



EC Courses for Licensing

Ad Hoc Committee Meeting

April 16, 2026



WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS



In the chat, please put your name, organization
AND:

- It's Week of the Young Child! What was your favorite activity as a kid (that maybe you still enjoy doing as an adult!)?

Meeting Expectations & Notes

Workgroup Members:

- **Please be on video** as much as possible
- **Mute self** when not speaking
- Use **Chat feature** or **“raise hand” button** for questions or comments
- If you are experiencing an unstable connection - **switch to phone call or close other applications**
- **For technical issues**, please message Christi in the chat

For Public Participants:

Attendees can provide input through public comment (last five minutes of meeting)



Meeting Goals

- Share Updates
- Consider Initial Recommendations
- Discuss Ways to Ensure Consistency in Review

Agenda

Meeting Agenda:

- Welcome
- Discovery Updates
- Review of Potential Recommendations
- Process
 - Breakout Groups
 - Whole Group Discussion
- Next Steps
- Public Comment

Norms for Working Together

Proposed Norms Guiding Principles



Be solution oriented, and recognize that process is part of the solution



Prioritize attending, show up prepared, and be fully present



Step up, step back



Be curious and seek to clarify differences



Center workforce member and provider experiences with the system



Recognize intent & impact: I might not intend to hurt or offend, but the impact may hurt or offend



Guiding Principles



Guiding Principles for Process Design

Guiding principles represent a shared set of commitments and values that will guide discussions and recommendations.

1

The **process should be transparent and simple** for providers, workforce members, and others to understand which higher education courses “count” towards being an early childhood teacher or director

2

The process must include **a way to submit, review, and post courses** not currently on the website, including those from other states and countries.

3

Processes and posting courses should lead to **more consistency** in eligibility determinations.

4

Process for course review and determination and the process to appeal ineligible courses should be **easy to navigate and impartial**.

5

Location, time period the course was taken, modality, or whether earned through a transfer or credit for prior learning **does not exclude** it from being eligible.

6

All processes should be consistent and not in conflict with current statutes and rules, incl. PA 104-0309 and 89 Ill. Adm. Conde 407.130 and 407.140, which list teacher and director qualifications



Discovery Updates



Discovery Findings: Common Courses

On April 1, IDEC, ICCB, and IBHE hosted a discussion with community colleges to explore common courses that might be substantially focused on early childhood that we could “auto approve”.

- Agreed that the following are **Yes for auto approve**:
 - Intro to Early Childhood, Early Childhood Curriculum, and other 'by title' courses
 - Health, Safety and Nutrition
 - Child, Family and Community
 - Child Growth and Development (when part of IAI) are Yes for auto-approve.
- **Observation and Assessment and Practicum**
 - Most said yes; some colleges have similarly named courses not focused on young children, but subtitle or prefix should distinguish which focus on early childhood.
 - ***We cannot “auto approve” by title but may be a yes due to title and prefix***

Discovery Findings: Student Focus Group



On April 15, IDEC, ICCB, and IBHE hosted a focus group with six ECE college students and recent graduates. They varied by institution, geography, current Teacher/Director and future Teacher/Director. All six were 4-year college students, with at least three having prior 2-year experience. They included two current EC Teachers, one current EC Director, the three traditional students with Child Care Teacher and Director career goals.

Themes that emerged:

- **Low awareness, inconsistent information:** Most participants had limited knowledge of course qualification requirements before enrolling, and many discovered gaps only after the fact.
- **Advising gaps:** Across institutions, participants described advisors who were uncertain about ECE specifically – leaving students to piece together requirements on their own, often becoming their own experts, mentoring others and/or learning from colleagues.
- **Possible implications for EC Course rule:**
 - A clear, accessible course list that shows which courses count and why, written in language students and advisors can use.
 - Advisor training, so that the person guiding a student's degree plan knows the licensing requirements.
 - A practitioner perspective embedded in advising resources, so students understand what the people hiring them are actually looking for.



**What do we know
so far?**



Some Courses Are Easy To Approve Or Disapprove

For many courses, it will be relatively easy to determine whether or not they “count”.

