

Program Standards Alignment Workgroup

Meeting #3

Thursday, February 26, 2026

4:30 pm – 6:00 pm



Interpretation instructions// Instrucciones de interpretación

How to access interpretation:

- Click on the globe icon labeled "Interpretation" at the bottom of your Zoom window.
- Select your preferred language from the list.
- If you only want to hear the interpreter, you can also click "Mute Original Audio."

Cómo acceder a la interpretación:

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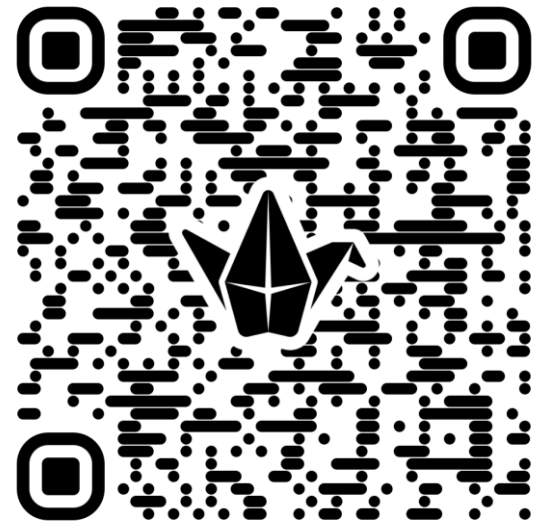
Meeting Expectations & Notes

For 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
- Technical issues can happen to anyone – **chat Crystal Roman privately for any needs**
- If you are experiencing an unstable connection - **switch to phone call or close other applications**

For Public Participants:

- Attendees can provide input through Padlet, public comment (last five minutes of meeting), and will have the opportunity to engage in small group discussion



Note: This meeting has Spanish translation. Please speak slowly and clearly to support translation.

Meeting Goals

- ✓ Build community and establish community agreements
- ✓ Share revised vision and guiding principles for program standards alignment and discuss how to apply these to the alignment work
- ✓ Share framework for program standards crosswalk and gather feedback on
 - ✓ Crosswalk framework
 - ✓ Priority categories for Spring 2026 discussions

Agenda

- **Welcome (10 min)**
 - Connection question
 - Recap goals, activities and timeline
 - FY 27 Budget update
- **Vision and guiding principles (40 min)**
 - Feedback summary and revisions
 - Small group discussion: applying the vision and guiding principles
- **Program standards crosswalks (30 min)**
 - Overview of crosswalk framework
 - Small group discussion: deep dives by sector
 - Early Care and Education
 - Home Visiting
 - Early Intervention
- **Public comment (5 min)**
- **Next steps (5 min)**

Welcome

Share in the chat...

If you had 25 hours in a day, how would you spend the extra time?



The workgroup includes representation from a wide range of roles, program experience and geographic diversity

Alberto Roman – Parent/caregiver	Rep. Joyce Mason – Illinois House of Representatives
Ariel Chaidez – Sr. Program Manager, Parents As Teachers State Leader, Start Early	Julian Lomax -- ECE teacher (Christopher House)
*Brandi Granse – Director, Champaign County Regional Planning Commission/Head Start & Early Head Start	Madison Wekony – Parent/caregiver
Bridgett Vance – ECE provider – family child care	Marilyn Rodriguez – Home Visiting provider (Glenbard Parents As Teachers /CASE DuPage)
Brynn Seibert – SEIU	Marla Willard – CCR&R (West Central Child Care Connections)
Cerathel Burgess Burnett – City of Chicago/DFSS	Miranda Lin – Higher ed faculty (Illinois State University)
Cindy Agredo – Parent/caregiver	*Nicole Van Hise – ROE 13/Child & Family Connections Early Intervention Program
Dara Cohen – ECE Provider (Family Focus)	Pat Chamberlain - Consultant
Donna Emmons – IL Head Start Association	*Rachel Mika – Early Intervention provider (physical therapist)
Erica Larkin – Parent/caregiver	*Sally Peterson – Glencoe Park District Pre-k classroom coordinator
Erin Gutiérrez – ECE Provider – center (Governors State)	Theresa Atchley – IL Association of Infant Mental Health and Birth to Five
Jill Wardlow – ECE Provider – school district (ROE 13)	Tom Layman – CELFE
Jon Korfmacher – Chapin Hall	<i>*indicates member joining in February 2026</i>

Workgroup Norms

- **Take Space, Make Space**
- **All Voices Matter:** Encourage and respect diverse perspectives, recognizing the value of different roles and lived experiences. Prioritize parent and provider experience
- **Listen to Understand:** Approach discussions with curiosity and openness
- **Assume Positive Intent:** Approach members' questions, comments & feedback as contributions made in good faith
- **Lean into Discomfort:** Challenge and discomfort can lead to insight and progress

Is there anything else we should add to these norms?

Program Standards Alignment Workgroup

Review of Goals, Activities, and Timeline



Program Standard Alignment Workgroup Overview

Goal: To develop **recommendations *for aligning* birth-to-five program standards and expectations** for programs transitioning to the Illinois Department of Early Childhood (IDEC), with a vision of a *continuum of quality* that supports all children's development and *successful transition to kindergarten*.

