program standards.
  - 2. Annually review to ensure this is being done effectively.
- vi. Publish annual reports on the objectives and outcomes of the
- vii. Programmatic Policy Council

*“Head Start includes Head Start Policy Councils – through these Councils, parents are seen as equal partners and parents are governing the program in which their child is participating. Parents make up 51% of Policy Councils, and the remaining 49% include community members. - Advisory Workgroup*

#### **4. Resources and communication modalities are family friendly, use strength-based language, and are accessible in multiple languages to engage families across Illinois.**

##### **a. Policy Guidance:**

- i. ALWAYS consult with a communications team on best practices.
  - a. Develop plain-language standards to ensure that communication modalities are accessible to families.
  - b. Ask for help if needed
- ii. Remove jargon, acronyms, and bureaucratic language.
  - a. Test materials with families prior to final release to ensure that language is accessible.
- iii. Translate all core materials into parent/caregivers preferred language(s).
- iv. Establish clear timelines for language translation so that parent/caregivers with different language backgrounds can access the materials at the same time.
  - a. Use multi-modal communication methods whether community partners, text/phone calls, social media, or email.
  - b. Ensure ADA-compliance with digital or printed materials.

##### **b. Practice Guidance:**

- i. Before making operational or programmatic decisions, engage families early on what information they need, how they prefer to receive it and in what languages.
- ii. Work with the Family Engagement team to plan for the development of focus groups, listening sessions, and co-design workshops with families.
  - 1. Develop surveys to collect feedback.
  - 2. Checkpoints with Parent/Caregiver workgroup members on communication methods.

3. Utilize parent/caregiver community ambassadors to evaluate communication methods.
4. Quarterly town halls for families.
- iii. Use multiple communication modalities that parent/caregivers can select, especially around the implications of a policy change.
  1. Newsletters
  2. Text-based tools
  3. Family friendly websites to identify programs and services in their communities.

*“Better communication, shared resources, listen to the concerns of parents and guardians.” - Parent/Communities from DuPage (Transition Survey)*

## 5. Implement equitable strategies for **continuous quality improvement** to center family voice and improve feedback loops.

### a. **Policy Guidance:**

- i. Use the family-centered continuous quality improvement processes.
  1. Develop key performance indicators that measure family engagement success.
  2. Include families at all levels of the CQI process.
  3. Survey design and measurement tools.
  4. Data interpretation and literacy.
  5. Recommendations for improving family engagement processes.
- ii. Disaggregate data to ensure disparities in engagement, experience, access and outcomes are identified.
- iii. Close feedback loops with clear processes, timelines, responses, and actions.
  1. Reports to the community.
- iv. Train staff and facilitators on equity-centered CQI processes when engaging families.

### b. **Practice Guidance:**

- i. Regularly evaluate a parent/caregiver engagement co-designed survey or other survey data to assess parent/caregiver perspectives quarterly.
- ii. Evaluate participant engagement data to ensure we are engaging and representing diverse parent/caregivers.
- iii. Follow up with communities on whether feedback is or isn't used or implemented.
- iv. Address barriers to participation such as transportation, technology, language access, etc.
- v. Probe the community about the efficacy and accessibility of parent/caregiver engagement opportunities.

*"Families want to see their voice actually taken into consideration, so some sort of 'closure' or a way to show that they truly had an influence." - Supporting Multilingual Learners Workgroup*

## **6. Design programs and cultivate community partnerships that are informed by the needs of children and families.**

### **a. Policy Guidance:**

- i. Standardize community needs assessments and reports that inform local and regional needs for children and families to inform program goals and strategies.
- ii. Prioritize partnerships that recognize parent/caregivers as co-designers and ensure they are embedded into decision making processes.
- iii. Develop guidance that emphasizes clearly defined roles, responsibilities and expectations for all intermediaries to ensure alignment and support for children and families.

### **b. Practice Guidance:**

- i. Utilize current intermediary structure to find alignment with system navigation, communication, resources and comprehensive services provided to children and families.
  1. INCRRA
  2. CCR&RS
  3. CFCs
  4. Birth to 5 IL
  5. All our Kids Networks
- ii. Emphasize equitable experiences as community systems development is informed by children and family needs and strengthened by local relationships/partnerships.
- iii. Collect feedback from families and community partners on the intermediary structure to ensure effectiveness.

*"Collaborations Work. We need to communicate and work more closely together to ensure our families and children get the care and services they need." Parent/Center-based ECE Provider, Menard and Sangamon (RLS Meeting Convener Form)*

## **7. Provide compensation for parent/caregivers' participation, feedback, and contribution to IDEC workstreams and beyond as available.**

### **a. Policy Guidance:**

- i. Determine equitable compensation amounts for participation in virtual, in-person or asynchronous events and engagement opportunities.
- ii. Ensure compensation is flexible and accessible to parent/caregivers regardless of banking status, income source, or immigration status.
  - 1. Compensation should be consistent and equitable across engagement opportunities.
- iii. Reimbursement for travel, child care, meals, and/or technology to remove barriers for parent/caregiver representation and increase accessibility as needed.
- iv. Embed into the budget requests funding for parent/caregiver compensation following engagement activities.
- v. Designate a person responsible for administering compensation in a timely manner and oversight.

**b. Practice Guidance:**

- i. Plan for compensation ahead of time to ensure that payments are not delayed.
- ii. Share clear details with parent/caregivers on compensation amounts, requirements for participation to be compensated, and timeline for payment.
- iii. Provide equitable payment options for parent/caregivers (e.g. prepaid gift card, check, or electronic payment).
- iv. Consider paying parent/caregivers for meeting time, pre-work preparation, review of materials and follow-up activities as needed.
- v. Implement family-friendly processes to minimize paperwork and administrative issues.
  - 1. Reducing personally identifiable information to ensure anonymity of parent/caregiver participants when administering payments.
- vi. Monitor compensation processes to inform internal guidance and improve processes.



# Streamlining Early Childhood Advisory Committees

Support SB2984 (Sen. Collins)/HB5204 (Rep. Mason)

## Purpose:

Moves administrative authority and certain appointments to IDEC to create clearer coordination and accountability.

Illinois Early Learning Council (ELC)	<b>This legislation will update the structure and administration of the Early Learning Council to reflect IDEC's leadership role in early childhood.</b>	
<b>What Will Change:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IDEC Secretary (or designee) will serve as co-chairperson of the Council.</li> <li>• IDEC will provide staffing and administrative support, which was previously overseen by the Governor's Office.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adds parents and caregivers of children five and under.</li> <li>• Vendors and grantees with conflict of interest can discuss but not vote on recommendations for which they have a conflict of interest.</li> </ul>
<b>Why This Matters:</b>	These updates ensure the Council operates with clear leadership, transparency and accountability.	

Update ECACE Statute	<b>This legislation will appoint authority for the ECACE Advisory Committee to IDEC.</b>	
	<b>What Changes:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointment authority for specified Advisory Committee members shifts from the Department of Human Services to IDEC.</li> <li>• IDHS will continue to appoint one co-chair.</li> </ul> <p><i>No changes are made to member qualifications or responsibilities.</i></p>
<b>Why This Matters:</b>	Changes ensure appointment authority is aligned with IDEC's new responsibility for child care programs and creates clear coordination for the workforce systems.	

## Bottom Line:

SB2984/HB5204 ensures early childhood leadership and oversight are fully aligned under IDEC while maintaining strong advisory structures that support Illinois' early learning and child care systems.

For questions contact:  
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