Most time spent reviewing these
courses

Yes & Auto Approve	Probably	Maybe	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Easy to approve by title (Early childhood or child development) or• “Auto Approve” category<ul style="list-style-type: none">• INCCRRA EC on PDR• 2 IAI (Child Dev, Child, Family and Community)• Potentially 4 common community college courses	<p>May need to review course descriptions or course syllabi and look for key words, phrases, age groups, focus</p>		<p>Gen Ed Courses Lifespan Courses Too general, like Psych 101, History of Education, Philosophy of Education</p>

Potential Recommendations

Some recommendations that have emerged include the following:

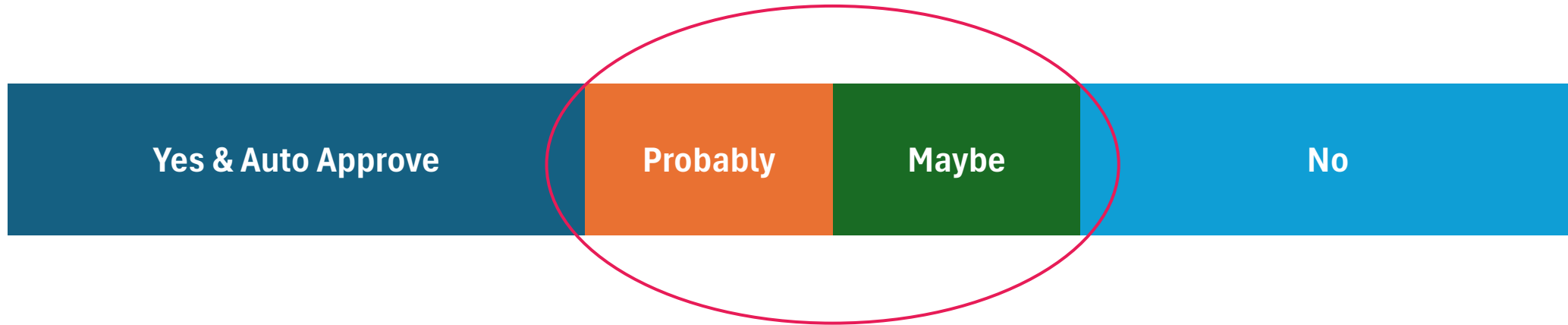
- Courses should ***substantially*** focus on children within the birth to six age range, though this could include a focus on a subset of children (e.g., infants and toddlers) or a broader group of children (e.g., birth to eight).
 - It will not be possible, at least not at this point in time, to quantify exactly how much of a course supports families and children birth to six. This is not identified in titles, descriptions, or even most syllabi.
- A **rubric or framework** should be used to ensure a consistent approach to reviewing courses, particularly in consistently determining a “substantial” focus.
- When possible, **leverage other review processes** so that we can more easily “auto approve” courses (e.g., aligned IAI courses, common community college courses, INCCRRA PDR: Early Childhood Courses)
- A **running list of courses** (approved and not approved) should be stored and posted by institution.

Potential Recommendations - Continued

- The **process should be transparent and simple** for providers, workforce members, and others to understand which higher education courses “count” towards being an early childhood teacher or director
- To the degree possible, this process and clarified interpretation of the administrative rules **should not have a negative impact on current providers** in the field who have been working in programs and determined qualified.
- IDEC may want to **work with higher education** to:
 - Ensure institutions are aware of the eligibility requirements
 - Consider whether a recommendation process would be helpful
 - Determine if there are opportunities that already exist to submit higher ed data
 - Indicate eligible courses on their websites

**What questions or
comments do you have?
What are we missing?**





How do we ensure a consistent, nonbiased process for evaluation, course review, approval, appeal, and removal?

Process Discussion: Breakout Groups

Choose your own adventure

Group 1 — Consistency & Centralization *What would a consistent, standardized process need to look like to build trust with providers and workforce members?*

Group 2 — Impartiality *What kinds of things would make this process seem fair and trustworthy to someone whose course was deemed ineligible?*

Group 3 — What does "substantial focus" mean? *What does "substantially focused on birth to six" actually look like in a course? What evidence would you look for?*

Break Out Group Discussion: Share Out

Group 1 — Consistency & Centralization *What would a consistent, standardized process need to look like to build trust with providers and workforce members?*

Group 2 — Impartiality *What kinds of things would make this process feel fair and trustworthy to someone whose course was deemed ineligible?*

Group 3 — What does "substantial focus" mean? *What does "substantially focused on birth to six" look like in a course? What evidence would you look for?*

Other Recommendations

The following recommendations have come up several times. We are noting these for future consideration, though they are a little out of the committee's scope

- Align the systems:
 - It is very difficult to understand what is needed for licensing, credentials, programs standards, INCCRRA basic transcript reviews, etc.
 - The state should, to the degree possible, align and share requirements.
- Conduct one review when determining eligibility, and document everything in the workforce member's registry and PDR. Have one single source of "truth" that everyone can look to.

Next Steps



Next meeting: May 20 – 1:30-3:00 pm

- Final meeting for Ad Hoc
- Review recommendations to date
- Notification and communications plan discussion