Workgroup role:



Provide context and background on the current state to inform **program standards crosswalk**



Inform **vision and guiding principles**

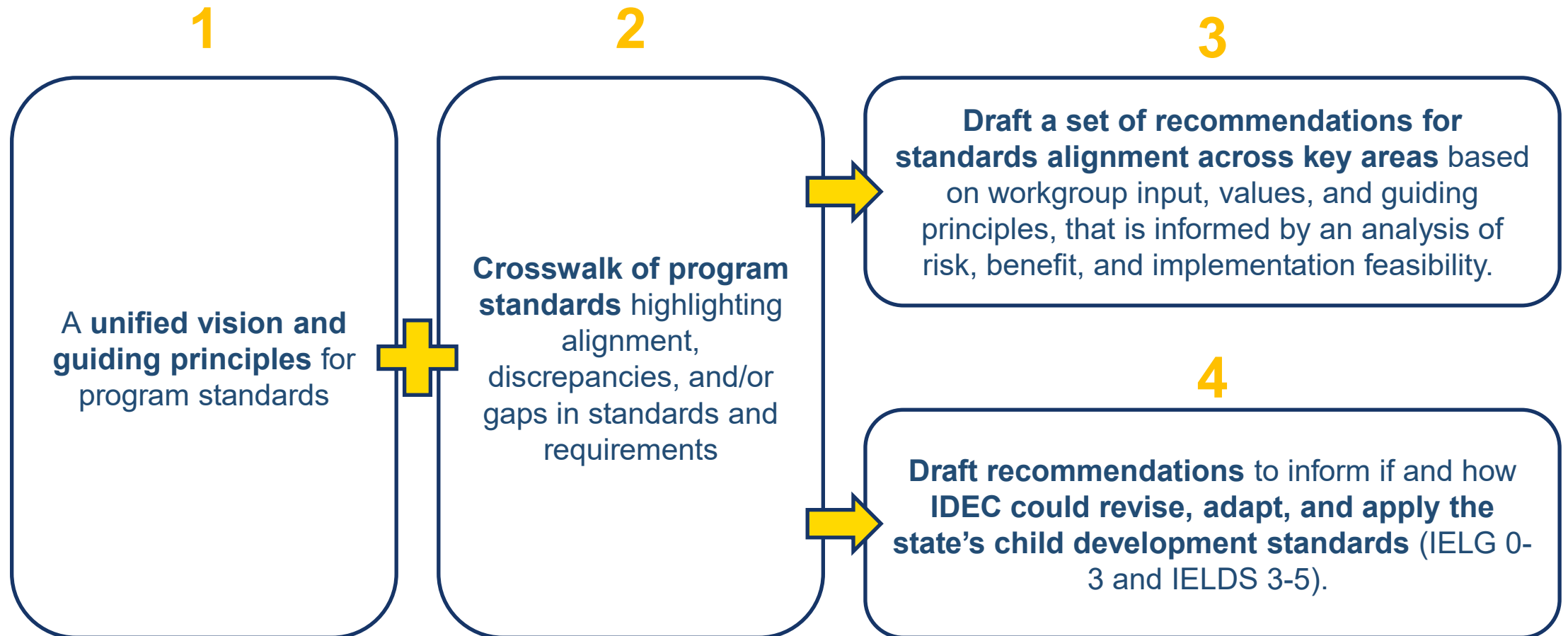


Provide feedback to develop **recommendations for standards alignment**



Identify potential **risks and mitigation strategies**

The workgroup will inform four key deliverables between now and June 2026



Recap of conversations to date and our focus for today

Where we've been...

December 2025

- ✓ Launched the workgroup
- ✓ Aligned on goals for the program standards alignment workstream

January 2026

- ✓ Reviewed a **draft vision and guiding principles** for program standards alignment
- ✓ Reviewed insights about provider experiences with program standards and impact to children and families

Our goals for today

Discuss Vision and Guiding Principles

- Review updated vision and guiding principles
- Gather your input on a proposed approach for applying the guiding principles to emerging program standards alignment considerations

Discuss Program Standards Alignment Crosswalk

- Review approach for mapping program standards
- Identify topics to prioritize for workgroup discussions between March and June 2026

FY27 Budget Update



The Governor's Proposed FY27 budget includes nearly \$4.5B in Early Childhood investments

Investing in What Matters: Early Childhood Development



SMART START ILLINOIS: Investing in Early Childhood

Governor's Proposed FY27 Budget for Illinois Department of Early Childhood (IDEC): \$4.424 billion All Funds, \$2.088 billion General Funds

- Includes the first year of full operational and programmatic funding for IDEC.
- **\$748 million** to maintain investment in the Early Childhood Block Grant funding.
 - Maintains the funding level that has supported the addition of over 11,000 new seats added since 2023.
- **\$200 million** investment for Early Childhood Workforce Compensation Grants.
- Other Early Childhood Investments include:
 - **\$55 million** in additional investment for increased participation in the Child Care Assistance Program, up to 155,000 children.
 - **\$2.3 million** to continue implementation and expansion of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.
 - Today, more than 97,000 children under the age of five are receiving free books in the mail every month, a 59 percent increase since February 2025.
 - **\$15 million** increase for Early Intervention programs to support timely services for families.
- IDEC funding consolidates nearly \$2 billion in FY26 General Funds appropriations for early childhood programs such as the Child Care Assistance, Early Intervention, Home Visiting, and Maternal and Child Health programs, as well as DCFS day care licensing and the ISBE Early Childhood Block Grant.



Revised Vision and Guiding Principles



Vision and guiding principles' purpose and context

The following DRAFT vision and guiding principles:

- **Reflects workgroup input, 1-1 discovery conversations, the Transition Advisory Committee, and prior engagement feedback.** They have been updated to reflect input from the workgroup's January meeting.
- **Will remain in "DRAFT" form** as we continue to gather and incorporate your feedback as well as input from Family Service Workgroups, Transition Advisory Committee, and other groups.
- **Will never be written in stone.** We can continue to adapt and strengthen these as we learn more.

A **vision** is an aspirational statement describing the desired future state.

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

Summary of feedback on draft vision and guiding principles – January 2026

Feedback and suggestions for revision

- General appreciation for guiding principles speaking to equity and the interconnected early childhood system
- Suggested ways to streamline language and make the guiding principles more approachable
- Ensure language throughout is asset-based, clarifying that the burden is on the state rather than the family or child
- Suggested that “care” should be broadly defined and include the importance of early relationships and identifying needs
- Named the importance of meeting providers and the workforce where they are and supporting movement toward quality
- Suggestions for language tweaks to ensure language is inclusive and representative of all stakeholders (e.g., “linguistically inclusive”)

Opportunities to clarify meaning

- Understanding Kindergarten readiness in the context of program standards alignment:
 - Establishing a shared understanding of Kindergarten readiness allows families, early childhood providers, and schools to work together to support a strong start for children.
- Balancing developmentally appropriate outcomes and individualized learning:
 - Developmentally appropriate outcomes establish meaningful goals while honoring that each child progresses along their own developmental timeline.

Draft Vision Statement for Program Standards Alignment

The Illinois Department of Early Childhood (IDEC) envisions an early childhood system that provides children and families a **continuum of equitable, high-quality support, education, and care from prenatal to age five**. This continuum ensures **seamless, coordinated, and comprehensive services** that cultivate **learning** and foster **Kindergarten readiness**.

The program standards and associated expectations, measures, and milestones that guide programs and services under IDEC are:

- **Equitable, culturally, and linguistically inclusive**, reflecting the strengths and needs of diverse communities.
- **Informed by families, providers, workforce members, and community partners**, who share responsibility for continuous quality improvement and individualized outcomes for children.
- **Grounded in research-based best practices** as a foundation, **alongside families' aspirations** for their child's growth, learning, and well-being.
- **Supportive of the workforce**, enabling early childhood professionals to effectively deliver high-quality education and care programs and services.

Draft Guiding Principles for Program Standards Alignment

Illinois' program standards for early childhood programs and services will:

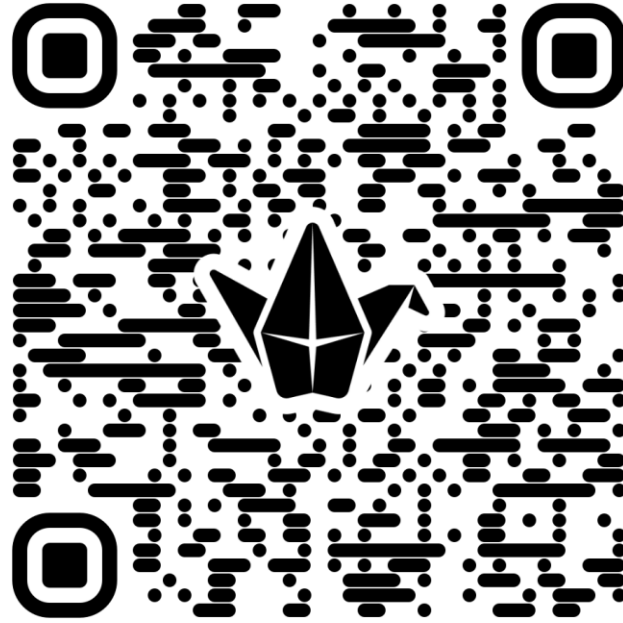
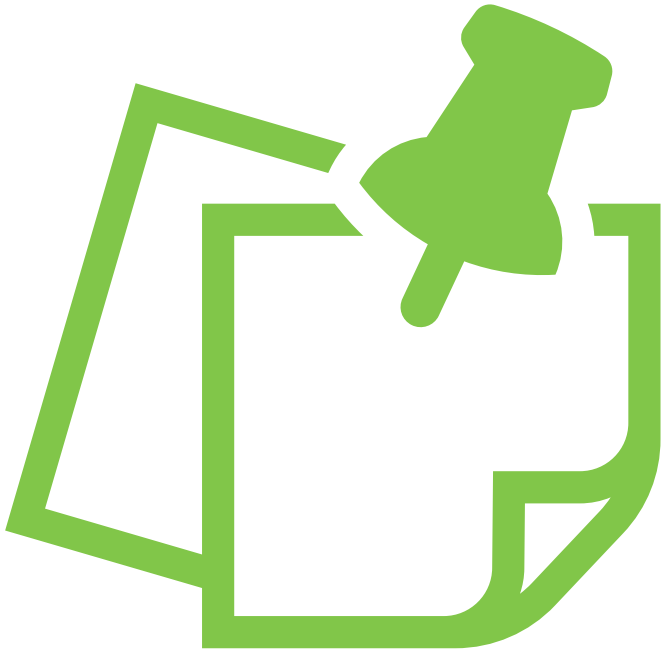
1. **Center the child and family's experience and perspective.** Program standards and expectations must support the whole child—their education, care, health and well-being – and foster nurturing relationships with families, caregivers and service providers.
2. **Strengthen coordination across interconnected early childhood systems.** Children and families navigate multiple programs and services from prenatal through age five. A cohesive continuum ensures equitable access, nurturing relationships, developmental progression, and smooth transitions across programs and into Kindergarten.
3. **Prioritize outcomes and developmentally appropriate progression.** Ground expectations for program standards in the desired outcomes and impact for children and families, with flexibility to address the unique strengths and needs of each child, family, and community.
4. **Ensure inclusion of all children and families, particularly those the state has the hardest time serving.** Program standards must support providers in meeting the needs of all children and families - including multilingual learners, children with disabilities and developmental delays, families who are unhoused, children and families who are or have been involved in the child welfare system, and families regardless of immigration status.

Draft Guiding Principles for Program Standards Alignment, cont.

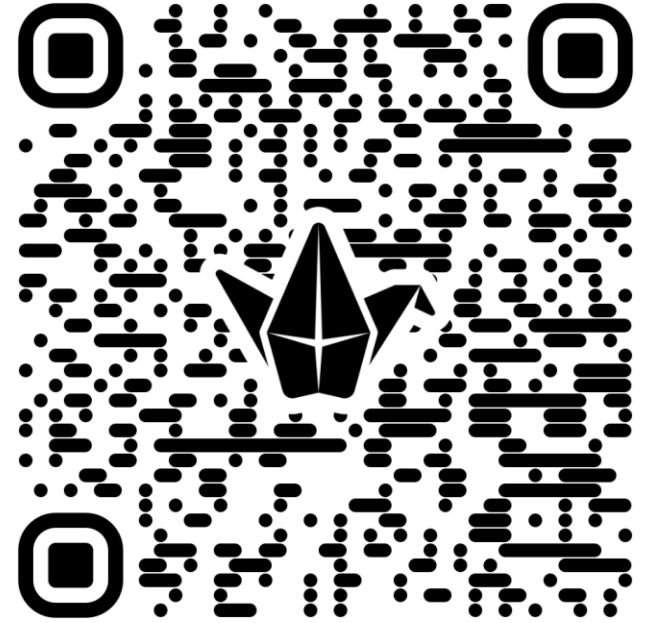
- 5. Streamline reporting and reduce administrative burden for families and providers.** Where possible, program standards should streamline reporting to reduce administrative burden while maintaining clear expectations for accountability. Compliance processes should not create barriers to providing or accessing high quality programs and services.
- 6. Pair quality expectations with support for providers.** Providers must be supported by responsive and intentional mechanisms that enable early childhood professionals to deliver a continuum of high-quality early childhood services in partnership with families.
- 7. Advance equity through equitable design and process centered on those the state has the hardest time serving.** All children, families and early childhood professionals—regardless of geography, race or ethnicity, ability, socioeconomic status, language, or immigration status—deserve access to opportunities for success. Any process to inform system design must meaningfully engage those most affected by inequities and share decision-making power with families, providers, and communities.

Process Note: IDEC understands that future phases of this work will need to include discussions on operational considerations and connections with other workstreams

Share additional feedback via Padlet



Public (English) Padlet



Public (Spanish) Padlet

Applying the Vision and Guiding Principles – *Proposed Approach*

Program Standard Alignment Workgroup Overview

Goal: To develop **recommendations *for aligning* birth-to-five program standards and expectations** for programs transitioning to the Illinois Department of Early Childhood (IDEC), with a vision of a *continuum of quality* that supports all children's development and *successful transition to kindergarten*.

Workgroup role:



Provide context and background on the current state to inform **program standards crosswalk**



Inform **vision and guiding principles**



Provide feedback to develop **recommendations for standards alignment**



Identify potential **risks and mitigation strategies**

The workgroup will fulfill the charge when recommendations for aligning birth-to-five program standards are...



Reflective of child, family and provider perspectives, challenges, wants and needs.



Grounded in research-based best practices that support children's development and Kindergarten readiness.



Equitable and inclusive, as outlined in our vision and guiding principles.

A reflection tool grounded in guiding principles can...

- **Center equity:** Ensures program standards alignment considerations reflect IDEC's commitment to children, families, providers, and historically underserved communities.
- **Support transparent decision-making:** Creates a shared process to reflect on program standards alignment considerations and ensures alignment with values and guiding principles.
- **Prevent unintentional harm:** Provides an opportunity to pause and ask where program standards alignment considerations could mask disparities, overburden families and providers, or reinforce deficit narratives.
- **Strengthen IDEC's accountability:** Provides a documented process to show how equity principles inform program standards alignment considerations.

Examples of similar reflection tools include:

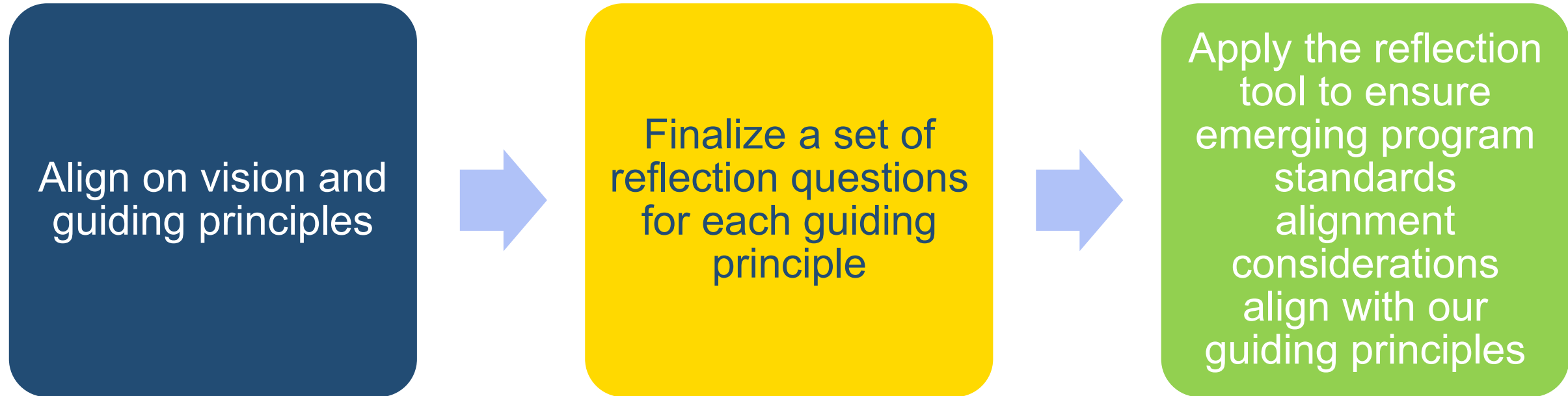
Data, Analytics, and Insights Workgroup

- Developed an **Equity Reflection Tool** to develop recommended data priority metrics for their initial phase of work

Transition Advisory Committee (TAC)

- Created the **TAC Equity Framework** to define equity and center families throughout their meaning-making discussions

We will review and refine draft reflection questions for each guiding principle. These will be used to examine emerging considerations for program standards alignment



- Today, we will review draft reflection questions and get your input
- We will refine these reflection questions together over time
- We will apply the reflection tool to alignment considerations

Draft reflection questions to test if program standards alignment considerations align with the guiding principles

Guiding principles	To what degree does this alignment consideration ... (Sample questions)
1. Center the child and family's experience and perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access and the experience of children and families? • Support whole-child development (e.g., education, care, health, well-being)? • Strengthen the importance of nurturing, responsive relationships across children, families, and providers? • Strengthen opportunities for families to identify what they and their children need?
2. Strengthen coordination across interconnected early childhood systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support smoother transitions (prenatal to age five to kindergarten)? • Eliminate siloes and reduce fragmentation across programs and services (EI, HV, CCAP, ECBG, etc.)? • Reduce the burden for families and providers of navigating fragmented systems? • Clarify roles and expectations across systems?
3. Prioritize outcomes and developmentally appropriate progression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly link to a research base of improved outcomes for children and families? • Foster children's growth and development? • Allow for a continuum of supports that meet children and families where they are?

Draft reflection questions to test if Program Standards Alignment considerations align with our guiding principles

Guiding principles	To what degree does this alignment consideration ... (Sample questions)
4. Ensure inclusion of all children and families, particularly those the state has the hardest time serving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access for priority populations? • Unintentionally exclude any populations? • Preserve access regardless of factors such as geography, immigration status, disability, etc.?
5. Streamline reporting and reduce administrative burden for families and providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate duplication? • Maintain accountability without adding unnecessary burden? • Simplify documentation across standards or funding streams?
6. Pair quality expectations with support for providers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create opportunities for providers in a mixed delivery system to deliver a continuum of high-quality services in partnership with families? • Foster clarity and guidance along the continuum of quality and supports?
7. Advance equity through equitable design and process centered on those the state has the hardest time serving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster shared decision-making with families and providers? • Reflect input from stakeholders, particularly those most impacted? • Reduce systemic disparities? • Recognize and support the unique structure and purpose of all early childhood programs and services across the mixed delivery system?

Small group discussion



Feedback on the guiding principles reflection questions

- Do these reflection questions help determine whether an alignment consideration aligns with our guiding principle?
- How can they be improved?
- What other reflection questions should we add to each guiding principle?

Please share additional feedback using:

- **Padlet**
- **Post-meeting survey**

Program Standards Crosswalks

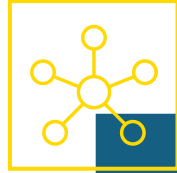


Program Standards and Requirements: Approach for Crosswalk Development



1

- **Gathered relevant resources, standards to review** (informed by 1-1's)



2

- **Developed topic categories and subcategories** based on initial scan of standards and resources reviewed.
- **Goal:** have a comprehensive list for sorting each standard at a granular level



3

- Reviewed each standard or requirement and **created a crosswalk to compare the standards across programs or funding streams**



4

- Reviewed the crosswalk and **color-coded preliminary alignment considerations and feasibility considerations**

Relevant resources: The number of program standards included in the review process differs across ECE, HV, and EI, reflecting the unique governing structures and funding streams within each sector

Early Care and Education

Child Care Licensing	Child Care Assistance Program (State and Federal requirements)	ExceleRate Illinois	Preschool for All/Expansion and Prevention Initiative Center Based	Head Start, Early Head Start, and Migrant Seasonal	License Exempt (FFN, Non-traditional programs)
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Home Visiting

Early Childhood Block Grant – Prevention Initiative Home Visiting (ECBG – PI HV)	Illinois Department of Human Services – Home Visiting (IDHS-HV)	Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV)	Maternal Child Home Visiting (MCHV)	Early Head Start Home Visiting
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Early Intervention

Federal Requirements: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C	Illinois Approach (state law, guidance, and administrative rule)
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Proposed Topic Categories: Program standards for early childhood outline how a program should operate, who is served, and accountability measures

**Collaborative
Governance**

Program Purpose

Funding

**Program
Management**

**Quality
Improvement**

Service Delivery

Eligibility

**Education &
Child
Development**

Staffing

**Support for
Children with
Disabilities and
Developmental
Delays**

**Support for
Multilingual
Learners**

**Child Health &
Social Emotional
Learning**

**Family &
Community
Engagement**

Transitions

**Priority
Populations**

These categories will be the basis for organizing and comparing program standards and requirements for each program

Sample Early Care and Education crosswalk structure:

Categories and subcategories will allow for comparison across ECE standards

Standards	Child Care Licensing	Child Care Assistance Program	ExceleRate Illinois	Preschool for All/Expansion and Prevention Initiative Center-Based	Head Start, Early Head Start, and Migrant Seasonal	License Exempt (FFN, Non-traditional programs)
	Categories		Subcategories			
Crosswalk Categories	Collaborative Governance		Standards for governing boards; Policy committees; Advisory committees; Parent involvement and oversight			
	Program Purpose		Program purpose; Goals/vision; Target populations			
	Eligibility		Eligibility to provide program; Eligibility to enroll in program; Eligibility for funding			
	Funding		Funding distribution; Timeframe; Funding renewal policies			
	Program Management		Administrative requirements; Data systems; Reporting; Human Resources; Record Keeping			
	Quality Improvement		Strategic Planning; Evaluation and accountability; Monitoring; Leadership development; Working environments			
	Service Delivery		Program Offerings, Class/group size			
	Education and Child Development		Curriculum; Learning standards; Materials; Screenings; Child assessments			
	Staffing		Staff credentials and qualifications; Professional development requirements; Training or continuing education requirements			
	Supports for Children with Disabilities and Developmental Delays		Requirements and supports for children with disabilities and developmental delays			
	Supports for Multilingual Learners		Requirements and supports for multilingual learners			
	Child Health and SEL		Child health; Nutrition; Social-emotional learning; Mental health			
	Family & Community Engagement		Family engagement; Family supports; Community partnerships; Communication requirements			
	Transitions		Child & family supports; Documentation; Communication requirements			
	Priority Populations		Children experiencing homelessness; Targeted populations based on geographic location; Low-income			

A fully developed crosswalk will provide an at-a-glance view of current alignment, strengths, gaps, and the level of effort required for change

Working definition of alignment

Alignment is the intentional coordination of program standards to ensure expectations across programs are clear, complementary, and mutually reinforcing — without requiring programs to be identical.

What Alignment *Is*

- Using **common language** where possible
- Clarifying **what is shared vs. what is different**
- Reducing **duplicative or conflicting requirements**
- Supporting **smooth transitions** for children and families
- Making it **easier for providers to operate** across funding streams

What Alignment *Is Not*

- One set of standards replacing all others
- Ignoring federal or statutory requirements
- Eliminating program-specific strengths
- Forcing all programs to operate the same way

** **Level of effort required for change:** e.g., a standard required by an administrative rule would be medium effort/high possibility for change, while a standard required by a federal regulation or statute would be high effort/low possibility for change*

Our Goals for today, in small groups...

1. Review categories and subcategories for the crosswalk
2. For each early childhood sector, discuss potential topics to prioritize for the coming months



Early Care and Education Small Group Discussion



Early Care and Education programs and sources included in the review process

Child Care Licensing	Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)	ExceleRate Illinois	Preschool for All/Expansion and Prevention Initiative Center-Based	Head Start, Early Head Start, and Migrant Seasonal	License Exempt (FFN, Non-traditional programs)
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Sources Reviewed

- Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) Administrative Rule Section 235
- ECBG Preschool For All/Expansion Compliance Checklist
- ECBG Prevention Initiative Compliance Checklist
- IDHS Child Care Administrative Rule Part 50
- CCAP Policy Manual
- License Exempt Child Care Health and Safety Standards Checklist
- DCFS Licensing Standards for Homes (Part 406), Centers (Part 407), Group Homes (Part 408)
- Head Start Program Performance Standards
- ExceleRate Circles of Quality standards for centers, home-based, standards and evidence for PFA/E and Head Start

Additional resources

- ECBG Preschool For All/Expansion Implementation Manual
- ECBG Prevention Initiative Implementation Manual
- Illinois' Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) State Plan 2025-2027
- WIDA Early Language Development Standards
- National Association for the Education of Young Children Accreditation (NAEYC)
- National Association of Family Child Care Accreditation (NAFCC)

Early Care and Education: Categories for Alignment Mapping

- Program standards across ECE programs generally can be sorted into the various categories on the right.
- To ensure time for intentional and deep conversations with the workgroup, we will need to determine which (2-3) topics to recommend to prioritize for discussion between now and June.
- Timeline, opportunities for collaboration with other Transition workgroups and redesign efforts, and potential for impact will also be factors in narrowing in on the initial priority categories for discussion.

Categories

Collaborative Governance

Program Purpose

Eligibility

Funding

Program Management

Quality Improvement

Service Delivery

Education and Child Development

Staffing

Supports for children with disabilities and developmental delays

Supports for Multilingual Learners (MLL)

Child Health and SEL

Family & Community Engagement

Transitions

Priority Populations

Early Care and Education example: Alignment efforts should clarify shared expectations and reduce duplication while leaving flexibility for providers

Example scenario: a center-based ECE provider has Preschool for All and Head Start classrooms and participates in ExceleRate

The provider must:

- Meet licensing standards (DCFS)
- Meet ExceleRate/ QRIS requirements
- Meet ECBG program standards
- Meet Head Start Performance Standards

Each program:

- Different program quality evaluation and reporting expectations
- Reports in multiple data systems
- Conducts its own monitoring visits

Depending on the classroom they attend, children and families may have different experiences and receive inconsistent levels of support.

The provider experiences duplication, administrative burden, and confusion.

Alignment mapping might identify that across each program standard...

- Different program evaluation tools are used (e.g., CLASS, ITERS/ECERS) in addition to program-specific checklists.
- Required monitoring activities differ (including frequency of assessments, role of external monitors and different improvement planning templates).
- Reporting systems and documentation requirements differ.

Alignment considerations might include:

- Development of a crosswalk that shows how different evaluation tools are related
- Shared data elements for reporting
- Coordinated monitoring visits or data sharing at the state level
- A single improvement planning template that meets the expectations of multiple programs or funding streams

Early Care and Education: Which topics do we want to prioritize for discussions in the coming months?

1. When you think about **aligning birth-to-five program standards and expectations** that support a continuum of quality, which topics come to mind as most essential for us to discuss first?
2. What key tensions, challenges, or opportunities could the workgroup surface to inform alignment considerations for the topics you mentioned?

Categories

Collaborative Governance

Program Purpose

Eligibility

Funding

Program Management

Quality Improvement

Service Delivery

Education and Child Development

Staffing

Supports for children with disabilities and developmental delays

Supports for Multilingual Learners (MLL)

Child Health and SEL

Family & Community Engagement

Transitions

Priority Populations

Home Visiting Small Group Discussion



Home Visiting: Programs and sources included in the review process

Early Childhood Block Grant – Prevention Initiative Home Visiting (ECBG – PI HV)	Illinois Department of Human Services – Home Visiting (IDHS-HV)	Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV)	Maternal Child Home Visiting (MCHV)	Early Head Start Home Visiting
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Sources Reviewed

- Illinois Administrative Rule Section 235 Early Childhood Block Grant
- Prevention Initiative Compliance Checklist (Fiscal Year 2026)
- Prevention Initiative Manual, May 2025
- Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Notice of Funding Opportunity (Fiscal Year 2024)
- MIECHV Non-Competing Continuation Update (Fiscal Year 2026)
- MIECHV Data & Continuous Quality Improvement
- Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Home Visiting Notice of Funding Opportunity (Fiscal Year 2026)
- IDHS Program Manual (Fiscal Year 2025)
- Maternal Child Home Visiting (MCHV) Exhibits (Fiscal Year 2026)
- Head Start Program Performance Standards

Additional resources

- *ISBE & IDHS Home Visiting Programs Crosswalk from IDHS, July 2025*
- *Doula Alignment Crosswalk from Start Early, September 2024*

Home Visiting: Categories for Alignment Mapping

- Program standards across HV programs generally can be sorted into the various categories on the right.
- To ensure time for intentional and deep conversations with the workgroup, we will need to determine which (2-3) topics to recommend to prioritize for discussion between now and June.
- Timeline, opportunities for collaboration with other Transition workgroups and redesign efforts, and potential for impact will also be factors in narrowing in on the initial priority categories for discussion.

Categories
Program Purpose
Funding Processes
Program Management & Quality Improvement
Service Delivery
Education & Child Development
Staffing
Community Engagement

Home Visiting example: Alignment efforts should clarify shared expectations and reduce duplication while leaving flexibility for providers

Example scenario: a community-based provider is funded by ISBE Prevention Initiative HV and IDHS HV

Based on the funding stream, the provider must balance different requirements for:

- Eligibility criteria
- Allowable models (e.g., Baby TALK or MIECHV-approved models)
- Monitoring checklists
- Age ranges served

Alignment mapping might identify that

- Differences in requirements across eligibility, monitoring, ages served, and allowable models might be due to different philosophies across funding streams on the purpose of HV services and the desired outcome for children and families.

Alignment considerations might include:

- Ensuring one coherent state-wide philosophy on the desired outcome of HV services
- Shared core child outcome expectations grounded in Illinois Early Learning Guideline (IELG) domains
- A common language for describing developmental progress

Home Visiting: Which topics do we want to prioritize for discussions in the coming months?

1. When you think about **aligning birth-to-five program standards and expectations** that support a continuum of quality, which topics come to mind as most essential for us to discuss first?
2. What key tensions, challenges, or opportunities could the workgroup surface to inform alignment considerations for the topics you mentioned?

Categories

Program Purpose

Funding Processes

Program Management
& Quality Improvement

Service Delivery

Education &
Child Development

Staffing

Community Engagement

Early Intervention



Early Intervention: sources included in the review process

Federal Requirements:
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
Part C

Illinois Approach (state law, guidance, and
administrative rule)

Sources Reviewed

- CFR Part 303 – Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities
- PART 500 Early Intervention Program (State administrative rule)
- Child and Family Connection (CFC) Procedure Manual
- Illinois EI Provider Handbook (Rev. 07/2022)
- Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA) Systems Framework

Additional resources:

- *Illinois EI Policy Crosswalk (Draft developed by New Practice Lab, New America)*

Early Intervention: Categories for Alignment Mapping

- Program standards across EI programs generally can be sorted into the various categories on the right.
- To ensure time for intentional and deep conversations with the workgroup, we will need to determine which (2-3) topics to recommend to prioritize for discussion between now and June.
- Timeline, opportunities for collaboration with other Transition workgroups and redesign efforts, and potential for impact will also be factors in narrowing in on the initial priority categories for discussion.

Policy Domain
Governance & Legal Authority
Provider and Workforce Qualifications
Training & Professional Development
Service Delivery Model
Evaluation, Assessment & Eligibility
IFSP Development & Implementation
Billing & Reimbursement Policy
Documentation & Reporting
Monitoring & Compliance
Family Rights & Safeguards
Transition & Extended Services
System Infrastructure & Administration
Equity, Access & Outcomes
Child Finds, Public Awareness & Referrals

Early Intervention example: Alignment efforts should clarify shared expectations and reduce duplication while leaving flexibility for providers

Example scenario: A family has a 2-year-old who is referred to EI. They complete EI intake and evaluation and have an IFSP developed. The family is connected to other early childhood services including Home Visiting, Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), and Head Start.

Each program may:

- Collect slightly different demographic information
- Use different child outcome frameworks
- Have separate referral forms
- Use different eligibility criteria
- Require separate family interviews

The family repeats their story multiple times.

Providers navigate, separate data systems, separate consent processes, separate timelines

Alignment mapping might identify that the family and child participate in duplicative intake and referral processes:

- Separate EI referral
- Separate Home Visiting referral
- Separate PreK screening intake

Alignment considerations might include a shared referral and intake including:

- A shared early childhood referral portal
- One entry form* that routes to EI, HV, or ECE based on eligibility
- Shared demographic data fields across programs
- Clear communication with families about next steps

**Common forms will ensure appropriate privacy safeguards*

Which topics do we want to prioritize for discussions in the coming months?

1. When you think about **aligning birth-to-five program standards and expectations** that support a continuum of quality, which topics come to mind as most essential for us to discuss first?
2. What key tensions, challenges, or opportunities could the workgroup surface to inform alignment considerations for the topics you mentioned?

Policy Domain

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Next Steps, Public Comment, and Closing



Timeline of workgroup activities through June 2026

Dec 2025 - Feb 2026

- ✓ Launched the workgroup
- ✓ Developed a **working draft of a vision and guiding principles** for program standards alignment
- ✓ Reviewed the current state of program standards across early childhood programs and family and provider experience
- ✓ (*February focus*) Identify **topics to prioritize for discussions** for March – May

Mar – May 2026

- ✓ Deep dive into **one topic each month** (specific to each early childhood sector) and review program standards alignment analysis for the topic
- ✓ Discuss:
 - **current impact** on providers, children, and families.
 - **opportunities for alignment and unintended consequences**
- ✓ Apply vision and guiding principles to vet recommendations and refine reflection tool as needed

June 2026

- ✓ Review and reflect on **emerging recommendations for program standards alignment based** on topics discussed from March to May conversations
- ✓ Gather input to **inform next steps** for this work

Public Comment

To join the line to provide public comment, please raise your hand via Zoom.





Closing

- **Share your feedback:**
<https://forms.gle/jHV1jSTmXe7DGMFh8>
- **Next meeting**
 - Thursday, March 26, 4:30 – 6:00 PM



 @idec_illinois

 @IllinoisDepartmentofEarlyChildhood

 @Illinois Department of Early Childhood



Appendix



Early Care and Education: Categories for Alignment Mapping

***Bold** categories came up through 1-1 conversations

Collaborative governance

- Standards for governing boards
- Policy committees
- Advisory committees
- Parent involvement and oversight

Program purpose

- Goals and/or vision
- Target populations

Eligibility

- Provider eligibility
- Child eligibility to enroll
- Child eligibility for funding

Funding

- Funding distribution
- Funding timeframe
- Funding renewal

Program management

- Administrative requirements
- Data systems & record keeping
- **Reporting**
- Human resources

Quality improvement

- Strategic planning
- Evaluation and accountability
- **Monitoring**
- Leadership development
- Working environments

Service delivery

- Program offerings
- ***Class/group size**

Staffing

- **Credentials and qualifications**
- Professional development
- Training or continuing education requirements

Education and child development

- *Curriculum
- Learning standards
- Materials
- ***Screenings**
- Child assessments

Child health and SEL

- Child health
- Nutrition
- **Social-emotional learning**
- **Mental health**

Special education services

- ***Requirements and support for children with disabilities and developmental delays**

Multilingual Learner (MLL) support

- ***Requirements and support for children who are multilingual learners**

Family and community engagement

- Family supports
- Program recruitment
- Community partnerships
- Communication requirements

Transitions

- Child & family supports
- Referrals
- Documentation
- Communication requirements

Support for priority populations

- Children experiencing homelessness
- Targeted populations based on geography
- Low-income

Early Care and Education: Proposed crosswalk structure

Example Topic	Child Care Licensing	Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)	ExceleRate Illinois	Preschool for All/Expansion and Prevention Initiative Center Based	Head Start, Early Head Start, and Migrant Seasonal	License Exempt (FFN, Non-traditional programs)	Summary
Supports for Multilingual Learners	Sources reviewed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DCFS Licensing Standards for Homes (Part 406), Centers (Part 407), Group Homes (Part 408) 	Sources reviewed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IDHS Child Care Administrative Rule CCAP Policy Manual 	Sources reviewed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ExceleRate Circles of Quality standards for centers, home-based, standards and evidence for PFA/E and Head Start 	Sources reviewed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ECBG Preschool For All/Expansion Compliance Checklist ECBG Prevention Initiative Compliance Checklist Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) Administrative Rule 	Sources reviewed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head Start Performance Standards 	Sources reviewed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> License Exempt Child Care Health and Safety Standards Checklist 	Summarized analysis, noting consistencies, gaps, discrepancies Analysis of potential <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provider impact Child/Family Access/quality impact

Home Visiting: Categories for Alignment Mapping

***Bold** categories came up through 1-1 conversations

Program Purpose

- Mission & orientation
- Desired outcomes
- **Target populations**

Funding Processes

- Timeline
- Program eligibility to apply
- Funding priorities
- Funding distribution approach

Program Management & Quality Improvement

- Data requirements
- **Reporting**
- **Monitoring & evaluation**
- Performance measures

Service Delivery

- **Program models offered**
- Services offered
- **Ages served**
- Family eligibility/initiation
- Caseload size
- Staff ratios
- **Utilization of I/ECMHC**
- Doula services provided
- Modality of services offered
- Program policies & procedures

Education & Child Development

- Curriculum
- Screenings & assessments
- Learning standards alignment

Community Engagement

- Community partnerships
- Communication requirements

Staffing

- Staffing requirements
- Staff salaries
- Clinical consultation/supervision
- Training requirements
- Professional development

Home Visiting: Proposed crosswalk structure

Example Topic	Early Childhood Block Grant – Prevention Initiative Home Visiting (ECBG – PI HV)	Illinois Department of Human Services – Home Visiting (IDHS-HV)	Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV)	Maternal Child Home Visiting (MCHV)	Early Head Start Home Visiting	Summary
Eligibility Criteria	<p>Sources reviewed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrative Rule School Code PI Compliance Checklist PI Program Manual 	<p>Sources reviewed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IDHS Home Visiting Notice of Funding Opportunity (FY26) IDHS Program Manual (FY25) 	<p>Sources reviewed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MIECHV Notice of Funding Opportunity (FY24) MIECHV Non-Competing Continuation Update (FY26) MIECHV Data & Continuous Quality Improvement 	<p>Sources reviewed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MCHV Exhibits (FY26) 	<p>Sources reviewed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head Start Performance Standards 	<p>Summarized analysis, noting consistencies, gaps, discrepancies</p> <p>Analysis of potential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provider impact Child/Family Access/quality impact

Early Intervention: Categories for Alignment Mapping

Early Intervention

***Bold** categories came up through 1-1 conversations

Governance and Legal Authority

- IDEA Part C compliance
- IL statute; Rule 500; Enforcement authority
- Hierarchy of policy documents

Evaluation, Assessment & Eligibility

- **Intake**
- Timelines
- Eligibility criteria
- Instruments
- Informed clinical opinion

Documentation & Reporting

- Report formats
- Progress notes
- Documentation timelines
- Retention standards

Child Find, Public Awareness & Referrals

- Communication
- Outreach
- Referral process

Provider Workforce & Qualification

- **Credentials**
- **Associate provider**
- **Supervision**
- **Consultation hours**
- **Enrollment**
- **Termination**

IFSP Development & Implementation

- IFSP timelines
- Team composition
- Outcomes
- Revisions
- Transition planning

Family Rights & Safeguards

- Consent
- Confidentiality
- Due process
- Fees

Training & Professional Development

- **Core knowledge**
- **Ongoing training**
- **Discipline-specific requirements**
- **Supervision as training**

Billing & Reimbursement Policy

- Authorizations
- Billing codes
- IFSP development billing
- Supervision billing
- Refunds

Systems Infrastructure & Administration

- Illinois Medicaid Program Advanced Cloud Technology (IMPACT)
- Provider Connections
- Central Billing Office
- Coding logic
- Data systems

Service Delivery Model

- Natural environment
- Live Video Visit (LVV)
- Service location
- Frequency/intensity
- Family-centered practice

Monitoring & Compliance

- Monitoring reviews
- Corrective Action Plan (CAP)
- Violations
- Refund triggers
- Complaint resolution

Transition & Extended Services

- **Transition timelines**
- **Part B coordination**
- EI Extended Services

Equity, Access & Performance Measures

- Workforce Shortage
- Rural access
- Equity impacts
- Provider retention

Early Intervention: Proposed crosswalk structure

Example: Policy Domain	Included Policy Areas	ECTA System Framework Component	Federal Requirement (IDEA Part C)	Illinois Requirements	Alignment Category	Analysis of emerging recommendations across current conversations
Provider and Workforce Qualifications	Credentials	Personnel / Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CFR Part 303 – Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PART 500 Early Intervention Program (State administrative rule) Child and Family Connection (CFC) Procedure Manual Illinois EI Provider Handbook (Rev. 07/2022) 	Summarized analysis noting whether authority for a requirement sits at the federal or state level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal Risk Implementation Efforts Systems Impact
	Associate Providers					
	Supervision					
	Consultation Hours					
	Enrollment					
	Termination					